"Awakening to a Nightmare"

Abjectivity and Illegality in the Lives of Undocumented 1.5-Generation Latino Immigrants in the United States

by Roberto G. Gonzales and Leo R. Chavez

Does the undocumented status of 1.5-generation Latinos (those who migrated at a young age) in the United States affect their political, civic, and public selves? Our approach to this question begins with a theoretical framework based on the concept of abjectivity, which draws together abject status and subjectivity. We argue that the practices of the biopolitics of citizenship and governmentality—surveillance, immigration documents, employment forms, birth certificates, tax forms, drivers' licenses, credit card applications, bank accounts, medical insurance, car insurance, random detentions, and deportations—enclose, penetrate, define, limit, and frustrate the lives of undocumented 1.5-generation Latino immigrants. We examine data from a random-sample telephone survey of 805 Latinos and 396 whites in Orange County, California, to provide general patterns that distinguish 1.5-generation Latino immigrants from their first-generation counterparts and to suggest the contours of their lives as undocumented immigrants. We then examine in-depth interviews with 80 respondents also in Orange County who provide extensive qualitative information and personal narratives. The analysis shows how abjectivity and illegality constrain daily life, create internalized fears, in some ways immobilize their victims, and in other ways motivate them to engage politically to resist the dire conditions of their lives.

> *The "abject" designates that which has been expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, literally rendered "Other." This appears as an expulsion of alien elements, but the alien is effectively established through this expulsion.* (Judith Butler 1999:5)

From 2003 to 2008, we listened to the stories of undocumented Latino young adults who have lived in the United States since childhood. We came to know many of these young people personally and interacted with them in community meetings, on school campuses, and at their homes. They spoke of their frustrations and struggles to make better lives for themselves and their families. Esperanza, a particularly bright 27-year-old woman who migrated to the United States from Jalisco, Mexico, with her parents and younger sisters at age 8 and aspires to be a journalist, told us that even though she has a BA from the University of California, her dreams are on hold. Articulating the frustrations of her present circumstances, she told us,

> I [don't] want to break the law, but everything you do is illegal because you are illegal. Everything you do will be illegal. Otherwise you can't live. But I am still afraid. I don't want to jeopardize anything. I mean, I guess I am just ashamed. I looked [for work] and in most restaurants they would be like, "Why do you want to work for us if you have a BA?"

Esperanza, like many others we met during the course of fieldwork, told her story with an outpouring of emotion, as much of her young life had been spent trying to understand the confusing and contradictory experience of growing up in the United States but not being able to take part in important and defining aspects of being American. Over the course of our 3+ years in the field, we came across more than 200 young people with similar stories of frustration and shattered dreams. We spoke to the Orange County Immigrant Student Group, an organization made up of mainly undocumented college-age students working to pressure the US Congress to pass legislation to provide undocumented students a path to citizenship (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors [DREAM] Act). We also interacted with less fortunate undocumented youth who, because of run-ins with the police, trouble in school, and economic circumstances have not been able to move on to college. These young men and women struggle to make ends meet and find their place in society. We heard undocumented Latino youth speak of themselves

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as unwanted by the larger society even though the United States is the only country they really know.

Out of these experiences came our general research question: Does the undocumented status of young Latino men and women who came to the United States at a young age (whom immigration scholars call the 1.5 generation) affect their political, civic, and public selves? Our approach to this question is framed by what Sarah S. Willen has called "abjectivity," a term that combines abject with subjectivity (Willen 2007). Our contribution to thinking about abjectivity is to further elaborate how Foucault's notions of biopolitics and biopower, and Agamben's "states of exception," frame abjectivity's usefulness for understanding (im)migrant and racialized populations. We also argue that undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos, despite the structural constraints they face, are often active agents working to make the best of their situation and to change the laws that constrain their lives.

At the core of the concept of abjectivity is the word "abject," which means "to cast away" or "to throw away." Abject has been used to describe those in the lowest, most contemptible, and most wretched social status.[1] Julia Kristeva first pointed to the implications of a condition of abjection as an exclusionary practice that produced discrete subjects, a point that has influenced subsequent scholars (Kristeva 1982; Willen 2007).[2] As Judith Butler (1999:169) notes in the epigraph above, "The 'abject' designates that which has been expelled from the body, discharged as excrement, literally rendered 'Other.' This appears as an expulsion of alien elements, but the alien is effectively established through this expulsion." Various intersections of race, gender, sexuality, nationality, migrancy, and any number of other categories can demarcate the abject in society. For example, Nicholas De Genova (2008) examined what he called "American abjection," a form of racialized identity Mexican migrants projected onto US-born people of color. And Leo R. Chavez (2008) examined how the often vitriolic discourse about the children of undocumented immigrants in the United States, including the US-born ("anchor babies"), characterized them as abject, as unwanted and discardable.

For our purposes, it is the body of the nation from which undocumented children of immigrants' are expelled and the source of their abject status. Theirs are castaway (abject) lives, which, as James Ferguson noted, are lives disconnected from the life they had imagined for themselves (Ferguson 2002: 140–141). These rejected and abject subjects inhabit a liminal space where the boundary between their everyday lives *in* the nation and their lives as *part of* the nation is maintained as a way of ensuring their control and social regulation (Chavez 2008:115–116). But what about the subjective understanding of living an abject life?

Willen's research among undocumented migrants in Israel emphasized the importance of lived experiences, that is, subjectivity, within abject spaces. It is in this sense that abjectivity raises a question such as that posed by Paul Farmer (2003:30): "By what mechanisms, precisely, do social forces ranging from poverty to racism become embodied as individual experience?" Such a question leads to a methodological approach that examines experiences and practices that shape understandings of the world. As Marjorie O'Loughlin observed in relation to Merleau-Ponty's (1962, 1968) theoretical insights, it is crucial to ask, "How embodied subjectivities are produced through material relations with other embodied subjects" (O'Loughlin 1998:275).[3] Human beings, as O'Loughlin (1998:280) further observes, "are simultaneously *inside* their bodies and *embodied* as actors in the world. It is this dual sense of bodiliness—the lived experience of embodiment—which enables social agency, that is, the ongoing creation of collective life." It is in this sense that Sarah Willen (2007:8) called for a "critical phenomonology of 'illegality,'" one that examines illegality as a juridical status, as a sociopolitical condition, and, finally, as a mode of being-in-the-world.

We are interested in the experiences of living in abjection. Abjectivity speaks to how the "casting away" of individuals and populations shapes (or perhaps delimits) their social, economic, and biological life. We believe that abjectivity draws attention to the forces creating the condition of abjectivity. Abjectivity is the effect of social forces, but we must also ask about the causes of that condition. We argue that the practices of the biopolitics of citizenship and governmentality—surveillance, immigration documents, employment forms, birth certificates, tax forms, drivers' licenses, credit card applications, bank accounts, medical insurance, and mandatory car insurance—may frustrate anyone, citizen and noncitizen alike, because they enclose, penetrate, define, and limit one's life and actions. But for undocumented 1.5-generation Latino immigrants (and others in a similar status), these practices of governmental contact and surveillance can create enormous distress, detention, and even deportation (Inda 2006). These "rites of institution," as Pierre Bourdieu (1992) called them, are central to the power of nation-states to construct identities and produce, in a perverse way, the "sweet sorrow" of a sense of belonging (to borrow from Shakespeare). Thus, abjectivity underscores the link between the mechanics of biopower and the lived experiences of those most vulnerable to the exercise of power.

Our construction of abjectivity clearly draws on Michel Foucault's biopolitics, the development of techniques that work on the body to produce docile bodies (Foucault 1977, 1990 [1976],

1. See *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), s.v. "abject."

2. For examples of Kristeva's influence on scholars examining abjectivity, see Butler (1999); Chavez (2008); Ferguson (2002); Inda (2002, 2006); Willen (2007).

3. See Uli Linke's (2006) argument that the state also has a corporeal grounding.

1997; Gordon 1991).[4] This led Foucault, as Giorgio Agamben (1998) points out, to two research directives. The first focuses on the way power "penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life." The state, with its "political techniques (such as the science of the police) . . . assumes and integrates the care of the natural life of individuals into its very center" (Agamben 1998:5). Second, Foucault examines "the *technologies of the self* by which processes of subjectivization bring the individual to bind himself to his own identity and consciousness and, at the same time, to an external power" (Agamben 1998:5). Judith Butler (1997*b*) also argued that power and subject are interlocked in a paradox of subjectivization, or the formation of a self-conscious identity and thus agency.

We are also interested in the intersection of Foucault's two research directives, that is, how the practices targeting undocumented or unauthorized immigrants shape the lived experience of undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos and how they respond to such constraints. Agamben speaks of "bare life," the natural life that is distinct from the "good life," the political life in classic Western thought. In modern politics, bare life, once kept at the margins, is now increasingly included in the political order (Agamben 1998:9). But what happens to those objects of state regulation whose bare life is kept at the margins of the political order? They become states of exception, their lives bracketed as in the nation but not part of the nation, which allows them to become the object of laws and other techniques of regulation (Agamben 2005). These can include everyday experiences of ill treatment by the larger society, discrimination, and targeted police actions. When taken to its extreme, the state can target such exceptions, physically separate them from society, isolate them into "zones of social abandonment," and even engage in practices of genocide, extermination, or ethnic cleansing (Biehl 2005).[5]

But before such endpoints are reached, if ever, a set of practices can emerge that mark off or bracket a group as different, less than, unworthy, illegitimate, undeserving (Sargent and Larchanché-Kim 2006; Tormey 2007; Willen 2007; Zhang 2001). What marks the group as "Other" derives from particular histories and can coalesce around any number of traits: race, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, stigmatized disease, migration history, or citizenship status, among others. Importantly, it is not something inherent to the particular bracketed group that is important here, but the practices that make their lives miserable, constrained, limited, invisible or differently visible, stigmatized, feared, and even dangerous. And yet, despite these practices of exclusion, it is sometimes possible that a sense of inclusion emerges through everyday lived experiences such as working, forming families, making friends, paying taxes, playing sports, engaging in community affairs, and interacting with social institutions, particularly schools (Agamben 1998; Chavez 1998; Yuval-Davis 2006). These "zones of indistinction," as Agamben called them, are paradoxes in which the law and social practices legitimize that which law has prohibited (Agamben 1998; Coutin 2007).

Importantly, as Nicholas De Genova (2010:37) has noted, zones of indistinction, and bare life, are produced by sovereign (state) power. But we must note that, as we will show, undocumented 1.5 generation can, and do, resist total exclusion. The ultimate exclusionary act here is deportation, which De Genova (2010:34–35) has observed, is where "the whole totalizing regime of citizenship and alienage, belonging and deportability, entitlement and rightlessness, is deployed against particular persons in a manner that is, in the immediate practical application, irreducibly if not irreversibly individualizing."

Abjectivity leads us to examine the quotidian experiences of those who are the object of disciplinary practices and the subjects of exclusionary discourses of citizenship and belonging (Coutin 2000*a*; Reed-Danahay and Brettell 2008; Yuval-Davis 2006). How do the abject in a society internalize their subject status? What types of self-disciplinary practices do they engage in? How does everyday reality inform a sense of identity, belonging, and citizenship? At the same time, by including biopolitics as central to our formulation of abjectivity, we are also underscoring that power not only works to create docile bodies but that, as Foucault (1990 [1976]:95) so famously put it, "Where there is power, there is resistance." Thus, as we explore these questions, we are mindful of how, as Liliana Suárez-Navaz (2004:13) observed, "people situated at the margins of the hegemonic 'either-or' notion of belonging resisted their displacement." Focusing on the lives of undocumented Latino youth and the ways in which they understand, respond to, and critique their circumstances demonstrates the salience of this observation.[6]

Locating 1.5-Generation Latinos in a Condition of Illegality

The literature refers to the 1.5 generation as those who migrated at a young age,[7] in recognition of the fact that most

4. Paul Rabinow and Nikolas Rose (2006:197) provide a sharper definition to Foucault's rather vague concept of biopolitics: "We can use the term 'biopolitics' to embrace all the specific strategies and contestations over problematizations of collective human vitality, morbidity and mortality; over the forms of knowledge, regimes of authority and practices of intervention that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious."

5. Agamben (1998) notes that Foucault did not apply his insights to twentieth-century totalitarian states and their concentration camps.

6. Although our focus is on the United States, we recognize that the lives of the children of immigrants vary across nation-states according to laws of citizenship and national philosophies and practices of inclusion. For information on a large multicountry project on this topic currently underway, see the Integration of the European Second Generation, available at http://www.tiesproject.eu/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/lang,en/. See also Maurice Crul and Liesbeth Heering's (2008) work among second-generation Turks and Moroccans in Amsterdam, and the research of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2007) for Europe. See also Kamal Sadiq's (2005, 2008) research on India, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh.

7. There is no consensus on the cutoff age for the 1.5 generation. We use under 15 years of age in our analysis.

or all of their schooling and much of their cultural and social development occur in the host country (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Rumbaut 2004).[8] In contrast, older migrants (the 1.0 generation) who experience their formative years in their country of origin develop their worldview from experiences growing up there. In many respects, the 1.5 generation is more similar to the second generation, those born in the new country, than to those of the first generation who migrated at 15 years of age or older. Also, because the 1.5 generation come to the United States as young children, it is typically their parents who made the decision to migrate.[9]

The biopolitics associated with governmentality produce illegality.[10] "Illegal" refers to unauthorized residents who entered the county without permission from government authorities, or they may have entered with permission—tourist or student visas—but then overstayed visa end dates. Illegality, as Susan B. Coutin (2007:9) observed, has meant that "individuals can be physically present but legally absent, existing in a space outside of society, a space of 'nonexistence,' a space that is not actually 'elsewhere' or beyond borders but that is rather a hidden dimension of social reality." We would offer as a slight variation on Coutin's representation: to be illegally present is not to be "outside of society" but to be allowed to participate in some aspects of society (e.g., schooling) but not others (e.g., work) (Gonzales 2011). All children, regardless of immigration status, have access to primary and secondary education as a result of the US Supreme Court's decision in *Plyer v. Doe*. Access to higher education has focused on immigration status and in-state versus nonresident tuition. In California, Assembly Bill 540, signed into law in 2001, allowed undocumented students to attend publicly funded colleges and universities and pay in-state tuition, but they were ineligible for financial aid, which the California DREAM Act of 2011 now allows.[11]

As a condition, being "illegal" contributes to subjective understandings of the world and to identity (Coutin 2000*a*, 2000*b*; De Genova 2002; Menjívar 2006; Suárez-Navaz 2004; Willen 2007). As Sarah Willen (2007:11) has put it, "migrant 'illegality' [is] the catalyst for particular forms of 'abjectivity.'" Abjectivity, by drawing us back to biopolitics, suggests that adding to the despair of abjectivity is not just the condition of illegality but the state's holding out of the possibility of an end to that condition.

Moving from an illegal status to a legal one—to legal permanent residence—has become much more difficult as a result of changes in US immigration law, most notably the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA; Bunis and Garcia 1997).[12] IIRIRA's provisions included that apprehended undocumented immigrants can no longer demand a hearing and stay in the country until their case is adjudicated; they can now be sent home immediately, but they can appeal a deportation order because of a later legal decision (Stout 1978). Undocumented immigrants must now be in the United States for 10 years, rather than 7 years, before they can appeal a deportation decision, and they must prove good moral character and show that that deportation would cause extreme hardship to a family member who is a US citizen. Waivers of deportation for aggravated felonies are no longer possible, and this class of felonies has been greatly expanded. An individual sponsor for an immigrant must sign an affidavit and prove that his or her income (not her household's income) is at least 125% above the nation's poverty level (Chavez 2001).

Because of such obstacles to moving to legal status, public debates over comprehensive immigration reform include the possibility of a "path to citizenship" for the large (11–12 million) number of unauthorized residents (Passel and Cohn 2009). Although such proposals have gained little traction in recent years, the US Congress has considered a more focused reform for the undocumented 1.5 generation, known as the DREAM Act. Under the DREAM Act, most students of good moral character who came to the United States before they were 16 years old and had at least 5 years of US residence before the date of the bill's enactment would qualify for conditional permanent resident status if they met one of three criteria: (*a*) graduated from a 2-year college or a vocational college, or studied for at least 2 years toward a bachelor's or higher degree; (*b*) served in the US armed forces for at least 2 years; or (*c*) performed at least 910 hours of volunteer community service. Undocumented youth would not qualify for this relief if they had committed crimes, were a security risk, or were inadmissible or removable on certain other grounds. However, the DREAM Act has been in Congress, in some form, for nearly 10 years without passage.[13] The constant vacillation between hope and despair engendered by the possibility of immigration reform and the DREAM Act is a major disciplinary practice that informs the subject status of the undocumented young people whose lives are examined below (Gonzales 2008*a*, 2008*b*; Negron-Gonzales 2009; Olivas 1995; Ramirez 2008).

8. Problems also arise when children raised in the United States return, either voluntarily or involuntarily, back to their country of origin; see Boehm (2008); Hamann, Zúñiga, and Sánchez García (2006).

9. We understand that minors also migrate unaccompanied by parents or other family members. For our discussion here, we focus on undocumented youth who migrate and live with parents or other familial guardians.

10. For a discussion of the legal construction of the "illegal" and the "Mexican illegal alien," see Mae Ngai's (2004) book *Impossible Subjects*.

11. For research on California Assembly Bill 540 and its impact on undocumented students' lives, see Abrego (2006, 2008); Gonzales (2007, 2008*a*, 2008*b*); Olivas (1995).

12. Details of IIRIRA are available at http://www.ows.doleta.gov/dmstree/pl/pl_104-208.pdf.

13. According to the National Immigration Law Center (http://www.nilc.org/immlawpolicy/DREAM/Dream001.htm), the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act (S. 1545), introduced on July 31, 2003, was reintroduced in the Senate on November 18, 2005. It passed the Senate Judiciary Committee on March 27, 2006. However, Congress failed to pass immigration reform, and with it the DREAM Act, in either 2006 or 2007.

Abjectivity as experienced by those in a condition of illegality, therefore, is situational and not immutable, with the state having the power to maintain or mitigate that status (Bosniak 1998, 2000). An illegal or undocumented immigrant can sometimes, though with great difficulty, find a way to move to a legal immigration status, which often means greater economic, physical, and psychological stability. The liminal and unstable nature of abjectivity is both a source of life stress and a condition that allows for the possibility of change, which opens up a space for human action and resistance. Though lacking power, undocumented immigrants are not powerless. They have, as Saskia Sassen (2003:62) put it, a political *presence*. This becomes evident when we examine the political activism, what Isin and Nielsen (2008) call "acts of citizenship," of the young people examined here (Getrich 2008). Rather than falling into completely immobilizing despair and hopelessness, they often engage in personal acts of resistance (Butler 1997*a*), which range from making small steps to improve their lives through education and training to political activism aimed at immigration reforms to provide a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants.

Exploring the Lives of 1.5-Generation Latinos

We examine the lives of young Latino immigrants who came to the United States at a young age and were living in Orange County, California. Our approach combines survey data and in-depth ethnographic interviews that grew out of extensive participant observation. Survey data provide general patterns in the lives of 1.5-generation Latinos in Orange County and indicate the constraints of illegality on their lives. In-depth ethnographic interviews and participant observation provide insights into the subjective understandings and practices of living in a condition of illegality for young Latino immigrants. Questions in both the survey and in-depth interviews focused on residence, family, education, work, discrimination, unauthorized status, political engagement, and daily, lived experiences, with extensive follow-up and probing in the in-depth interviews.

Orange County covers an area of 789 square miles, is largely urban, and contains 34 cities and numerous unincorporated communities (US Census Bureau 2006). It is the third most populous county in California, with an estimated 3,002,048 inhabitants in 2006, of whom 30.5% were foreign-born. With an understanding that it is difficult to estimate the undocumented immigrant population, they may account for about 10.2% of the county's overall population in 2006 (Fortuny et al. 2007; Paral 2006; US Census Bureau 2006). Latinos accounted for 32.5% of the county's population in 2005. Most Latinos are of Mexican heritage, but Latino immigrants are also from other nations in Latin America, particularly Central America.

Orange County is an excellent site for this study not just because of the large proportion and diversity of Latinos, but for other reasons as well. Even though it had a median household income in 2008 of $74,862 (almost $24,000 above the California average), it is an economically diverse county, ranging from modest working class communities to wealthy communities (US Census Bureau 2010). The southern half of the county has been an area of rapid growth in new middle class, upper-middle class, and exclusive (i.e., mostly white) residential communities. Latino immigrants often work in south county communities but find less expensive housing in the many working class communities in the northern part of the county (Chavez et al. 1997).

Finally, Orange County has also been one of the areas where anti-immigration movements have found substantial support. In the early 1990s, Ronald Prince, one of the cofounders of the Save Our State (SOS) initiative, was based in Orange County. The SOS initiative was the basis for the 1994 California state initiative known as Proposition 187, the so-called anti-illegal alien initiative and a forerunner of Arizona's 2009 anti-immigration law (McDonnell 1994). Jim Gilchrist lives in Orange County and started the Minutemen Project to express concern with what he perceived as a lack of enforcement of the nation's borders (Delson 2005; Kelly 2005). In sum, the demographics of the county and the local concern for public policy issues surrounding immigration reform make Orange County a particularly apt place to examine issues related to 1.5-generation Latinos.

Survey data were collected between January 4 and January 30, 2006, from 805 Latinos and 396 non-Latino whites (hereafter simply "whites") in Orange County. Latinos were oversampled to account for diversity in generation and immigration status. The Orange County Survey was conducted under the auspices of the Center for Research on Latinos in a Global Society (CRLGS), University of California, Irvine. The research protocol was successfully reviewed by the University of California, Irvine Office of Research Administration Institutional Review Board.[14] Interviewing Service of America conducted the telephone survey, using trained interviewers in both English and Spanish. Interviews were in the interviewee's language of choice. The survey used random-digit dialing on a sample from a database that includes all US directory-published household numbers, both listed and unlisted, combined with a sample that had identified Hispanic markers, such as unique first and last names.[15] Eligible participants were English- or Spanish-speaking men and women, 18 years of age or older, who were not institutionalized and who identified

14. Confirmation from the UC Irvine Office of Research Administration Institutional Review Board was received December 9, 2005 (HS# 2005-4671).

15. Both listed and unlisted numbers were included, avoiding potential bias due to exclusion of households with unlisted numbers (SSI 1990). In addition, telephone survey findings may not be generalizable to families without telephones. In Orange County, however, approximately 94% of Latinos and 99% of whites have telephones (CSCDC 1995). Despite these high proportions, there is still a limitation based on some members of the population without phones, e.g., recent immigrants and the unemployed.

themselves as white (Anglo, Caucasian, non-Hispanic white) or Latino (Hispanic or more specific ethnic identifiers such as Mexican, Mexican American, and Salvadoran). If there was more than one 18 year old in the household, we asked for the one with the closest birthday. The response rate was 70%.

Although "Latino" and "Hispanic" are often used interchangeably, the term "Latino" is used here as a panethnic identifier of people of Latin American descent living in the United States. For the purposes of this analysis, respondents who were born in a Latin American country and/or self-identified as Latino, Hispanic, or a specific Latin American nationality (e.g., Mexican, Salvadoran) were classified as Latino.

Survey questions focused on residence, family, education, work, income, discrimination, immigration status, political engagement, various social and economic experiences, use of medical services, and health. Questions of life stressors were drawn from research on an array of health outcomes and stress (Campos et al. 2007; Dressler 1996; Farley et al. 2005; Wallace and Wallace 2004). Not all questions in the survey are examined here.

Immigration status was assessed through two questions. First, we asked if the respondent was a legal permanent resident of the United States, a naturalized US citizen, or something else (the default category). We then asked if any of the following applied to their immigration status: awarded asylum, awarded Temporary Protected Status, applied for a work permit, applied for permanent residence, applied for political asylum. The default category consisted of those without authorization to be in the United States. As the findings below indicate, unauthorized immigrants differed significantly along a range of socioeconomic variables from legal permanent residents, naturalized citizens, and US-born citizens.

We also conducted 80 in-depth interviews, the majority (72) of which were with individuals of Mexican origin. Most of the in-depth interviews (76) were conducted by the lead author, the rest by the second author. Gonzales's research took place in several sites during three periods of field research in Orange County. The first included volunteering at two community-based organizations in Santa Ana during the 2002–2003 academic year, where he once or twice a week helped out and observed young adults in their natural environments. The fieldwork and the relationships made with key community interviewees helped him to identify initial respondents and use snowball sampling to identify subsequent interviewees (Chavez 1998; Cornelius 1982). The second phase of fieldwork took place from 2004 to 2007, during which he observed respondents in their workplaces, schools, homes, and in community settings. In 2009, he collected additional data and followed up with past respondents. All in-depth interviews were conducted in English.

Interviewees included 1.5-generation young adults who entered the United States without authorization and remain unauthorized, 1.5-generation young adults who entered the United States with visas and became unauthorized due to overstays, and 1.5-generation young adults who were once unauthorized and have since regularized their status (are either lawful permanent residents or naturalized citizens). Interviewees ranged from 20 to 34 years of age and were evenly divided by gender. Interviews ranged in time from 1 hour and 40 minutes to 3 hours and 20 minutes. Interviews were transcribed and coded.

Describing Abject Lives

We examine survey data first as a way of providing general patterns that distinguish 1.5-generation Latino immigrants from their first-generation counterparts and to suggest the contours of their abject status. Of the 805 Latinos surveyed, most (84.7%) were Mexican immigrants or of Mexican origin. There were, however, Salvadoran and other Central American immigrants, some South Americans, and a few immigrants from the Caribbean. Of the Latinos surveyed, 573 (71.2%) were first generation, meaning that they were born in a foreign country and migrated to the United States.[16] Of these, 130 respondents, or 22.7% of the first-generation Latino respondents, were in the 1.5 generation. Most (105, 82%) of the 1.5 interviewees were born in Mexico, with the rest coming in smaller numbers from the same countries mentioned above.

Surveyed 1.5-generation respondents were generally younger (median age 29) than first-generation adult migrants (median age 39), but they had more years of US residence (23 years and 16 years, respectively). The 1.5 generation also tended to have more years of schooling (median 12 years) than their older migrating counterparts (median 9 years), but less than second-generation Latinos (median 13 years) or whites (median 16 years). Income also varied by generation, with only 26% of those who migrated at age 15 or older (1.0 generation) having family income (interviewee's income plus spouse/partner's income, if applicable) of $35,000 or more, compared to 54% of 1.5-generation Latinos ($P < .01$), both of which were less than second-generation Latinos (71%) and whites (79%) in that upper income category. Young Latinos who migrated under age 15 were, compared to older migrants, more likely to speak all or mostly English at home (17.8% and 2.5%, respectively; $P \leq .001$), with friends (31% and 5.2%, respectively, $P \leq .001$), and at work (43.4% and 19%, respectively; $P \leq .001$).

Examining all 1.5-generation Latinos together masks the material conditions of illegality. About a third (32%) of the Latino 1.5-generation interviewees were unauthorized immigrants in the United States compared to 46% of the first generation who migrated at age 15 or older, a statistically significant difference ($P < .01$). Illegality had significant ramifications for all Latino immigrants, and for the 1.5-generation Latinos in particular. For example, undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos were able legally to attend a college or uni-

16. The percentages cited in the discussion are based on the total of 799 Latinos who answered the question.

versity in California, but they were not eligible for government-sponsored financial aid and thus often found meeting the costs of higher education difficult (Rincón 2008). Not surprisingly, given the financial obstacles, only 30.3% of the undocumented 1.5 generation had 13 or more years of schooling, compared to 50% of their legal resident counterparts.

Being undocumented also meant that those educated in the United States could not work legally. Consequently, among Latinos who migrated at a young age but were still unauthorized residents at the time of the interview, only 23.5% had a family income of $35,000 or higher, compared to two-thirds (67.6%) of legally resident 1.5-generation Latinos, a statistically significant difference ($P < .001$).

Living in a condition of illegality also results in beliefs and experiences among Latinos who differ significantly from Latino legal immigrants. Undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos were less likely than legal 1.5-generation Latinos to own their home (13% compared to 70%; $P < .001$), as well as second-generation Latinos (70%) and whites (86%). Compared to legal 1.5-generation Latinos, undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos held less positive beliefs about their quality of life in Orange County (13% compared to 35%; $P < .05$), were less satisfied with their neighborhoods (36% compared to 64%; $P < .05$), more likely to have lost sleep or worried excessively because of neighborhood problems (18% compared to 7%), were more often forced to move because of money problems (15% compared to 2%; $P < .01$), and more often did not have enough food to eat (18% compared to 8%). They were less likely to view police protection as excellent (13% compared to 26%; $P < .05$) and more likely to believe they had been treated unfairly by the police (18% compared to 6%; $P < .05$). These views and experiences indicate the social, material, and psychic costs of illegality and abjectivity.

Illegality places limits on what is possible, especially spatial mobility and engagement in transnational practices (Basch et al. 1994). Although both legal and undocumented Latino immigrants (60% and 67%, respectively) remitted money to a relative or friend in another country, legal 1.5 Latino immigrants were twice as likely as the undocumented 1.5 interviewees (84% compared to 42%; $P < .001$) to have visited their parent's home country in the year before the interview. They were also much more likely (13% compared to 3%) to participate in hometown or state-of-origin organizations associated with their country of origin. Communicating with relatives or friends transnationally was hampered by few undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos (39%) compared to legal 1.5 Latinos (73%, $P < .001$) owning a computer. Among those undocumented 1.5 generation who did have a computer, few (7%) compared to about half (49%, $P < .01$) of legal "1.5ers" used the computer to communicate with a relative or friend in another country.

Illegality also has physical or bodily costs as well. Few of the undocumented 1.5 Latinos had private or government medical insurance compared to their legal counterparts (42% and 71%, respectively; $P < .01$), the sine qua non for access to medical care in the United States. As a consequence, undocumented 1.5-generation interviewees were less likely (51% compared to 78%; $P < .01$) than legal 1.5 Latinos to have sought medical care in the 12 months prior to the interview. Moreover, they were less likely to exercise regularly outside of work or in addition to daily activities (49% compared to 69%; $P < .01$), a pattern ill-suited to maintaining good health.

Abjectivity does not result in complete surrender, or silencing, at least in terms of civic and political engagement. Indeed, perceived threats can, and did, lead to political activity among Latinos surveyed, even those without legal status. This can be shown most clearly in the relation between civic engagement and perceived discrimination.[17]

The survey asked about membership in community, sports, ethnic, and political organizations, and about political activities in the previous 12 months, such as contacting a governmental office to complain about a problem or get help; attending political rallies, meetings, or dinners for a political candidate; taking part in protests; contributing money to political candidates or campaigns; or volunteering time for an organization. About the same proportion of 1.0 (28.2%) and 1.5 (33.6%) generation Latinos surveyed answered yes to one or more of these examples of civic engagement and political participation. However, 31.8% of the 1.5-generation Latinos who were civically and politically engaged also perceive discrimination, compared to 19.2% of the 1.0-generation Latinos. The 1.5-generation Latinos were similar to their US-born counterparts, among whom 30.5% of the civic and politically engaged also perceived discrimination.

When facing perceived discrimination and threats, the 1.5 generation will respond, or resist. The survey was undertaken before the large marches and demonstrations by immigrants and their supporters in the spring of 2006. However, the in-depth interviews below were done during and after the marches, and as we will note, the fact that most of the interviewees participated in the marches reflects the survey's findings of civic and political engagement when faced with threats.

As these survey findings suggest, illegality significantly influences the daily experiences of those living in that condition, raising a number of questions. In what ways do 1.5-generation Latinos internalize their experiences? How do they make sense of the biopolitics that constitute their subjective understandings of the world? What practices have emerged to confront

17. When asked if they felt as if someone was showing prejudice toward them or was discriminating against them because of their race or ethnicity in the past year, 13.1% of older migrating Latinos (the 1.0 generation) said yes, compared to 21.7% of the 1.5-generation Latinos and 24.8% of US-born Latinos. For the 1.0- and 1.5-generation Latinos, there was not a significant difference by immigration status, although the 1.5ers (and the second generation) were more likely to perceive discrimination in school, whereas the 1.0 generation were more likely to believe they faced discrimination in the workplace and when trying to find an apartment or house.

and resist a condition of abjectivity? The ethnographic aspects of our study help us to answer these questions.

"Awakening to a Nightmare"

In-depth interviews indicate that as undocumented adolescents move into adulthood, the technologies of biopolitics and the practices of governmentality become achingly apparent in their lives. They come face-to-face with illegality, a condition that they had been partially protected from by their age and by their parents. But as they began to anticipate the rites of passage common to adolescents and young adults in the United States, reality quickly entangled them. Like other youth, they desired to drive a car, work, vote, and join friends in social activities where a state-issued identification was required. However, each of these activities requires some form of state-issued identification, typically a driver's license or Social Security card, which are easy to get if one is a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States. For those living in a condition of illegality, however, attempting to acquire such identification exposes them to government practices of control, surveillance, and punishment.

Thus, adolescence is a period of great stress and anxiety for undocumented youth (Coutin 2007, 2008). As children, most of them were not required to produce identification. It is only when they attempted to assert their position in the American mainstream that the importance of identification became essential. This was a defining moment, a challenge to their taken-for-granted identity and sense of belonging. This often came as a surprise to many who were unaware of their unauthorized immigration status or its significance.[18] As Julian, who has been in the United States since age 4, described it, "It was like awakening to a nightmare." Respondents grew into adolescence and adulthood steeped in US culture, and, because their unauthorized status did not pose too many restrictions as they grew up, many gave little thought to their legal status. In fact, many believed themselves to be just like their US-born peers.

Sergio was 16 years old when he discovered his unauthorized status. He had saved up money for over 2 years from various side jobs—a paper route and weekend job helping his father at a construction site—in order to buy his first car. But, as he said, "I was told at the DMV that I needed a Social [Security number]. So I went home and my mom told me I didn't have one. I couldn't believe it. What was I going to tell my friends? I had been all 'I'm gonna get my car before all of you.' But I couldn't. How could I tell them now I can't drive? I can't get my license. It really messed me up."

As a child, Sergio was not required to produce his Social Security number and, as a result, his early life was not defined by his legal status. However, the attempt to get a driver's license forced him to confront the implications of not having legal status.

The sudden awareness of their abject social status was often jarring and traumatic. Cesar's case exemplifies. He migrated to the United States from Mexico City as a child with his mother and brother, and his father followed a few months later. His father had completed 2 years of college in Mexico, and his mother up to the sixth grade, but both emphasized education for Cesar. Cesar excelled academically, taking honors and advanced placement classes, and was involved in student government, clubs, and sports. He wanted to pursue a career in pharmaceutical sciences. Upon graduation, he was accepted to seven universities. But problems suddenly arose:

> Once you get the acceptance letter, then you get sent a letter asking for residency. You know, proof of residency. And so, that's when reality struck, and that was around the second semester [senior year] of high school. All my friends were accepted [to college], making plans. That's when I was, I got a little bit depressed. I got a little bit frustrated. And even more so because I learned that I couldn't go to any of the schools I had gotten accepted to. I had to go the junior college route.

At that time, before Assembly Bill 540, Cesar would have had to pay nonresident tuition, at 3–5 times the cost of in-state tuition, to attend a public college or university in California. Without the possibility of student loans, his family could not afford it. Cesar's depression lasted quite awhile. He could not understand how the value of hard work and his accomplishments could suddenly be so meaningless. He felt as though he was being punished: "I worked so hard, junior college was way below my standards."

Problems of Everyday Living

After growing up in the United States, undocumented young adults are forced to confront the consequences of illegality and must learn to live as an "illegal."[19] Whether the respondents were trying to move on to college, find jobs, travel, or open bank accounts, awareness of their status meant their plans had to be adjusted or even abandoned.

The sudden and dramatic changes that accompanied the awareness of the condition of illegality altered the lives of undocumented young adults in profound ways as they began to recognize the constraints on their lives. Becoming aware of the condition of illegality during adolescence and confronting its challenges was not a singular or uniform experience. Some respondents mitigated the constraints of their lack of citizenship status by continuing their education with private scholarships to attend college, a few with family financial support. Others, however, became despondent as their

18. For a more extensive examination of the tension between acculturation, transitioning to late adolescence and early adulthood, and illegality, or the transition to illegality, see Gonzales (2008*a*, 2011).

19. See also Chavez (1998, chap. 9).

lives became narrowly circumscribed.[20] Rather than going to college, they had to try their luck in the low-skilled labor market, alongside adult migrants, many of whom were also without immigration documents. Some experienced trouble with the law, others early childbearing.

Many experienced a sense of hopelessness as they looked ahead to an uncertain future. Miguel was 4 years old when he was brought to the United States from Jalisco, Mexico. He believed during most of high school that he had his whole future laid out, but when his mother alerted him to the reality of his nonlegal status, everything was "turned upside down." As a result, his school attendance faltered and his grades fell. Others also recounted how their grades declined and their optimism about the future fell during their last year or two of high school.

Those who managed to attend college were able to ameliorate the daily stresses of illegality. It also allowed them to continue their education and the hope that they would find a way to become legal residents. As students, they would also reduce the risk of run-ins with police or immigration officials. As a result, many respondents felt less stress while on college campuses. However, driving to and from college increased that risk. Irene, a 22-year-old who came from Guerrero at age 6, was returning from classes at a California state university when she was pulled over by a police officer less than six blocks from her house and had to call her father to pick her up. This was an awakening for her because she felt a false sense of safety while in school, but away from college she was, in her words, "just another Mexican."

For 1.5-generation undocumented Latinos, like Irene, working and going to college meant they had to find a way to get there, and in Southern California, public transportation is often difficult and slow. Many who chose to take the bus described excruciatingly long commutes from Orange County to Los Angeles. Those who drove to work ran the risk of being stopped by the police for some minor infraction. Luis, a 26-year-old from Jalisco who is now enrolled in graduate studies, noted that driving meant that he had to "try his luck in the gauntlet everyday." The dangers associated with driving caused many to pay close attention to traffic laws. They made sure to always drive under the speed limit and to avoid certain areas, such as those where immigration officials were known to have set up checkpoints to stop drivers and check for immigration documents. Interviewees spoke of avoiding certain cities in Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino counties where local police have been deputized as immigration agents.

Even a minor traffic violation or accident can throw their lives into peril. Luz came to the United States from El Salvador when she was 2 years old. When the police stopped her for a minor violation, Luz and her children were left on the street after her car was towed away.

> I was coming from an appointment, and my son took off his seatbelt in the tantrum that he was throwing. And the cop passed by us and saw him without a seatbelt. And I couldn't pull aside to put his seatbelt back on because it was traffic time, and we were like in the middle of the road, so it was like "ahhh." The cop stopped me, and he gave me a ticket for not having a license and they took the car.

For most people, driving without a license would have resulted in a traffic ticket, but Luz also did not have automobile insurance. She and her four children were left on the sidewalk near a busy intersection, without their car and miles away from home. This incident triggered a fear in Luz for not only her own safety, but also that of her children. It also left a huge impression on her, as she became acutely aware that at any moment her life could change. As a result, Luz is fearful of everyday situations that could result in contact with the authorities.

Taking buses presented other risks. Interviewees said they stopped taking the bus in Santa Ana after reports that immigration agents were seen at the downtown bus station. Sonny, who was 8 when he came from Michoacan, Mexico, and left high school in tenth grade, told us about his cousin being stopped at a bus stop near Huntington Beach. The cousin was waiting with his girlfriend at a bus stop when local police stopped him and asked for his papers. When he was unable to produce them, they drove him all the way to Tijuana and dropped him off. At the time of the interview with Sonny, his cousin had been in Mexico for over a year. His family had been unable to come up with sufficient funds to bring him back to the United States. With no money on him, and no familiarity with Tijuana, he had a difficult time.

As the reality of the respondents' authorized immigration status became oppressively apparent, stories, news reports, and firsthand experiences served to set a climate of fear. Many interviewees told of changing their behavior patterns. A common experience among most was the continual looking over their shoulders. Especially when driving, many feared being pulled over by police. They made sure to always drive under the speed limit and obey traffic laws, in an almost exaggerated manner. They also learned to avoid certain areas with high levels of police activity. After an immigration raid in their apartment complex, Ramon and his girlfriend Maria, who were both undocumented and without high school diplomas, began spending most of their nonworking time locked up in their apartment. Maria, age 26, was not working at the time of our interview, so as to take care of their two children at home. She said that while she was bored at home, "at least I don't have to worry about what's going to happen to me or the kids." Maria and Ramon, who was 27, worry about what would happen if one of them were deported, as Maria said: "My biggest fear is our kids. I mean, what's going to happen if both of us get picked up and deported? What's

20. For a more in-depth discussion of the ways in which familial, institutional, and community mediators differently shaped respondents' trajectories, see Gonzales (2010, 2011).

going to happen to the kids? We worry a lot about that. About what's going to happen. I can't imagine what I'd do if something happened. It's scary. It's really scary."

Ramon related that Maria had been sick because of stress. Neither of them has medical insurance, and, with only Ramon working and not making enough some months to cover all of their expenses, they have avoided going to the doctor to check on Maria's condition. Others in our study developed similar physical manifestations of stress. Misto, a 22-year-old who came to the United States from Guerrero when he was 5, was forced to bypass college for work. He developed an ulcer as a result of his constant worry. Andrea, a college graduate who had been in the United States since she was 8, had to miss several days of work and school after experiencing chronic fatigue and recurrent headaches that sent her on regular trips to the doctor. Similarly, Grace, who was enrolled at the University of California at the time of her interview, has had to miss school and work because, "sometimes I can't even get out of bed."

Living on Hold

Undocumented 1.5-generation Latinos that have succeeded academically may desire greater levels of inclusion for themselves but are hampered by their illegality. Esperanza, whose story began this article, excelled academically in her Anaheim high school and was heavily involved in extracurricular activities, including the school's band. As she said, "The whole band experience and community service . . . makes you so proud of your school and you represent it no matter what. It makes you feel so proud of them." She completed a BA from a University of California campus and would someday like to pursue a PhD or law degree. At the time of the interview, however, she was working and trying to survive as an undocumented immigrant. Esperanza spoke of how her life is constrained because of her unauthorized status:

> I know I can do so much more, but I can't because I can't live wherever. I can't choose where I live. I can't choose where I work. And the worst thing is that I can't choose my friends. In high school I was able to do that. I can't anymore. I can't even hang out with my high school friends anymore and that hurts a lot. Yeah, they want to do grown up stuff. I can't do anything that is 18 and over. I can't do anything. I can only hang out where little kids hang out. I can't hang out with them. I can't travel with them. I can't go out to dinner with them. I can't go to Vegas with them. If I want to go to a bar, I don't even have a drink. If they want to go to San Diego, if they want to go visits museums down there, if they want to go to Sea World, I can't go with them. I can't go to Los Angeles. I can't go to any clubs in L.A. I can't go to any clubs in L.A. because after the marches [in the Spring of 2006] they don't accept *matrículas* [identification provided by the Mexican government] anywhere.[21]

21. For more on *matrículas*, see Varsanyi (2007).

Esperanza's high school friends are doing well. Some have their own band programs, one is a city planner, others are moving ahead in business-related jobs or are teachers. As Esperanza notes: "They have their degrees and they are working at jobs they saw themselves working at. . . . They are following their dreams." Esperanza, on the other hand, moves from one low-paying job to another. She typically either finds work where employers do not ask for identification or stays until identification becomes an issue. She has held various jobs—minor office work as a receptionist and secretary, factory work stuffing envelopes, and in fast food restaurants—but she runs the risk of not getting paid when the issue of identification surfaces, which has previously happened. Sometimes she works for cash. Esperanza laments the humiliations she has had to endure as a person who is educated, speaks English, and, from the perspective of the recent immigrants she works with, appears to "have it easy" because she grew up in US culture. Alas, as a strategy for survival, on job applications she omits her university degree, even though she views the degree as her greatest accomplishment.

> So I tell them that I just dropped out of high school. But eventually they are going, it is going to come out, I know it. The people [working] at those places, like the cooks and the cashiers, they are either really young people, and I feel really old, like what am I doing there if they are all like 16, 17 years old, those who start working when they are very young. The others are like *señoras* who are 35 and have little kids and they know they dropped out of school, but because they have little kids they are still working at the restaurant. Thinking about that, it makes me feel so fucking stupid. And like the factories, too, because they ask me, "*Que estas haciendo aquí?* [What are you doing here?] You can speak English. You graduated from high school. You can work anywhere." They don't stop bugging me. (Quoted in Gonzales 2011:615)

In high school, before the reality of her abject status set in, Esperanza looked down on the types of jobs she now takes. Then she reconciled the work as temporary, not career work, until she could find a way to become a legal resident. She told herself there were some jobs she would not do—cleaning toilets, mopping floors—but her views are slowing changing. "I just need a job. It's become about survival. If it used to be a choice, it is not a choice anymore. I am to the point where yes, I will clean somebody's home. I will take care of them. I will clean up somebody's saliva. More and more it is getting to the point where I don't care."[22]

Although Esperanza finds it difficult to make plans for the future, she still yearns for legal residency and to hold a job where she can put her education to use. Although she recognizes the desperate conditions under which she is living,

22. This disdain for jobs held by their immigrant parents is common among US-born and raised children, as Kasinitz et al. (2008:173–204) found among the second generation in their extensive New York study.

she has not given up all hope. She volunteers for an organization promoting passage of the DREAM Act, which would provide 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants like her a path to citizenship.

Cesar, who was introduced earlier, had similar feelings. After his initial despair, he became involved in student government and once again excelled academically. He transferred to UCLA, which was made possible by his parents, especially his mother, working extra hours and saving specifically for Cesar's tuition. Cesar also worked to pay tuition. Cesar graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles, and now dreams of applying to medical school and opening a nonprofit clinic. As Cesar said, "I decided about a year ago that I wasn't going to let my situation [being undocumented] handle me anymore. When I used to think about my situation, it was kind of like a block. I was like "Oh, no. I can't apply to med school. I can't do this. I can't do that."

Because he is not a legal resident and cannot work legally, Cesar works as a tutor, helping young people in the sciences. His students have included two high school valedictorians. Cesar reflected on his illegal status, which he said "defined who we are." Rather than give up, Cesar said he "pushed back" and continued his education and hoped for the day he can become a legal resident and put his education to use. For Cesar, being undocumented forced him to fight back, to develop self-confidence, and motivated him to achieve educationally. Cesar is aware of the self-disciplining caused by his abject status: "You put a positive spin onto this negative reality that you live in. It's kind of like, you know, when you're a little kid and you get scolded and they tell you to go to your room. It's like, okay, I've learned my lesson now. I've learned that I have to be humble. I learned that you have to work hard for what you need to work hard for. So, now, it's time for it to go away."

As these last examples suggest, for some adolescents and young adult undocumented immigrants, the condition of illegality can be paralyzing, resulting in a lack of mobility along multiple dimensions: educational, economic, and physical. Indeed, such feelings of paralysis, and the dangers associated with undocumented status, kept many respondents in a state of limbo.

For example, Dora, a 26-year-old from Zacatecas who has lived in Santa Ana since she migrated with her family at age 8, has held only one full-time job and one a part-time job in her entire life. At the time of her interview, she was not working because of a fear of getting caught. However, she was living at home with her parents and other siblings who work. While she wants to contribute to household expenses, she is not required to do so. Such minimal expectations allow her to avoid situations that could put her face-to-face with the law. However, they also place many aspects of her life on hold.

For many of our respondents, waiting for the possibility of acquiring legal permanent residency status is full of uncertainty, and thus many refrain from making investments in their futures. Luz has experienced unsuccessful attempts at sponsorship by her mother and husband. Her hopes for a change in immigration status have turned into disappointment, as she is stuck in limbo, trying to make the most of her abject situation. At 22 when we first met, Luz was raising three children by herself. Her husband of 8 years was incarcerated and was not expected to be released anytime soon. Because he was convicted of a crime as a noncitizen, his legal permanent residency was revoked, and he faced deportation charges upon the completion of his served jail time. As Luz said, "If you get deported or something, everything that you worked for is going to be gone."

Wasted Lives

Many young undocumented immigrants who did not move on to college had to work in order to contribute to their families or meet their own needs. After high school, life became saturated by legal limitations and barriers caused by a lack of legal residency. Biopolitics penetrated our interviewees' behavior such that they constantly thought about ways to avoid immigration officials, police, and other authorities. They found themselves constantly looking over their shoulders, avoiding potentially dangerous situations and spending much of their time worrying. The stress of abjectivity was pronounced in their lives. The longer the time interviewees were out of school, the greater effect the condition of illegality had on their aspirations and expectations, the more biopolitics worked on their very being.

Take Pedro, for example. He came to the United States from Guatemala when he was 6 years old. Already, at 26, Pedro's aspirations have been derailed by his unauthorized status and a police record. After completing a day-labor job, the employer gave Pedro a check for his work. When Pedro tried to cash the check, the teller at the local currency exchange called Pedro's employer to verify the check's legitimacy. The employer denied writing the check, and the police were called. The police found different sets of identification on Pedro and took him to jail. He served over a month in prison and was serving a 3-year probation sentence when interviewed. Pedro currently lives with his childhood friends in a mobile home and does odd jobs to pay rent for his room.

Pedro has few aspirations other than living in a mobile home and does not see his life changing for more than 10 years. Pedro's outlook, however, is not unique. Other interviewees were similarly hesitant when it came to thinking about their futures. The opaqueness with which they viewed the future stemmed from the cumulative effects of illegality and the seemingly insurmountable number of barriers framing their lives.

Fear of detection and deportation sometimes render undocumented young adults immobile and afraid to invest time, money, or hopes in their future. Living their lives in a narrowly circumscribed present, several of these young men and women let go of aspirations to have anything more. When Sergio and his brother were in a car accident with another driver, the already unfortunate situation took on a magnified

level of stress. Although they were not in the wrong, neither of them had a driver's license or insurance. Because of their illegality, they were left vulnerable and having to pay for the damages out of their own pockets. After the accident, Sergio bought a beat-up 1987 Chevy Cavalier for which he paid $900 because, he said, he could not buy a good car on his own. He figures that if he gets caught and has the car towed, he will lose only $900.

Sergio was 21 years old when interviewed. He occasionally worked on the weekends, taking jobs that hired for the day or weekend, but stayed away from anything resembling ongoing or permanent employment and did not drive.

> I've been offered jobs, but the thing is that it messes me up. There's ways around it but let's say, okay, there's a job I've been offered, if I get it, I have to buy fake papers. If I get caught with fake papers, that's a federal offense so I'll be screwed, and, I mean, I'm closer than I've ever been to getting my papers. I don't want to mess it up with something like that so I can't get it later on.

Sergio chose to take the safe route in hopes of someday being able to work freely without worry. He did not want to jeopardize his chances by getting caught with illicit citizenship papers. Nevertheless, his frustration grew with the years he has had to wait. At the time, Sergio indicated that he was frustrated and felt stuck in one place. "When you don't have papers you're not really motivated . . . you can't go anywhere." Three years later his girlfriend was pregnant with his child, and he felt as though he needed to provide financial support to his new family. He took a full-time job at a factory and carpooled with a coworker, a Caucasian male and former skinhead.

One evening after work, local police pulled them over and searched his coworker's vehicle. In addition to finding a small amount of drugs in the car, they also found a homemade explosive device. Sergio was charged as an accomplice to a federal crime and ordered to serve 3 years in prison. In addition to serving prison time, Sergio was to be deported.

Like Pedro and Sergio, Luz dropped out of school at an early age. Now, with few options, she works as a cashier at a Greek-owned hamburger restaurant where she makes minimum wage and is subjected to ongoing verbal harassment by her racist employer. She sees her status as the most salient barrier to success.

> If I had the papers I wouldn't be in the situation that I am, because I would fight for what I want. . . . Sometimes there's people that just want the papers, you know, and they don't do anything, and they're just like at home, whatever. But I want my papers to get ahead, and I think a lot of people do, too, so I could work here, so I could get something.

Identity

The condition of illegality not only constrains daily life, but can leave an indelible imprint on identity. Catarina, 21 years old, came to the United States when she was 8 years old. Her father had come to the United States before Catarina and acquired legal permanent residency through the legalization program of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act. Catarina's mother joined her husband, who was working as a gardener, in Santa Ana, California, where much of his family had preceded him and from whom they were able to get a great deal of help and support. Catarina's mother, although undocumented, worked as a housekeeper. When she became pregnant, she returned to Mexico to deliver Catarina because delivery was cheaper there, and she was not yet used to life in Santa Ana. Because of her family's fateful decision, Catarina was not born in the United States and was not a citizen when she came back to the United States at age 8. Catarina's undocumented status has plagued her pursuits at education and has influenced her sense of identity.

Catarina finished high school with a 4.0 GPA but knew she could not attend the University of California because, at that time, undocumented students would have to pay nonresident tuition, thousands of dollars more than regular tuition. Consequently, she went to community college and later transferred to a University of California campus. By this time, California law had changed as a result of Assembly Bill (AB) 540 so that students like Catarina could attend the university and pay in-state tuition, with the proviso that they could not receive financial aid. When she heard AB 540 passed, Catarina said, "I cried, I cried. I was with my dad in my living room. My sister follows a lot of the legal stuff, and we had helped sign stuff to send to Governor Davis. We were involved, I was involved in student government in my community college, and it was like finally something, justice."

At the time of the interview, Catarina was finishing her senior year at the university, had a 3.9 GPA, and intended to apply to graduate school. Her father had acquired US citizenship and had sponsored his wife and children for legal residence, which Catarina was now in the process of obtaining.

Catarina identifies herself as Mexican. She does so because she is an immigrant and not a Chicana or Mexican American, which she associates with being US-born. But she also recognizes that society has pushed her toward emphasizing Mexican as an identity. For Catarina, her experiences as an undocumented immigrant have influenced her identity. Because she has not had the rights and privileges that come with being US-born and being a citizen, Catarina says she does not "think like a Mexican-American." As she said,

> Having the barriers that I had, or not having all the opportunities that I see that a lot of the students have, and they might not be taking advantage of them for different reasons. I know I'm no one to criticize their decisions, but I think that's what really makes me consider myself a Mexican. I am an immigrant, immigrant Mexican. . . . You know you are not [American] because society keeps telling you that you're not. You don't have the opportunities that a Mexican American has, because you don't have the social security. So you have to make the decision. I don't fit in

> here. They don't want me in here. Then I fit there, with Mexicans. . . . I think if you have obstacles to integrating, one, they don't want you to integrate. Obviously, they have the obstacles for you not to integrate, so you get to the point where you know what, I don't want to integrate, whether you will eventually want me to integrate for any reason, I am no longer willing to integrate.

Despite her frustration with the obstacles she has faced, Catarina desires US citizenship because of the opportunities and rights it imparts. As she put it, "You need it [citizenship] in order to move on. If I am going to work hard, why not get the benefits?" Catarina also realizes that even though she identifies as Mexican, she is also American in many ways and that living in the United States for most of her life has shaped her sense of self and made her life different from if she had stayed in Mexico. Concerning what it means to be American, she said,

> It can mean different things. It can mean being acculturated into American culture. It can mean having loyalty for America, for example, after September 11, I felt American. And it's amazing because regardless of political inequalities, I think of my life and what would it have been if I had not been here. And here I am. There are obstacles, but it's better. It's better here even with the inequalities. I guess it's human nature. We just want something better.

Abjectivity as a Way of Life

As the comments of the 1.5-generation undocumented Latinos testify, they are not living the lives they imagined for themselves. They grew up in US society and culture. The significant part of their education was in the United States, and, like other youth, they were for the most part inculcated in the values, desires, drives, ethics, and cultural practices of US youth. This is not to say that they abandoned, or did not carry around with them, cultural beliefs and practices of their countries of birth. They did, after all, live within families where they and their parents were immigrants. But that does not diminish the fact of lives lived in the United States, where they also learned about educational expectations, career goals, and the rites of passage so eagerly awaited by adolescents and young adults. However, even with the internalization of much of the culture of the larger society, their lack of immigration status places them closer to the structural position of undocumented immigrants who came as adults. It was also in this context that illegality and abject status came to frame their lives at a critical stage in their lives, the moment when they are making plans for their future and their move from the security of home to increasing engagement with the larger society.

The subjective experience of an abject status as related to illegality intersects harshly with issues of the economy, national policy, and power. During the early years of their lives, they became incorporated into the nation through their social relationships and public school experiences. Then, as they became aware of their lack of legal residency, they felt cast out, forced to live in the world as illegal subjects. They experienced a trauma of sorts, one that destabilized their sense of self. They were forced to come to terms with what the condition of illegality meant for their lives and their futures. Their bodies are the targets of disciplinary practices—biopolitics—which are designed to constrict their mobility and to construct subjective understanding of their lives as undocumented immigrants. But because their practices and subjective experiences were also often similar to those which constitute belonging among those born in the United States, our interviewees desired inclusion, to be considered as having qualified lives, as subjects in and of the nation.

The voices heard here indicate bitter lessons learned. With the awakening reality of their abject status as socially constituted noncitizens, these young people came to realize they were not like their peers. Even though they may have come to believe the civic lessons so essential to citizenship and to hold dear the values driving the American Dream, the illegality that defined their abject status left them with a clear sense of their difference. As noncitizens, they were full of discardable potential. No matter how hard they worked or how they self-disciplined, applied themselves, and self-engineered their very beings, they were to remain on the sidelines, waiting, leading abject lives on the margins of society, desiring government documentation of their presence. Knowing they have more to offer society and themselves, they wait for the possibility that future changes to immigration laws would someday ameliorate their condition. Some wilted under such pressure, while others resisted, pursued education and training, struggled to survive economically, contributed to organizations working to change the nation's immigration laws, and maintained hope in a future where they would be allowed full participation in society. For example, of the 76 in-depth interviews conducted during or after the immigrant marches of 2006, 65 had participated in at least one march.[23] This includes all but one of the interviewees quoted in this paper. Another 42 of the in-depth interviewees, including Catarina, Cesar, Misto, Grace, Esperanza, and Miguel, have contributed their time to organizations working to promote passage of the DREAM Act.

We interpret these acts of resistance as acts of cultural citizenship, which Flores and Benmayor (1997:15) define as a broad range of activities that disadvantaged groups use to claim space and rights in society. However, their lives are narrowly circumscribed by a multitude of regulations that protect citizens and ensure the persistence of an abject population against which citizens are defined, such as policies regarding immigration, detention, deportation, access to social services, medical care, driver's licenses, Social Security

23. For an example of second-generation Mexican American youth in San Diego, California, and their participation in the marches of 2006, see Getrich (2008).

cards, bank accounts, work authorization, and many other micropractices of control. Despite, or even because of, these constraints on their lives, many of the young people examined here assert their cultural citizenship through their political activities and by continuing their education.[24] These acts blur the boundaries between objects and subjects of political power and are important forms of resistance to the condition of abjectivity that informs and frames their lives.

Finally, although 1.5-generation undocumented Latinos engage in both self-disciplining and resistance, their full integration into society is on hold. Their fates—whether they will continue living in a state of illegality, be allowed to become legal permanent residents, or be deported—are unknown to them. In the meantime, there is the suffering that goes along with the contradictions of being raised in a society that finds you discardable. Focusing on abjectivity among the undocumented 1.5 generation draws our attention to the practices of power that help construct the abject, such as laws targeting immigrants. But by no means is abjectivity limited in its applicability. There is much to be learned about the subjective understanding of living in an abject status among various individuals and groups who find themselves relegated to such a status.

By way of a postscript, young undocumented Latinos continue to have their fates and hopes raised and dampened by public policies and polarized political discourse. Under President Obama, the threat of deportation for undocumented immigrants actually increased. In 2009, for example, 387,790 people were deported, a 5% increase over 2008, the last year under George W. Bush's administration (Medrano 2010). In addition, the federal Secure Communities program, which works in cooperation with local police to locate undocumented immigrants, received criticism for deporting immigrants with minor offenses and for splitting apart families (Preston 2011*a*). Then, on July 26, 2011, Representative Luis Gutierrez (Illinois) was arrested for protesting, outside the White House, the one millionth deportation by the Obama administration, about half the number deported over 8 years under George W. Bush (DHS 2011:95). However, in a dramatic change in policy, the Obama administration, in August 2011, began reviewing all deportation cases in order to separate criminals from noncriminals. Those who have not been convicted of a crime would possibly receive a suspension of deportation and be allowed stay, and would also possibly be able to apply for work permits (Preston 2011*b*). This policy has raised the hopes of many. As one 21-year-old undocumented student who was brought to the United States as a boy and whose mother is facing deportation put it: "It makes me happy and hopeful. I hope they go through my mother's case, stop her deportation and, if possible, get her a work permit" (Goffard et al. 2011). While possibly reducing the risk of deportation for some of the undocumented 1.5 generation, it does not solve the problem of their lack of citizenship—rather, it creates another subclass of individuals living in limbo. The new deportation policy does not provide undocumented immigrants with a path to citizenship, which is something only Congress can do. Until Congress acts, the young people examined here will continue to live with uncertain futures.

24. For more on cultural and social citizenship, see Dwyer (2004); Ong (1996); Rosaldo (1997); Sassen (2003); Schiller and Caglar (2008); Stephen (2003).

Comments

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In their timely and engaging piece, Roberto G. Gonzales and Leo R. Chavez argue that abjectivity manifests in particular forms in today's global milieu, increasingly converging with the production of "illegality" as the state labels and orders immigrants. The authors underscore the urgency for ethnographic perspective on the issue and are to be commended for providing a view of immigrant youth's lives through the lens of abjectivity. I was struck by how this important work might be extended to diverse experiences of illegality, and so I focus my comments on the potential for such an endeavor. As Judith Butler (2004:151) asserts, the task of cultural criticism is "to return us to the human . . . in its frailty"—Gonzales and Chavez do precisely that, countering stigmatizing discourse on immigration that characterizes the current moment.

By outlining the experiences of "1.5-generation" immigrants—defined by the authors as those who migrate before the age of 15—this work points to ways to theorize within but also beyond the categories. There are limitations to categories of age and generation: for example, how are we to conceptualize migrants who came at 16, or as adults, and have lived here for decades? I have grappled with these questions in my own work. While the situations of young people can and should be differentiated in certain contexts, delineating the categories can be difficult, and such analysis may detract from the ways that abjectivity is experienced by all people living in the United States without authorization, regardless of age or migration trajectory. Recent legislation in Alabama, with its proposal for increased surveillance in schools and other community spaces, illustrates how abjectivity can extend in both directions, affecting adults and very young children. Similarly, the authors mention that people of color and so-called anchor babies are also characterized as abject; the abjectivity of the undocumented 1.5 generation may not be fundamentally different. Indeed, US citizens in mixed-status families and relationships are also "living in ab-

jection," as they witness and endure the "nightmare" of parents, siblings, and partners. Such abjectivity is pervasive, and arguably of a kind.

The authors' analysis aptly situates the production of abjectivity within the nation-state, while also raising questions about how this condition is constituted transnationally. For those cast off, expelled, or thrown aside, another space is understood, be it geographic locale, national membership, or imagined homeland. Although undocumented youth may have no recollection of their country of origin, their exclusion is enacted spatially and defined by connections, or perceived connections, to the other place (e.g., Boehm 2011; Coutin 2000*a*, 2007; De Genova 2005; Zilberg 2004). Presence and absence, belonging or not—these experiences rely on the construct of somewhere else and reveal how subjectivity and abjectivity are created across borders. Research in both (or multiple) places, conceptually and through transnational fieldwork, can further elucidate the workings and effects of abjectivity.

In particular, the transnationality of abjectivity might be studied through a focus on deportability and its end, deportation—what Gonzales and Chavez rightly term the "ultimate exclusionary act." Among unauthorized immigrants, deportation is the final swing of abjectivity, if not its defining characteristic, a casting out with irreversible effects. To understand abjectivity's reach, studies of illegality within nations could fruitfully link to research that traces deportation through "an anthropology of removal" (Peutz 2006). The fact that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sweeps have recently targeted deportees who have returned and are again living in the United States (US ICE 2011) highlights how "deportee" is a status itself on the margins of abjectivity. Those who are formally expelled from the nation are immutably marked "alien," a position that reveals much about the inescapability of abjectivity when actualized through deportation.

While there are few chances for undocumented immigrant youth to escape their condition, the authors show how one out may be the contradiction that defines the lives of these young people. Despite lives labeled "discardable," undocumented migrant youth are anything but. This is one of the article's most significant contributions: from despair comes unexpected activism. Useful here is Peter Nyers's (2003:1072–1073) concept of "abject cosmopolitanism"—the emergent political practices of immigrants through which they directly challenge their exclusion from the nation. In their efforts to pass the DREAM Act and to contest "illegality" as they articulate a civil rights agenda for the twenty-first century, the young people described by Gonzales and Chavez embody "the possibility of change," the prospect of another path. The condition of abjectivity, then, is never absolute. Spaces of possibility emerge from shifting ground (e.g., Bhabha 1994; Tsing 2005). As this compelling piece reminds us, it may be the very instability and unpredictability of abjectivity that is "the salvation of a backfire" (Derrida 1993:31). We can only hope that this is indeed the case.

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The United States is paralyzed in its efforts at immigration reform. As with many other problems that the country faces, the battle lines are starkly and rigidly drawn, particularly with respect to what to do about the large number (roughly 11 million) of undocumented immigrants who are living and working in the United States. One dimension of the stalemate is the inability to pass the DREAM Act, a piece of legislation first introduced in 2001 and again in May 2011. The DREAM Act would provide children who were brought to this country by their parents when they were very young (the so-called 1.5 generation) and raised in the United States with the opportunity to receive temporary permanent residency as long as they are of good moral character, have lived in the United States for at least 5 years, and have successfully completed high school. The legislation would put them on a path to legal status and citizenship, predicated on completing some higher education and/or military service. While some politicians are sympathetic to this cause, arguing that these young people are just what we want as future citizens, others cannot get beyond their illegal status and the mantra of "no more amnesty." They refuse to consider that coming to the United States without papers was not a decision made by these young people and that Mexico (or El Salvador, Guatemala, or some other Latin American country) is not their home. These young people are, Gonzales and Chavez argue, abjected; that is, cast off, degraded, rendered as other, and deemed worthy only of expulsion from American society and the American body politic. Gonzales and Chavez, drawing on survey and interview data with Latinos in Orange County, California, explore the subjective experience of abject status. How do young people cope with the denial of any right to belong? How does illegality constrain them in their daily lives? Does it immobilize them, or are there ways in which they act to resist abjectivity?

The most damaging dimension of abject status for 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants is that they are rendered to a permanent underclass. This is most apparent in the differences that Gonzales and Chavez draw between Latino legal and illegal immigrants—in home ownership, family income, levels of education, attitudes toward their neighborhood and the police, participation in hometown organizations, and in mental and physical health. "Illegality," these authors write, "places limits on what is possible." One cannot overemphasize how hypocritical this is in a country that constructs itself as a land of endless possibilities and opportunities. Indeed, it is these dimensions of America that draw immigrants, legal and undocumented. And how tragic the

contradiction is for those of the 1.5 generation in particular; they grow up with little awareness of the brick wall they will confront as they mature to adulthood. To use the words of one of the research participants in Gonzales and Chavez's study, they "awake to a nightmare." At every turn, their lives are regulated and their freedoms and choices are curtailed. They live in permanent limbo while policy makers remain indecisive about finding solutions in the form of true and humane immigration reform. And yet in this situation of limbo and abjectivity, Gonzales and Chavez also find some evidence of resistance—in public actions that can come with high risk, or in pursuing opportunities that will situate them well when the hoped-for reforms finally come.

This article makes several important contributions. First, it clarifies and refines the concept of abjectivity as applied to the study of immigration. Second, building on the ideas of Foucault, it advances our understanding of the multiple ways in which the nation-state enters into, surveils, disciplines, and directs the lives of those who reside within its borders, citizens and noncitizens alike. Third, it implicates the United States itself in the production of 11 million "illegals" as well as of people who identify more with Mexico than they do with the United States—precisely because they are abjectified and denied the right to belong. Fourth, as a contribution to public anthropology, it puts a human face on the illegals. The more that anthropology can do to introduce the stories of the undocumented into American public consciousness the better. As we publish in the pages of our scholarly journals, we must also engage the civic sphere as interlocutors for those who are abjected and hence denied their own voice.

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In this paper, Roberto Gonzales and Leo Chavez detail the experiences of undocumented 1.5-generation youth who, for reasons that are difficult for them to fathom, are "discardable potential." As schoolchildren, these youth undergo the integrative effects of public institutions only to later find themselves rejected by the society for which these institutions prepared them. As Gonzales and Chavez's material demonstrates, such rejection is deeply traumatizing. When they are denied access to jobs, education, and mobility, these youth become someone they did not know they were and have to struggle to remain connected to their former selves. According to the authors, some succeed through activism on behalf of immigrants' rights, delaying their entry into the job market, or accepting low-wage employment but defining it as temporary. Others lose this thread, often for reasons beyond their control. In such cases, abjectivity may become a permanent condition, recorded in criminal convictions that may make legalization impossible.

The notion of abjectivity developed by Gonzales and Chavez can be extended to other groups who awaken to nightmares. One such group is created by the 3- and 10-year bars on legal immigration to which those who have been unlawfully present for 6 months or 1 year are subjected. For example, if a US citizen marries and petitions for an undocumented immigrant, the couple may have to be separated for 10 years while the undocumented partner lives outside of the country, allowing the bar to toll. This example suggests that abjectivity can be contagious in that, much like the secondary prisonization experienced by the spouses and partners of those who are incarcerated (Comfort 2008), the US citizen spouse undergoes something of a secondary abjectification (Dingeman and Coutin, forthcoming; Kanstroom 2007).

Another such group is created by the expanded definition of aggravated felony and the elimination of waivers of deportation for long-term residents convicted of crimes. Prior to 1996, noncitizens who were convicted of crimes that made them deportable had the opportunity to argue to an immigration judge that their equities in the United States outweighed the harm that they had caused. Now, in contrast, even lawful permanent residents can be stripped of their status and rendered deportable, suggesting that alienage can supersede other dimensions of the self. Like 1.5-generation youth, noncitizens who become removable due to criminal convictions may experience sudden and traumatizing redefinitions. As one deportee lamented to me during an interview in El Salvador,

> I'm never going to be able to accept it. Because 41 years there [in the US]? A whole life! And paying taxes, everything there! Social security. And suddenly, nothing. What happened to all of that? How did I fail? They uproot you and send you here without anything.

Both of these groups, along with the 1.5-generation youth who were the subjects of Gonzales and Chavez's study, have been subjected to a *pulling away* of the law, of rights, and of temporary workarounds (such as using someone else's Social Security number) that, in prior eras, could have enabled individuals to legalize or to manage their undocumented status. This retreat occurs in a context of intensified legal surveillance, as the authors detail. The contradictory combination of law's retreat and intensification is shaping the contours of both the legalized and undocumented populations. It is therefore important to attend to processes that *abjectify*, that is, to the particular acts—such as denying eligibility for a driver's license—that constitute individuals as undocumented as well as the histories that leave migrants vulnerable to deportation. Individuals are not naturally "illegal"; rather, they are constituted as such, by structural conditions, violence, and immigration laws, policies, and histories.

It is also worth considering the transnational dimensions of abjectivity (Coutin and McGuire 2011). Gonzales and

Chavez allude to these in discussing the situation of Catarina, an undocumented immigrant whose years in the United States have "made her life different from if she had stayed in Mexico." Her abjectivity in the United States most likely extends to the life she would lead if deported to Mexico—a point that Gonzales and Chavez do not fully develop here but that is consistent with their analysis. The counterpart of being "unwanted by . . . the only country they really know" may be being unwanted by the country to which they legally belong. Importantly, though, youth develop strategies to contest abjectivity. By highlighting these youths' struggles and successes, Gonzales and Chavez have made a significant contribution.

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This is a wonderful and compelling article. It analyzes in striking detail how undocumented youth experience living in abjection. It speaks powerfully to how the "casting away" of young migrants shapes and delimits their social, economic, and biological life. In my remarks here, I take up the authors' thoughtful invocation of philosopher Giorgio Agamben's work on the politics of exclusion.

Drawing on Plato and Aristotle, Agamben (1998) notes that the ancient Greeks did not have a single term to express what we today mean by "life." Instead, they used two semantically distinct words: *zoe* (the simple fact of being alive, common to all living things) and *bios* (the form of living specific to an individual or group). Agamben emphasizes that when Plato and Aristotle theorized about life, they used the term *bios*. This was because what mattered for them was not brute existence but the way of life proper to human beings. Natural life was in fact excluded from the political life of the *polis* and restricted to the sphere of the *oikos* (household). It was thus not deemed a subject worthy of political and ethical contemplation. For Agamben, the exclusion of biological life from the *polis* is rather significant. It actually takes place through a fundamental act of sovereignty. Following the work of Carl Schmitt, Agamben understands sovereign power as the capacity to decide on the exception—to decree an emergency wherein conventional legal and constitutional rules are suspended. In such a state of exception, Agamben suggests, subjects are deprived of constitutional rights, reduced to mere living beings, and exposed to the unconditional power of death. The exclusion of natural life from the sphere of politics amounts to a sovereign act insofar as it is based on a decision as to who is granted status in the *polis* and thus subject to its protections, or banned from it and exposed to unlimited violation. In this sense, the sovereign's act of exclusion results necessarily in the politicization of life. That is, natural life ends up included in the political domain in the form of exclusion; it is set outside politics but nevertheless implicated in it. Significantly, what gets produced through the sovereign act of inclusion/exclusion is bare life. Bare life is not natural life as such but its politicized form. It can be defined as a natural life bereft of political status and hence subject to infinite violation.

Inspired by Agamben, Gonzales and Chavez cogently explore how the lives of undocumented youth have effectively been reduced to bare life. Indeed, to live illegally in the United States means living an existence stripped of juridical protection, opened to violence, and rendered potentially disposable. Central to the reduction of undocumented youth to bare life has been the contemporary immigration enforcement climate. Over the last decade, the boundaries of immigration enforcement have migrated inward, turning much of the interior of the United States into a border zone where governmental authorities endeavor to regulate putatively "dangerous" migrant illegalities. The result has been that undocumented youth (and unauthorized immigrants generally) have become subject to rather heavy surveillance by local and state police. As the authors note, a typical police tactic is to set up sobriety checkpoints or other traffic operations in or near immigrant neighborhoods. Once caught in these traps, youth without authorization to be in the United States are routinely arrested, generally for driving without a license, and often deported. Not surprisingly, this targeted policing has produced a deep distrust among undocumented youth of local police officials. The distrust is such that many youth have been prompted to change their behavior patterns in order to dodge contact with police officers or other authorities. For example, interviewees report venturing into public spaces less often, curtailing interactions with medical and other institutions, and continually looking over their shoulders when they do go out in public. The current immigration enforcement climate, then, has helped to disrupt the everyday lives of immigrants and produced a heightened sense of insecurity. Ultimately, such a climate serves to degrade immigrant life to its biological minimum and expose it to extreme abuse.

Importantly, the authors also show that undocumented youth have not stood idly by and accepted the highly punitive and discriminatory treatment to which they have been subjected. Through engaging in a range of democratic processes, from collective protesting and campaigning for rights to court battles, many youth have actually acted out against the dehumanizing effects of "illegality." The message they are sending is that undocumented migrants are legitimate members of US society and deserve the right to work, to raise families, and to be free from the fear of persecution. In other words, they are seeking to be recognized as legitimate political subjects with social, civil, and political rights—to be treated not as bare life but as *bios*.

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I cannot overstate the timeliness of this significant, thoughtful, carefully written piece, and I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on it. Gonzales and Chavez use Sarah Willen's concept of abjectivity to capture the lived experiences of the undocumented young Latinos who arrived in the United States as young children and who often do not have recollection of the countries they left or how they made it to the United States. Through the use of this concept, they draw attention to how practices of governmentality, in Foucault's conceptualization, produce a group in society that is marked as illegitimate, underserving, and unworthy. Importantly, they observe, there is nothing intrinsic about those in this group that makes them undeserving and marginal, no inherent characteristics that can make their lives so tough. Instead, the authors rightly note, it is the disciplinary and exclusionary practices—the biopolitics of immigration today—that make the young immigrants' lives limited, invisible, and even dangerous.

My participation in this exchange is related to my own research on the everyday experiences of immigrants who live on the margins of the law. And in my view, more than other scholars working in this area, Gonzales and Chavez provide a key analytical angle to understand how, today, immigrants in uncertain legal statuses live their vulnerable and marginalized status. Their focus on the 1.5 generation, whose particular position in the life cycle amplifies the experience of life transitions as undocumented, allows the authors to show us how an undocumented status becomes a condition of abjectivity. The authors illustrate, in the words of their study participants, how undocumented youth's legal status restricts their activities and life chances, and how it can further lead to their dehumanization.

I particularly appreciate the authors' approach to link the everyday lives of the young immigrants to their undocumented status, not only how this status impedes their educational (and eventually socioeconomic) mobility and how it shatters their "American dream," but also how mundane tasks, like driving from home to school, involve maneuvering and planning, highlighting the daily humiliations and fears experienced by those who live in this abject status. Indeed, I find much value in the authors' focus on commonplace, ordinary activities, as it sheds light on how these young immigrants' abject status shapes practices that thwart their path to higher education and to other opportunities in society. There is much research on how an undocumented status negatively affects opportunities in education and in the labor market, but using the lens of abjectivity allows us to unearth the actual mechanisms that produce these effects.

The authors argue that the concept of abjectivity draws attention to the forces that create this condition but also to the incongruities inherent in the application of US immigration law. This discussion allows Gonzales and Chavez to underscore the contradictory purposes of the law in pushing these immigrants to the margins but at the same time making them the targets of these regulations, marking their existence "in the nation but not part of the nation." And although I would have liked them to expand on these connections, on how this abject condition is actually produced by the law and why these young immigrants must wait for years and live in limbo for most of their lives, there is quite a bit of merit in their noting that it is forces beyond the individual that produce this abject condition. In doing so, the authors capture how the power of the law penetrates the mind and body to produce physical and psychological ailments, how this power contorts lives and human relations, and how through its laws the state disciplines even subjects it seeks to exclude. Through convincing and vivid narratives, the authors demonstrate the force with which the law shapes the lives of these young immigrants, how they live the law's power endlessly "waiting"—for a new immigration reform or for their applications to finally be approved. This waiting and the uncertainty that it engenders are key aspects of living in abjectivity. And these exaggerated waiting times have important parallels among other similarly vulnerable groups, such as the residents of a shantytown in Buenos Aires depicted in Auyero and Swistun's (2007) study, a point that should remind us of the impotency that dominated groups often experience. But Gonzales and Chavez also note that it is precisely the awareness of their condition, of their vulnerability, that serves as impetus for civic participation, action, and resistance. The undocumented lack power, the authors note, but are not powerless. Living abject lives creates spaces for "personal acts of resistance" and for undocumented youth to participate politically and to assert their cultural citizenship. This is an important point the authors make, and one I would have liked to see them develop further.

In sum, this is a critical article that captures vividly how vulnerable, abject, lives on the margins of society are lived and how state power is experienced, which no doubt will inspire much reflection, further research, and, I hope, action.

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"'Awakening to a Nightmare': Abjectivity and Illegality in the Lives of Undocumented 1.5-Generation Latino Immigrants in the United States," by Roberto G. Gonzales and Leo R. Chavez, explores "practices of the biopolitics of citizenship and governmentality . . . [that] enclose, penetrate, define, limit, and frustrate the lives of undocumented 1.5-generation Latino immigrants."

The work of Sarah Willen and Judith Butler informs the

way in which the authors conceptualized abjectivity as the process through which what is considered alien is produced as such through its expulsion. Gonzales and Chavez look at ways in which discourses of abjectivity are internalized. Abjectivity is embodied, they argued. The study is located in California, specifically in Orange County, a location where "anti-immigration movements have found substantial support." Methodologically, it combines quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were collected in January 2006, and interviews took place between 2002 and 2007. In terms of both institutional constraints and internalized fears, quantitative and qualitative evidence confirm that the 1.5 generation experience abjection.

The findings add evidence to a wide array of claims that support the approval of legislation known as the DREAM Act, which would allow the right to apply for a permanent resident status to those who arrived in the United States as minors. However, despite the fact that about 67% of the Latino population voted for Barack Obama in the last election, the DREAM Act does not seem to be politically possible in the electoral context of 2012. Farther away is a comprehensive immigration reform, one of the promises of Obama's campaign. Even worse, during the first year of the Obama administration, deportation increased by 25%. Recent changes in immigration legislation in Arizona, Georgia, and, more recently, in Alabama confirm this tendency. The current economic crisis on both sides of the Atlantic and probably beyond makes this scenario even more complex.

A query that emerges from my reading is related to the ways in which migrants' agency is conceptualized. It has to do both with the political landscape and with the chosen theoretical perspective. Regarding the political context, especially in the United States and the European Union, the hardening of immigration policies is the dominant tendency: in the criminalization of migrants, in the undermining of the rule of law, and in the externalization of borders, among others. In this sense, the authors give more prominence to what is by itself more noticeable.

Regarding the adopted theoretical perspective, one might ask to what extent abjectivity, as a key theoretical tool, can make sense of both rejection toward migrants by current criminalizing policies and the ways of resistance of new generations of migrants. It seems to me that rejection has much more prominence than resistance, which is understandable given that criminalization is the driving force. However, resistance is not, so to speak, theorized; it emerges as a consequence of power but does not receive the same attention. The authors note that undocumented 1.5ers "can, and do, resist total exclusion." They quote Foucault (1990 [1976]:95): "Where there is power, there is resistance." They note also that, "though lacking power, undocumented immigrants are not powerless."

In short, my query is whether abjectivity, given its emphasis on the power of the oppressor, allows us to understand how resistance becomes lived experience, and whether this lived experience might be thought of as the terrain upon which political agendas can be forged. With some trepidation, I would say that by locating abjectivity as a key reference, critical research might lose its productive tension between power constraints and resistance.

It is especially relevant since, for example, an important number of initiatives in 2006 were undertaken by young people who recruited older generations to join marches and other collective actions. It might be useful to think of these demonstrations as a group of actors (i.e., those who speak on behalf of migrants as well as migrants themselves) in different scales (i.e., community organizations, national initiatives, transnational networks) gathering to discuss different agendas (i.e., labor and migration, equity and migration, diversity and migration). In other words, the deepening of right-wing views on immigration in the United States and elsewhere requires a theoretical and political analysis of migrants' collective action.

Quotations from Esperanza (the Spanish translation of "hope") are the most prominent throughout the article. I do not know if this was done on purpose. Either way, Esperanza's name suggests that horizons of possibilities are not closed. Thanks to the authors for reminding us of this.

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Roberto Gonzales and Leo Chavez very vividly illustrate the disturbing "destructive irrationality" of US-American immigration policies. The situation of 1.5-generation Latinos in California seems to mock the state's general aims of promoting law abidance among its citizens, avoiding social disorder, and fostering an equal relationship between investment in education and its payoffs to individuals and society alike. The article describes family situations in which the father has a permanent residency permit, the mother and foreign-born eldest daughter are illegal, yet the younger siblings are American citizens since they are US-born. From a European perspective, this seems quite odd. And more questions arise: Why would a young person enrolled in higher education not receive a residency permit? Where are the scholarship programs for covering the tuition fees for nonresident students? How can it be that someone is convicted of a crime when his participation in it is neither evident nor plausible—because he is undocumented, and the situation offers a nice pretext to jail and deportation?

This is a major question for debate: the use of Foucault's concept of biopolitics in the article suggests rationality behind the apparent irrationality. But is there any? While the decisions of migrants to face the occasional hardships of going abroad—especially for illegal migrants—can generally be explained as

"rational choices," the rationale behind certain policy measures and "institutional arrangements" regarding immigration control frequently point to a divergence between aims and results. Controlling immigration and putting pressure on undocumented immigrants seems to have become a sort of playground for police and policy, strongly affecting peoples' lives but without having much real influence on an *effective* control of illegal immigration. Putting this kind of pressure on those who were formally educated in the United States and are more than willing to become useful and productive members of society is even more difficult to explain by any sort of rational argument.

In my view, the article adds two important new elements to the academic discussion: the first is the focus on the transition from childhood/adolescence to adulthood, that is, the moment of "awakening to the nightmare." The second aspect is intertwined with this: the seemingly trivial significant type of situations in which insecure status becomes decisive—for example, asking for alcohol in a bar or restaurant, getting involved in a car accident, becoming ill, or making a trip to Las Vegas. Adolescence is the delicate time in any young person's life to develop norms and ethics, and to find a place and position in society. For children of immigrants, this period moreover includes the difficult task of reconciling the worlds of the parental and community life with the life "out there." Considering the nightmare to which the undocumented 1.5 generation in California awakes at that crucial moment, it is easy to imagine how traumatic this experience can be. In addition, it might not always be life's biggest potential hardships that produce the most crippling injuries.

Gonzales and Chavez's article also shows that people tend to "survive" being forced to change their professional options and plans. The fear of deportation while children get left behind, or how a simple car accident can lead to prison and deportation, by contrast, are likely to leave deep scars that won't heal quickly. This has policy implications; perhaps there should be a parallel path to waiting for the DREAM Act: for example, giving "illegals" access to a driver's license, to a bank account, and to health insurance without checking for residency status.

The article raises two important issues that, in my view, need further development. First, what is the logic and idiosyncrasy of "the other side," of those who produce and enact the abjection of the 1.5 generation (police officers, politicians, middle-class whites, employers, etc.)? What is the reaction of universities and esteemed colleges to the ban of highly performing 1.5-generation students? The answers to these questions are also relevant to the initial inquiry about the applicability of the concept of biopolitics.

Second, the elements of "resistance" and "subversion" are highlighted in the article in the form of individual survival strategies, but what collective responses are there beyond the visible ones, such as the marches and the activities surrounding the DREAM Act? What can people do to become legal or even to become citizens? How could being enrolled in formal education for an extended period of time translate to an actual option for legalization? What about (fake) marriage with a legal person? And finally, could the 1.5ers study or work in Mexico for a period of time and then return to the United States with a student or working visa?

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Gonzales and Chavez's article provides an informed and detailed account of the everyday lives of 1.5-generation undocumented migrants in the United States. Drawing on interviews, informal conversations, and participant observation with young migrants originally (mainly) from Mexico living in the Orange County in California, they examine the multiple ways in which the lack of residence status shapes the present and the future of migrants who were born abroad but have spent a significant part of their formative years in the United States. As recent scholarship has pointed out (Bloch and Chimienti 2011; Bloch, Sigona, and Zetter 2011; Coutin 2000*a*; De Genova 2002; Goldring, Berinstein, and Bernhard 2009; Menjívar 2006; Willen 2007), the condition of illegality is defined and shaped by specific legal arrangements, which in turn produce illegal aliens (Ngai 2004) whose political and legal subjectivity is contingent on the specific legal and policy arrangements, as well as the broader social, political, and geographic context that made them (Sassen 2002). The investigation of migrant accounts can therefore be instrumental to illuminate the contingency of specific configurations of illegality and locate them in global and local political economies. The emphasis is here on the broader heuristic value of migrant narratives rather than on the impacts of illegality on individual experiences. To bridge this conceptual gap, the authors evoke Foucault's concept of biopolitics that is the combination of techniques of power and self through which subjects are produced in and by power. However, the attempt (which is at times rather impressionistic) is not completely successful. It leaves the reader with a rather monodimensional representation of undocumented migrants, overdetermined by the structuring power of immigration policies and bureaucratic practices, and as such unable to provide a theoretical explanation of variations and differences in the very accounts that the authors discuss in the article.

"Immigration here and emigration there are the two indissociable sides of the same reality, which cannot be explained the one without the other" (Sayad 1999:15). As Bourdieu and Wacquant notice in their celebration of the work of the Algerian ethnologist Abdelmalek Sayad, in order to understand migration and migrant experiences, the starting point must be the "history, structure and contradictions" of sending countries and not the "concern and cleavages of the receiving society" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2000:174). This

argument resonates with warnings to avoid methodological nationalism in research on migration (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). In Gonzales and Chavez's contribution, the monodimensional portrait of undocumentedness that emerges from the analysis can be traced back to two aspects of the methodology of research: first, the decision to adopt the heteronym "Latinos/Latinas" for identifying the individuals in the study, a choice that obscures the possibility of valuing the "history, structure and contradictions" of sending countries; second and similarly, by focusing almost exclusively in their qualitative analysis on the accounts of Mexican migrants (despite referring to them mainly as Latinos/Latinas), the authors miss the opportunity to explore the intersection of undocumentedness and country of origin that includes the associated situated configurations of gender, class, and ethnicity. This, for example, leaves little space to appreciate and understand the transnational practices of informants. An example is provided by the discussion of the paralyzing effect that the condition of illegality *can* produce, keeping many respondents *in limbo*. The reader is left thinking: Which respondents? Why only some of them and not all? How can we explain this difference?

The discussion of deportability, that is, the fear of being deported and its impact on the everyday lives of migrants, incurs a similar limitation. Did all interviewees experience the same fear? Are there other factors that contribute to shaping this fear? My own work, comparing the experiences of undocumented migrants from Brazil, China, Turkey, Ukraine, and Zimbabwe in the United Kingdom, shows that migratory projects and histories cannot be underestimated. If deported "back home," what is at stake for a Kurdish undocumented migrant who experienced political persecution in Turkey, and a Ukrainian undocumented builder who moved to the United Kingdom to accumulate capital and enjoy life in a metropolis, is certainly different and has only partly to do with their legal status in the United Kingdom (Bloch, Sigona, and Zetter 2009; Sigona 2012).

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On October 8, 2011, California Governor Jerry Brown signed the second part of the California DREAM Act, which grants undocumented immigrants access to state financial aid at public universities and colleges beginning in 2013.[25] Known as AB 131, the bill requires that students graduate from a California high school, have attended school for at least 3 years in the state, and are in the process of applying to legalize their status. Governor Brown reported that the California Department of Finances estimates that AB 131 will benefit approximately 2,500 students annually at a cost of 14.5 million (McGreevy and York 2011).

The California DREAM Act is welcome news for some of the subjects of Gonzales and Chavez's timely article "Awakening to a Nightmare." This important piece of research brings attention to the wide-ranging psychological, economic, social, and identity-formation experiences of 1.5-generation undocumented Latino youth. While much research has focused on this in-between generation of immigrant youth, few studies have looked in depth at what Gonzalez and Chavez call the "experiences of living in abjection." Their study confirms that undocumented Latino youth live their daily lives at a much higher level of stress and lower levels of social, material, and psychological security than documented Latino immigrant youth.

Gonzales and Chavez describe, as have others, how 1.5-generation undocumented Latino youth are socialized in the United States, learn English, attend schools, and begin to develop identities and expectations about attending college and aspiring to a middle-class American lifestyle. "Awakening to the nightmare" occurs when youth at ages 14–17 come face to face with their undocumented status, something which is often hidden from them until this age by their parents, teachers, and others. While this protection ensures them a measure of self-confidence and security in their younger years, it also creates a set of expectations and sense of identity formation that are rudely interrupted precisely when teens are most in need of confirmation of who they are. Joining friends in a California social life, work, and driving require a California license or ID, which in turn requires a Social Security card. The reality of being classified as "illegal" is a game changer for Latino immigrant youth. Immigration status is the only kind of legal category where "illegal" becomes a totalizing, criminalizing label for the individual. You did not commit an illegal act, you *are* illegal.

In my own research, I have documented the experiences of undocumented indigenous immigrant youth and found similar results to that outlined by Gonzales and Chavez, with the additional dimension of racialization processes that delegate indigenous youth to lesser status among Mexicano immigrants (Stephen 2007:211–220; 2008). They are read by many as "illegals" in an increasingly hostile political and legal climate in the United States, as "Mexicans" or "Latinos" by those who don't know enough to discriminate between different types of Mexicans, and by their fellow Mexicanos as inferior because of their cultural, linguistic, and geographic roots as indigenous peoples. Avenues of cultural expression that explicitly call on indigenous forms of dance, music, art, sports, writing, and language seem to be one of the most successful vehicles for indigenous immigrant youth to achieve some level of civic integration in their schools and commu-

25. The first half of the same act, signed in July 2011, allowed undocumented students to receive privately funded financial aid from the University of California, California State, and California Community College systems.

nities. If they are undocumented in states like Oregon, however, they again come to the realization that they cannot go to college and face the "awakening to a nightmare."

This article is also an important complement to other recent comparative research done by Suárez-Orozco et al. (2011), which looks at the experiences of the 1 million unauthorized children and youth from around the world and the 5.5 million children in the United States with unauthorized parents. Their work integrates an interdisciplinary approach focusing on the structural conditions children of undocumented parents exist in, but more importantly offers a framework for understanding the factors that shape the day-to-day experiences of children and youth as they move through different developmental stages. They conclude that

> the evidence reveals a consistent pattern: the effects of unauthorized status on development across the lifespan are uniformly negative, with millions of U.S. children and youth at risk of lower educational performance, economic stagnation, blocked mobility, and ambiguous belonging. In all, the data suggest an alarming psychosocial formation. (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011:461)

They suggest that the sheer numbers of children who are themselves undocumented or live with undocumented parents are a large-scale national concern that touches every state.

The solutions advocated by Gonzales and Chavez, Suárez-Orozco et al., myself, and many others are access to education through the DREAM Act, and more importantly a pathway to citizenship. Engaged research can help to influence policy, and Gonzales and Chavez provide an important model of how this might work.

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Similar to the authors of this powerful article, my research in southern Europe shows how the symbolic treatment of legality versus illegality in contemporary democratic migration regimes has been instrumental in the creation of racialized boundaries as well as in the maintenance of a reserve army of disposable workers living in the country of destination. The concept of "fetishism of the papers" served me to explain why, despite empirical evidence of the fact that illegality has become a structural feature of contemporary citizenry, the "appearance of legality" conjured up through this fetishism keeps people dreaming on a personal avenue for a legal recognition (Suárez-Navaz 2004). Gonzales and Chavez's research powerfully shows that this is not just the case for new immigration countries, but a structural feature of neoliberal migration regimes. The state's ability to demarcate and maintain classificatory boundaries shaping the construction of social difference is legitimized and largely naturalized. Immigrants, who are treated as an object and not a subject of the law, do not appropriate the surplus value created by this fetishism, but the state does.

Gonzales and Chavez's theoretical take on abjectivity greatly expanded my understanding of the effects of biopower in disciplining undocumented immigrants' body, subjectivity, and behavior, and allowed me to better frame processes of resistance and struggle (Suárez Navaz and Al-Jaima 2007). The conclusive empirical research demonstrates the extent to which this appearance of legality renders undocumented but long-time Latino residents as abject, abnormal, and deviant. As described by the authors, these immigrants awoke to a nightmare they did not expect for themselves. We understand why they fail to foresee the nightmare, based on the argument exposed above. However, the comparative perspective acquired after reading this work results in a very disturbing scenario, which deeply challenges commonsense and political premises on the governance of migratory processes.

First, Gonzales and Chavez's research on young 1.5-generation Latino immigrants shows how the legal norms of the migratory regime actually hinder life rites of passage to adulthood. Undocumented minors, protected by their dependency on their families, find themselves unable to reach independence and autonomy as adults, condemned to a never-ending transitional phase. Young people get trampled into a limbo, despite their factual membership and feeling of belonging to the United States. This shocking fact marks my reflection on similar trends here in Europe. My research has clearly showed the tendency to temporarily protect these young migrants or refugees coming to Spain—in order to comply with international agreements on the rights of minors—without documenting them. This temporary protection stops when they turn 18, when the minors transform into undocumented foreigners and the legal and moral commitment of the state collapses (Suárez Navaz and Jiménez 2011). This manipulation of giving restricted and temporary access to citizenship rights to minors cannot go without consequences in our understanding of an immigrant's processes of integration, a second feature of this disturbing scenario I want to refer to briefly.

Common sense and political discourse share the premise that there is some kind of congruence between a high level of integration in the country, like the young Latinos the authors interviewed, and the legal guarantee of their rights as citizens. The contrary is shown here: this "awakening to a nightmare" of Latinos coming of age produces a personal drama, an embodiment of abjectivity in their daily behavior and identities. There is also a deep effect in their political expectations vis-à-vis citizenry: "Even though they may have come to believe the civic lessons so essential to citizenship and to hold dear the values driving the American Dream, the illegality that defined their abject status left them with a clear sense of their difference." I found something similar when exploring the cultural and political effects of "fetishism of the papers" on African Muslim immigrants: an extended feeling

that citizenship was not a credible system, lacking not just the universal dimension it claims, but most dangerously, lacking the potential to function as a mortar for belonging and loyalty to a multicultural political community.

If Martin Luther King Jr. shook up the world with a dream of equality and social cohesion for all, this "awakening to a nightmare" of noncitizens who thought of themselves otherwise opens up an alarming scenario: a citizenry topography full of black holes of recognition. Gonzales and Chavez's work very poignantly shows some of the dramatic consequences of democratic societies raising "integrated youth" without papers just to let them fall into the gravity of those black holes. Let us hope that the efforts of these undocumented Latinos getting engaged in collective political action such as the DREAM Act or the marches and demonstrations of immigrants across the United States will be at least as successful as the civil rights struggle to reach Martin Luther King's dream was. Otherwise, thwarted expectations could lead young people into what Dr. Konzevik has named the "expectation revolutions," fed not just by education and access to global social networks but also by the moral claim of being defeated by the system.

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This remarkable paper is a piece that robustly contributes what we can call the sociology of subjectivity among subordinate social actors in the United States and elsewhere. It shows what *bare life* is for young undocumented 1.5-generation migrants in the richest societies today.

As a Mexican sociologist, I was extremely interested in learning from this paper that "illegality" constitutes an invisible obstacle for creating, reproducing, and nourishing transnational networks with family members in their own countries of origin. In contrast, legal residents of 1.5 or second generations have the opportunity to visit their families in Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. They can meet their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They feel they are members of a transnational family. Exactly the opposite happens with those 1.5-generation immigrants who are undocumented. For them, illegality impedes travels, visits, personal communication, networks; they simply cannot be a part of a transnational family. They are isolated to the point of incarceration. As a result, paradoxically, under the current legal US conditions, undocumented 1.5-generation migrants have the right to live in their country of origin—this ultimately means deportation; however, they have no personal contacts in their countries of origin. Their roots are in the wrong side of their lives.

Interestingly, most of 1.5-generation young migrants are unaware of their migratory status until they enter adulthood. They feel like they were born in the United States—then, when they confront the legal reality, they must learn how to live as "illegal" in what they consider their own homeland. In addition, they are unable to imagine a life in the countries they have the right in which to live, succeed, and contribute. They finally wind up accepting one conservative ideological premise we can read in the paper: "There are obstacles [in the United States], but it's better. It's better here even with the inequalities."

The 1.5-generation undocumented migrants inevitably internalized a society—the US political society—in the schools and from the schools. ("The significant part of their education was in the United States, and, like other youth, they were for the most part inculcated in the values, desires, drives, ethics, and cultural practices of US youth.") It was their right to be educated in the country they lived in since they arrived. However, the law rejects them just before they achieve the goal of being an entire part of that society that welcomed them when they were children and, ironically, refuses to recognize them when they become young adults.

One issue, as we can read in the paper, is how the host society can negotiate with these ironies and paradoxes. The other issue is how the countries of origin could open their doors for those talented, bilingual, and energetic young people living in legal limbo in the United States and rejected by the US Senate. This is something that Gonzales and Chavez do not discuss in their paper. But those of us living in Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras have to discuss this second relevant political concern as quickly as possible. If they are going to return, voluntarily or involuntarily, they have to know they are politically welcome. This message could change their perception of themselves.

Reply

We would like to thank the distinguished scholars who commented on our article. All of your observations matter to us, especially because they are based on your own impressive research in this area. We are pleased that the issues raised in the article also resonated in many ways with the commentators' work in different contexts, both national and international.

For example, Deborah A. Boehm reminds us that abjectivity is also experienced by those who migrated without authorization as adults, as well as those expelled or deported. Indeed, it was our intention to build a conceptual bridge between those who experience abjectivity. Society can and does label outcasts and discardable individuals and groups based on any number of prejudices. By delineating how 1.5-generation undocumented immigrants experience abjectivity, we hope to contribute to a discussion of abjectivity in general.

Like Boehm, Caroline B. Brettell finds that the abjected

experiences of the young people in our article also offer a ray of hope. Rather than merely acquiesce as docile bodies, young undocumented people are actively pursing political agendas, organizing against ICE deportations, and coming "out of the shadows" to resist their contradictory status as insiders/outsiders. We agree with Brettell that the limit on opportunities faced by the 1.5 undocumented immigrants in our article puts into sharp relief the principles of opportunity and individual achievement so central to the "American Dream." And as Brettell notes, we hope our article has a dual purpose, both as a contribution to scholarship and as a contribution to public discourse on what we believe is one of the most important civil rights issues of the new millennium.

Susan Bibler Coutin emphasizes the legal aspects of abjectivity. As Coutin rightly notes, individuals are not "naturally" illegal. Immigration laws have increasingly made it more difficult to adjust one's status to that of a legal permanent resident, expanded the criminal offenses that make immigrants deportable, put more immigrants in jail for relatively minor infractions, and shaped the condition of illegality. Further research, such as that by Coutin herself, will shed more light on the transnational nature of abjectivity than we were able to do in this article. This is especially true as more of the 1.5 generation are deported from the United States and then experience an often wary reception in their parents' home county.

Cecilia Menjívar is also concerned with how the law structures subjective experiences and abject status. For her, being caught in an endless life of waiting for the law to do something—to either allow for a change of status or to find them and expel them—is a key aspect of abjectivity. We agree. It is this liminal state of not knowing what their fate will be that is so excruciating.

Jonathan Xavier Inda focuses on Agamben's use of the concept *bios*. He notes that it is not brute existence that matters, but the way of life of specific individuals or groups. It is the exceptions to conventional law that must experience what it means to be mere living beings. Similar to Coutin's observations, Inda cites immigration laws that are increasingly punitive, restrictive, and surveillance-oriented. Inda appreciates the work of young people caught in this tragic dilemma to agitate for recognition as legitimate political subjects with rights. Or, as Inda put it, they are struggling to be treated as *bios*. We would add only that as academics, we must not sit on the sidelines as mere observers in this struggle, but build on research in our own struggles as engaged scholars.

We appreciate our commentators' critical readings of our article. Carlos Sandoval Garcia, as well as Cecilia Menjívar, would have liked more discussion of resistance as both a practice and an analytical concept. We believe we could have elaborated more on resistance, but space constraints must be considered. Also, we were primarily focused on developing the concept of abjectivity. However, resistance, in terms of both an undampened sense of hope and reinvigorated political engagement, emerged from a condition of abjectivity. This is what we wanted to get across in the article. The large immigrant rights demonstrations across the United States in 2006 reflected, we believe, the resistance that emerges when state policies threaten to further criminalize one's life and to make bare life even more a state of existence. Rather than limiting our analytical lens to the relation between power constraints and resistance, understanding subjective experiences of abject status through the lens of abjectivity helps us understand the frustrations, desires, dreams, hopes, and determinations that propel private and public resistances to power.

Jens Schneider, offering a European perspective, wonders at the rationality/irrationality of providing education but not legal residency for those brought to the United States at a young age. He raises an important issues by questioning the "logic and idiosyncrasy" of those who produce and enact the policies and laws that produce abjection. There is, of course, no hegemonic set of views on immigrants and immigration policy. The United States, as a "nation of immigrants," has long debated the positive and negative aspects of immigration (Chavez 2001; Gerstle 2001). One has merely to listen to political candidates from various parties to get a sense of the range of opinion about immigration, immigrant contributions, and noncitizens using limited resources. Many sympathize with the plight of the 1.5 undocumented immigrants, and educators may desire to educate them. But federal immigration policies, and increasingly state policies, on policing, access to higher education, drivers' licenses, apartment rentals, medical care, and myriad others are aspects of the biopolitics that produce the condition of illegality within which educators, medical practitioners, undocumented immigrants, and others must live.

Nando Sigona notes that we did not elaborate on the conditions in the sending countries of our respondents, thus limiting an understanding of migration and migration experiences. We agree, if we were exploring the lives of those who migrated as adults, as in the examples Sigona provides. Such an approach would be essential for understanding why migration occurs and the maintenance of migration streams. But here we were interested in modes of incorporation. We believe the policies, practices, and attitudes of the receiving country are essential, whether we are talking about the United States, Japan, Germany, France, Spain, or the United Kingdom, where the children of immigrants have also faced obstacles to social integration. Undocumented 1.5-generation Chinese, Koreans, Mexicans, Salvadorans, and so forth must all contend with similar immigration-related policies and practices. Where there is a difference is in their parents' status and background. Some groups may have an advantage in that their parents are more likely to be legal permanent residents or citizens of the United States, and in jobs that provide more resources for the legal costs associated with the legalization process. While we use "Latino" to indicate the shared experiences of illegality among our respondents, we indicate national background when speaking of individuals. Should these young people be deported, they would surely face different situations unique to their parents' country of origin, making what is at stake

different for each individual beyond the disruption in the life they had become accustomed to in the United States. The logical next research project would be the anthropology of deportation to more fully explore what is at stake in the ultimate act of exclusion (Coutin 2008; Peutz 2006).

Lynn Stephen raises the problems faced by indigenous groups from Latino America. They are often glossed as "illegals" and are doubly racialized, by the receiving society and by their fellow conationals who view them as inferior. Lynn Stephen's own work has helped us understand the abjection experienced by indigenous peoples from Oaxaca, Mexico, who migrate to Oregon. Stephen, like many of the other commentators, stresses the need to provide similarly situated people a pathway to citizenship. We agree, and then issues of indigeneity and racialization can come into sharper focus for research and intervention.

Liliana Suárez Navaz notes that issues of legality and illegality have been essential in the creation of racialized boundaries between Spain, Europe, and the less developed countries where many migrants originate. Suárez Navaz reflects on Spain's attempt to comply with the international rights of minors by providing them temporary protection, which ends at age 18, when they become subject to the laws governing undocumented foreigners. We would be interested in the subjective understandings of these young people's change in status vis-à-vis the Spanish state as we explore the comparative aspects of abjectivity, a process begun by Sarah Willen (2007).

We appreciate Víctor Zúñiga's intervention here. Mexico, as Zúñiga understands so well, is the largest source of 1.5 undocumented immigrants in the United States. He rightly points to the misperceptions children of immigrants often have about their parents' country of origin. Since their parents typically left for a "better life," they often assume the worst of life and opportunities in their parents' natal countries. They are also raised with media and public discourse that routinely characterizes countries such as Mexico as places of social and economic problems. As a result, as Zúñiga notes, they are often unable to imagine positively a permanent return, either forced or voluntary, to the country of their birth. Rather than blaming them for these misperceptions, we view them as part of the subjective understandings of their lives that contribute to their angst and sense of dread embedded in their lack of legal status. Zúñiga notes that should these young people be returned to Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, or Honduras, they would be "politically welcome." However, as we discussed above, the stakes of being forced to return may not always be so positive. Indeed, there could be a much more cautious welcome if these young people are culturally and linguistically unprepared for rapid integration. Moreover, it is not only the children of migrants who harbor misperceptions. What if Mexicans, Hondurans, Salvadorans, and others view returned young people as competitors or as socially disruptive? These perceptions would also color the welcome afforded returned 1.5-generation migrants.

Once again, we appreciate the thoughtful comments on our paper. As these scholars underscore, the lives of people living in difficult situations are not merely objects of study. They are human beings who struggle for dignity and opportunity.

—Roberto G. Gonzales and Leo R. Chavez

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