Young Migrants and Narratives of Belonging: Modes of Incorporation beyond Borders[*]

Jóvenes migrantes y narrativas de pertenencia: Modos de incorporación más allá de las fronteras

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes the category of narrative constellation of belonging understood as a mode of incorporation, created based on the narrative connection produced by the children of farm workers settled in San Quintin Valley, Baja California, and Madera-Fresno, California. We propose a simultaneity of narratives of belonging among Mixtec, Zapotecan, and Triqui youth outside Mexico as the product of a common ethnic origin articulated against the backdrop of the market for agricultural labor, as a context of domination. We employ a qualitative methodology based on the compilation of fifty biographical narratives obtained from young people living on both sides of the border. The findings show the dilemma between deep (or ethnic) belonging and acquired (non-ethnic) belongings as a mechanism of incorporation in the receiving context.

Keywords: 1. belonging, 2. borders, 3. modes of incorporation, 4. biographical narrative, 5. young people.

RESUMEN

Este artículo propone la categoría de constelación narrativa de pertenencia entendida como un modo de incorporación, elaborada a partir de la conexión narrativa producida por los hijos de trabajadores agrícolas asentados en el Valle de San Quintín, Baja California y Madera-Fresno, California. Se plantea una simultaneidad de narrativas de pertenencia entre los jóvenes mixtecos, zapotecos y triquis más allá de los confines nacionales como producto de un origen étnico común articulado al escenario del mercado de trabajo agrícola, como contexto de dominación. Se retoma una metodología cualitativa basada en la elaboración de cincuenta relatos biográficos recabados con jóvenes instalados en ambos lados de la frontera. Los hallazgos muestran el dilema entre la pertenencia profunda (o étnica) y las pertenencias adquiridas (no étnicas) como mecanismo de incorporación al contexto de recepción.

Palabras clave: 1. pertenencia, 2. fronteras, 3. modos de incorporación, 4. relato biográfico, 5. jóvenes.

INTRODUCTION

This presentation proposes the category of narrative constellation of belonging to analyze the process of incorporation undertaken by Mixtec, Zapotecan, and Triqui youth in San Quintin Valley, Baja California, and Madera-Fresno, California. The relevance of such a notion, product of a recent investigation,[1] lies in having taken into account three routes of content present in the biographical narratives of the youths interviewed, which we organize methodologically as: discrimination, resistance,[2] and belonging (the latter being the subject of this article). A second aspect which feeds the proposed category is the articulation of the narrative exposition across territorial boundaries, which can be explained as part of a common origin among youths, which reveals a historical heritage of social exclusion rooted in the place of origin and extending to the territories of settlement. As a final element, we find that youths' narrative construction occurs in a setting articulated to the agricultural labor market, which promotes mechanisms of subordination, producing an adverse incorporation, given the intensification of social categories of class, ethnicity, race, and migratory status.

This proposal is discussed in the light of a review of immigrants' integration literature in which we identify two lines of interpretation. The first is considered classic, relating the gradual abandonment of one's own culture as a required step toward cultural assimilation of immigrants. In contrast with the proposal on the logic of a circuit of migration and incorporation of individuals which involves more than one nation state as "methodological nationalism" announces (Wimmer and Schiller, 2003), the latter similar to our concern for documenting plasticity in the means of incorporating immigrants and their descendants, which we do not necessarily read from the perspective of "loss" of culture, but of resignification or transformation.

Under such circuits of circulation of information and persons, narratives emerge as the products of their memories and subjectivities, which account for complex and multiple belongings organized not only in institutional terms of citizenship, but in a subjective form (Schiller, Çaglar, and Guldbrandsen, 2006, p.614). In this regard, the core of belonging to a group or community is formed by social representations understood as socio-cognitive constructs pertaining to a conception of "common

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[1] The investigation was conducted for the purpose of earning a doctoral degree, with date of degree award 2014.

[2] More information on this narrative path can be found in Vargas (2016).

sense" (Gimenez, 1997, p.7). In this case, the narrative constellation of belonging conjugates dimensions between the ethnic and the non-ethnic, synthesized in hereditary and acquired belongings respectively, which are activated as part of the incorporation dilemma undertaken by the children of farm workers on both sides of the border, which we develop herein.

In the first section, we will discuss the receiving context of farm workers and their children, positioning it as a central aspect of adverse incorporation for the population in question. The second section develops the proposal of narrative constellation and its theoretical-methodological foundation. In the sections on hereditary and acquired belongings, we feed the proposed category with the empirical material analyzed. At the end, we present some lines of analysis and conclusions.

BACKGROUND

The agricultural labor market and adverse incorporation

The agricultural labor market linked to agroindustry is characterized by the acute precarity of the working and living conditions therein. Farm workers in the San Quintin Valley; Baja California; and Madera-Fresno, California, face conditions of structural precarity in the sense that the workloads imposed upon them affect their physical and emotional wellbeing. Combined with actors like the state and society, the labor market is one of three elements in which we can see a differential (adverse) incorporation and how poverty is reinforced based on interfaces which transcend people's physical traits and even their cultural values (Quesada, Hart, and Bourgois, 2011). In agribusiness, the incorporation of farm workers is based on selectivity of labor, in relation to different social categories (race, gender, age, ethnicity), and the low costs of immigrant labor are a factor in success (Canales and Zlolniski, 2001). These contexts of migration, articulated to subordinate working life, can be considered an example of adverse incorporation, a category which helps explain how the conditions of the migration context of farm workers on both sides of the border, such as the presence of the agricultural labor market, negative assessments sustained through ethnic and cultural characteristics, and migratory and racial status, are part of a system of subordination which has affected the process of immigrants' incorporation. In a context of social exclusion, the children of farm workers produce complex, multidimensional narratives of identity and belonging, which are revealed to us as windows through which we can

observe the intersection of elements derived from their ancestral culture in juxta-position with acquired elements, revealing a mode of incorporation. Our study po-pulation is made up by children of farm workers with different ethnic origins (Triqui, Zapotecan, and Mixtec) born and raised in niches of intensive agricul-tural production on both sides of the border. Undoubtedly, the subjects' ethnic groups each have their own history of migration, in the study cases we examine in our investigation—and in literature in general—the record shows that Mixtec mi-gration from Oaxaca is the oldest, followed by Zapotecan, and Triqui the most re-cent. Notwithstanding, there are also temporal differences by group, in other words, ethnicity is not the sole factor of interest; political and territorial area of origin is also key to understanding the dynamic of each migration.[3] Thus, Zapo-tecan migration from some Oaxacan villages is much older than others. What is clear is the influence of the year of arrival in the process of migratory regulation; (for example) fathers and mothers who obtained resident status following the 1986 amnesty with the enactment of the IRCA[4] were able to regularize their de-scendants, while others who came later were not. The stories of youths discussed in this essay draw on a variety of migratory scenarios (an aspect which changes their stories); the point of interest is to present the configurations, which subjects them-selves offer for their life experience as children of migrants in both regions and the forms of belonging they acquire, as a strategy to position themselves in complex scenarios of socialization.

A broad review of different theoretical approaches to the topic of cultural inte-gration of immigrants follows two main lines. The first is understood as the classic approach, and supported the idea of cultural belonging articulated to a nation state, involving territorialization of cultural belonging which also presupposed criteria of racialization and ethnicization of the population. The melting pot pro-posed total integration of the immigrant population, resulting in successful amal-gamation of all cultures, races, and ethnic origins. This perspective was viable as long as it referred to a white population, of European origin. However, the ethnic conversion seen in migration to the United States, headed by groups from Latin American, Central American, and Asian countries, radically reshaped the racial

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[3] The dynamic of Oaxacan migration has been extensively documented by various research-ers (Camargo, 2014; Fox and Rivera-Salgado, 2004; Velasco, 2005; 2010; Kissam and Jacobs, 2004; Stephen, 2007; Zabin, 1992).

[4] Immigration Reform and Control Act.

landscape. This last factor and ethnicity gained special importance in the debate on integration of immigrants of what is known as the Second Wave.

In this context, the concepts "amalgamate," "assimilate," and "Americanize" grew increasingly limited as ethnic, racial, and class differences gained power in the process of incorporation (Brubaker, 2001; Alba, 2005; Glazer, 2005, p.123). The perspective of a linear assimilation, in which immigrants and their children would abandon their ethnic origins to "Americanize" to the point of achieving successful integration and/or the "American dream," was prevalent in the literature of the early and mid-20th Century (Garcia, 2004).

In these perspectives, the relationship between culture and territory dominated as a normalized construct articulated to national representations derived from conceptions of identity, constructed from states and their nations (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, p.12). However, new approaches on the topic enjoin us to go beyond the "incarceration of spaces" (Appadurai, 1988), as mechanisms of production of difference in common, shared, and connected places which respond to global systems of domination. They refer on the need to think of relationships of power and culture which function as more than mere contexts (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992, pp.11-18).

Therefore, the second line of our discussion of theoretical approaches to understand the incorporation of migrants is contraposed with the classic perspective on cultural assimilation in which immigrants shed their identitarian background. Here, the focus on "methodological nationalism," which called for redefining the classic concepts of incorporation (assimilation, Americanization), gains force, evidencing that social and historical processes are not necessarily enclosed in the boundaries of nation states (Beck, 2000; Wimmer and Schiller, 2003, p.613). This line of enquiry triggers a production of proposals such as segmented assimilation compared with linear assimilation, which posits a wider circuit of migration in which more than one nation state is articulated, beyond its borders, created from the territorial mobility of subjects (Levitt and Schiller, 2004; Kivisto and Faist, 2010; Vertovec, 2003; Stephen, 2007).

Similarly, segmented assimilation forms part of the discussion and is proposed as a means of understanding, which accounts for the complex processes of incorporation of second-generation migrants, emphasizing that immigrants and their descendants do not necessarily respond to the same logic of incorporation in receiving societies. However, this approach has been criticized for maintaining a dichotomic discourse of success and failure (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997) as an indicator of the quality of integration of second generations (Garcia, 2006).

Consequently, new proposals emerge, like the concept of transborder lives, which sustains the importance and presence of the border crossings Oaxacan migrants confront as they travel from their places of origin until they arrive at their destination, in different orders (legal, state, racial, ethnic, class, gender, colonial, cultural, and regional) (Stephen, 2007, p.25).

In this context, we maintain that the event of cultural incorporation reveals a complex process which involves several levels of analysis and not only the success-failure dichotomy articulated in coexistence with certain institutions (labor-education), as has been proposed from other perspectives (Izquierdo, 2010). Based on empirical observation, a proposal has been developed which accounts for the complex scenario Oaxacan youth face in their efforts to gain incorporation in U.S. society under adverse conditions. Adverse because the mechanisms of domination by class, ethnicity, and migratory status act before and after the territorial border affecting the narrative creation of young children of migrant workers. Based on this problematization, we consider it pertinent to develop a proposal for the notion of narrative constellation of belonging, understood as a mode of incorporation. In other words, as a field with different institutional domains which facilitate the incorporation of immigrants or not, in the understanding that there are various modes of incorporation; accordingly, the analysis we offer has to do with the belonging of social subjects beyond a belonging "organized" in terms of their legal standing or citizenship, but as a subjective form materialized in narrative construction (Schiller et al., 2006, p.614).

NARRATIVE CONSTELLATION OF BELONGING AS A METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The notion of narrative constellation refers to the quality of combining and containing images, symbols, and knowledge relevant to the experience of subjects' mobility and modes of incorporation, from their own narrative construction, which involves social divisions of gender, ethnicity, migratory status, and class. Also, it helps articulate subjects' discourses beyond geographic distance, because there is a common history shared and transmitted across generations (Vargas, 2014). The proposed notion has to do with the field of phenomenology, which refers to the commonplace, the realm of everyday occurrence, as Schutz (Caballero, 1991) conceives it: "the objective and the subjective are dimensions of the phenomenological perspective extant in the social world. The, understood as a given, orga-

nized, orderly world, which is "out there," can be construed as an interpretation of social life which occurs with a "natural attitude." From the field of anthropology, the concept of constellations has been used sparingly; however, in his work, Melgar (2002, p.158) revisits the notion to think of a multi-referential time-space dimension which offers the possibility of assembling a set of symbolic and material elements which are established around a ceremony or activity, of a religious, political, or cultural order. In other words, the notion of constellation has a plastic, flexible quality which can be used in different analytical contexts. For that reason, it is not (sic) useful, due to the opportunity to assemble diverse elements (images, stories, meanings, geographies, and territories) of a process.

In the investigation preceding this exposition, 50 interviews were conducted with children of farm workers (maintaining equitable numbers for each region), under the methodology of biographical narrative, understood as the act of recalling and reciting, in response to a person's request, pursuing an objective for reflection, which crosses the individual biography (Velasco, 2005, p.246). In this exercise, we found that recitation materialized in narrative helps identify patterns of experience (Berteaux, 2005, p.226) and how youths imbue their processes of migration and incorporation with meaning. Thus, there is an evident simultaneity of narratives produced in distant geographies, nonetheless articulated by a memory of exclusion and discrimination derived from their indigenous identity, constructed within a nation state and then reproduced in the context of migration (adding new components). In other words, we found an articulation with proposals of incorporation, which focus on the construction of circuits of experience, which cross territorial boundaries evidencing processes of cultural identification articulated transnationally and escape from *territorial incarceration*.

What does it mean to speak of belonging? This approach opens a field of knowledge in which new theoretical resources are mobilized to approach the topic of second generations of migrants and the complex process of incorporation in receiving societies. The discussion is based on the need of social groups and individuals to belong, and by extension to differentiate themselves as part of a collective identity. Subjects' self-identification, in turn, is rooted in their belonging to a group, on the ability to position themselves within a system of relationships (Melucci, 1985, p.151, cited in Gimenez, 1997, p.11). Therefore, the belongings with which a subject identifies imply the inclusion of individual personality in a collectivity toward which she feels a sense of loyalty, but above all through at least partial appropriation and internalization of the symbolic-cultural complex (Gimenez,

1997, p.6). In the words of Gilberto Gimenez, the key to belong to a group or community involves sharing the symbolic-cultural complex which acts as its emblem, allowing us to re-conceptualize that complex in terms of social representations understood as social and cognitive constructs pertaining to a notion of "common sense" (Gimenez, 1997, p.7). In the case discussed, common sense is informed by historical references of exclusion and social discrimination transmitted generationally to youths, adding a dilemma in incorporation, where hereditary (or ethnic) belonging is differentiated from that acquired in their experience of interaction with the receiving society.

A methodological aspect of the concept of belonging to consider involves the different dimensions and angles of the social life of individuals, which goes beyond ethnic identity, involving other themes which run through the subject's biography (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin, 2011, p.xi). As such, it has the quality of being changing and shaping, through a biography, various belongings and collective identities, adding new forms, resources, and codes which do not necessarily make them part of a collective; rather, such forms and resources produce their effects at a particular point in each individual's biography and process of incorporation in new societies (Apitzsch and Siouti, 2007, and Kazmierska, 2009, p.94). In his analysis, Anthias (2006) proposes understanding the concept of belonging under the idea of "being part," which implies emotions and social connections which are related to different places and/or territories (Anthias, 2006, p.21; 2009). Consequently, when we speak of narrative constellations of belonging, the reference is to social affiliations (day laborer, migrant, activist, indigenous, non-indigenous, professional, dreamer, and others) which subjects assimilate in their consciousness and integrate throughout their life, which are emotionally meaningful at certain biographical moments and in different territories (Fefler and Radenbach, 2009; Anthias, 2006).

In an effort to order the youths' biographical narratives for the purposes of the narrative constellation of belonging, we will guide our analysis under two categories: *hereditary belonging,* which refers to ancestral factors, such as *1)* direct ties to a territory and a social group; *2)* inheritance of generationally transmitted knowledge; and *3)* the use and practice of a system of beliefs, language, and customs. Secondly, we will discuss *acquired belonging,* seen as ties which go beyond ethnic identity, (migrants, farm workers, students, friends, activists) and are part of youths' social identity and have had to be aggregated in the context of their social relations, in response to an effort of integration. In other words, acquired belonging is a non-ethnic form of incorporation which connects with social relationships based on different factors

of culture or common history, such as political, religious, migrant, and youth organizations, in other words bonds that migrants form with both natives and persons who share the same origin (Schiller et al., 2006, p.614).

NARRATIVES OF HEREDITARY BELONGING.
SAN QUINTIN VALLEY, B.C.[5]

Recognition appears as an axis of hereditary belonging associated with ancestral culture, imbuing the history of a person's life and their social group of origin with meaning. Among Oaxacan youths, ancestral culture is expressed in terms of *roots* as a primary link to their people and their communities. In this case, Facundo chooses to tell an anecdote about the system of traditional medicine in his community:

> We're used to that, if a kid gets sick, we take him to pray, to ask for a cure to bad air (*mal de aire*) and, well, evil spirits and all that, which made the kid sick, and like that. Here (in San Quintin) what we do when a kid is sick is say 'take him to the doctor and then use whatever traditional treatments you want;' that's what we tell the parents. And because they did that, the people here thought it was witchcraft, and forbade it. My father is a faith healer, right? So we know perfectly well what's good and what's bad, and that's what we told them (the owners of the work camp) so that they'd give him some space; we explained all that (F. Alvarez, biographical interview, August 11, 2011).

As a cultural promoter, Facundo's job is to stimulate cultural creation and disseminate his people's traditions. Maintaining the rituals which Mixtec women reproduce in the San Quintin Valley through the use of traditional steam baths and healing methods is part of the recognition of the ancestral culture or ties to their roots.

Another aspect of ancestrality can be illustrated with celebrations as a means of transmitting a sense of belonging to the people of origin. This occurs in the case of some Zapotecan families who decided to revive their traditional dances.

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[5] The following sections were developed using the Atlas.ti software, which creates codes, families, and networks to derive in broad categories. Thus, we followed up on the proposal for a founded theory which, in general terms, proposes collection of data and analysis, to then give rise to a theoretical hypothesis (Strauss and Corbin, 2002). In all the cases discussed, pseudonyms were used to safeguard the identity of the interviewees.

As Rodolfo insightfully remarks, it is possible not to have been born in Oaxaca but nonetheless feel a deep-seated sense of belonging with one's parents' people. He says:

> I feel a hundred percent Zapotecan, despite having grown up here and spent most of my life so far in San Quintin; I still feel Zapotecan and I'm very proud of my culture. And so far, in the parades, the parties, I've really enjoyed being at the front of the parades, as if to say "look, I'm Zapotecan, I'm a Zapotecan living here, in San Quintin" (R. Gutierrez, biographical interview, August 30, 2011).

Juan, for his part, explains that he is grateful to the San Quintin Valley as a territory which has provided him and his family with employment and the means of survival; however, he stresses that his *roots* are in Oaxaca:

> I am very grateful to the state (Baja California) and whatever you like, for allowing me to be what I am now, but my roots, where I come from, is Oaxaca, my parents are from there. Perhaps all I've kept is the language, because I haven't retained the traditions, the customs. I can't say I'm from here. It doesn't feel right to say I'm from here. It even bothers me to hear guys who I know are from there (Oaxaca) insist on saying they're from here. Maybe they do it because they feel ashamed; maybe they've experienced rejection, maybe they've experienced discrimination (J. Bautista, biographical interview, September 21, 2011).

Maintaining the position of self-recognition of their parents' and grandparents' culture helps challenge an adverse integration, in which youths endure offensive forms of treatment with reference to their hereditary belonging. Systematically, youths and their families have faced aggression with ethnic and racial content, and consequently many have opted to remain on the margin of ancestrally inherited cultural elements, an area in which language is a central marker.

It is noteworthy that, in the area of school insertion, Oaxacan youths were exposed to the former ethnic classification. In that space, the production of stereotypes articulated to physical traits (almost always reproduced by the Mexican mestizo community) takes on new tinges of social exclusion. This mechanism accounts for the presence of subjects who historically have been stigmatized by the production of identities assigned under the framework of a nation state and transposed to a transnational context; thus, indigenous migrant communities in both California and Baja California represent "minorities among minorities," on the ethnic scale of settled populations (Kissam and Jacobs, 2004, p.304).

MADERA AND FRESNO, CALIFORNIA

In this second scenario; we present the experience of Oaxacan youths who were born or raised in the context of migration in the United States, and whose parents were their closest link to their place of origin. Unlike youths in Baja California, those settled in the United States interact with international ethnic groups and with their social groups of origin. In other words, it is a space with new complexities of incorporation, a factor which is illustrated in Alma's story, where she attempts to explain the group she belongs to:

> If a white American or anyone else who doesn't know me asks '*Are you Californian?*' I say no, I'm Mixtec (laughs), so it depends on who says it or in what group I am, because if I'm talking to another Mixtec, they may say 'no, you don't speak Mixtec, you don't speak like we do, and you don't dress or eat like we do, and people have said that to me; they've said it, like others have also said 'Oh, you're Mixtec," right, yeah, thank you. But usually what you hear from Mixtecs is, 'Not you. You don't speak Mixtec. You grew up here; what are you talking about!' and then it's like 'OK, that's all right.' (A. Sandoval, biographical interview, August 18, 2011).

However, belonging serves as a means of incorporation even beyond what one's own community or the external community considers familiar and alien; that is so due to the creation of a social representation of pertaining to a common domain which gives meaning to the subjects' life in a social milieu (Gimenez, 1997), Sara debates this point:

> I mean, I think that if I feel proud of anything it's where I come from. Here (in California) you always face discrimination; if you're from Oaxaca, they call you *oaxaquita* … I've spent a bigger part of my life in Oaxaca than here, and I know that's where my roots are. When I came here it changed my life and I am aware that I'm Oaxacan, right? And although I don't speak the language, I know that I identify more as indigenous, no? I lost the Zapotecan language not because I chose to, but because (Spanish) was imposed on me, just like English is imposed on us, and learning English and living in this society where if you don't speak it well, if you can't communicate, you can't get ahead, right? So, well, I accepted that I had to learn English, but that doesn't mean I'm going to forget my Spanish, and the same would be true if I spoke Zapotecan (S. Santiago, biographical interview, September 19, 2011).

Sara's story crosses with that of Amalia, daughter of Mixtec parents, born in California, who finds a suggestion of common domain in a saying she has heard from her fellow Oaxacans: "the new generations are seeds planted here; it doesn't matter that they weren't born there, they're still Oaxacans." In the same dynamic of reinforcing ethnic belonging even with the marked social stratification youths face, Angela, a Zapotecan born in Oaxaca, settled in Madera, California, reflects: "In fact, I don't feel ashamed or anything like that; actually, I'd say the opposite, I possess the legacy of my forebears, my grandparents, and in fact even my parents, because my parents still speak Zapotecan. So, it doesn't embarrass me, and sometimes it's useful because we don't all have the privilege of speaking different languages" (A. Lopez, biographical interview, September 15, 2011).

In their own lifetimes, the youths have imbued their belonging to an ethnic group with meaning, as each stage of their life has been marked by various readings and conflicts surrounding their process of identification. Social and ethnic exclusion reshapes the subjects' experience of belonging, molding new interpretations. Aurelio describes his way of evading his ethnic belonging in an early stage of his life:

I compared our situation with Afro-Americans, who were called blacks or other discriminatory names and I saw it like the Mixtec language that I didn't want to learn, so, around 10 years ago, or less if someone asked me where I was from I would say I was from Mexico City. I never told them I was really from Oaxaca, but due to the vicissitudes of life the more you try to get away from something the closer you get to it, and that's what happened to me; the more I distanced myself from my culture, the more it caught up with me (A. Gonzalez, biographical interview, September 20, 2011).

Among the youths interviewed, there is a clear tendency to cling to a common domain which, in the midst of ethnic conflict, heteroperception, social exclusion, and coexistence with a diversity of social and ethnic groups, provides them with elements for incorporation in new scenarios, articulated to their ancestral roots. Youths in the study population show what other authors have reported before, in relation to clearly underscoring dilemmas and conflicts regarding change and continuity in the cultural groups they belong to (Perez, 2011, p.1).

NARRATIVES OF ACQUIRED BELONGING

San Quintin Valley, B.C.

We associate *acquired belonging* with those categories with which youths identify to resignify their experience in the study regions dominated by intensive agriculture. Being migrants and farm workers are two spheres of social life which have informed their biographical experience in the study regions.

In another period of his life, Juan asked his parents why they migrated if they had land and water in their village, to which his father replied that their exodus was motivated by a desire to *improve* and give their children an education. In this regard, he narrates:

> My parents always insisted that we were all here or had undergone the process of migration to improve ourselves, because we had everything there (in their village). So, it was a process of change, but … well we knew why we were here. And they (my parents) insisted that we had to improve ourselves, and they had to emigrate to the United States to provide us with a better quality of life (J. Torres, biographical interview, August 10, 2011).

For youths, the San Quintin Valley suggests a place which offers opportunities for employment and education, forming feelings of belonging and recognition. Rodolfo identifies with his ethnic belonging as a Zapotecan, but in counterpoint observes:

> We must remember that San Quintin is part of us as well, in the sense that, well, it was the land where we grew up, that gave my parents work and will give me work as well, and most likely is where I'll raise my children. So, we're what they call Oaxacalifornians, Oaxacalifornians, Oaxaca and Baja California; so, I take great pride in being from San Quintin. And as my dad says: "We can't be just indigenous. We have to be non-indigenous to get along with others" (R. Rodriguez, biographical interview, August 12, 2011).

Working life in the Valley is part of the life story of youths who from an early age have taken part in the economic activities of their domestic group, providing services as laborers, companions, and even caregivers for their younger siblings, while their parents work harvesting vegetables. What appears interesting to emphasize is their way of reinterpreting their experience of social exclusion, as part of a broader process of incorporation in the social, economic, and cultural life of the

region. The case of Samuel reveals a situation of considerable interest, linked to factors of discrimination and social exclusion.

For Samuel, working in the fields entailed a substantial disadvantage in different areas like nutrition, dress, and *health*, in contrast with mestizo children who performed better and achieved higher grades in school due to their family, cultural, and economic context. Samuel uses the metaphor of *the normal* in different senses, one of which is articulated to that which is *normalized* as the heavy farm labor children perform the Valley. The other meaning refers to the advantages mestizos acquire in their lifetimes, in contrast with indigenous people. Thus, "normal people" (S. Hernandez, biographical interview, August 8, 2011) have education, preparation, and money, whereas an indigenous person (Mixtec, Zapotecan, or Triqui) has to work "double or triple" to attain the same benefits, (S. Hernandez, biographical interview, August 8, 2011). This reflection, offered by Samuel at an early age, spurred him to make an effort to blend into his new social and cultural environment, as a strategy against discrimination: "If you weren't from here (San Quintin), you had to become from here; otherwise people would discriminate against you, say you're an outsider, short, dark skinned, you don't speak Spanish well, and they would almost force you to adapt to the local culture and customs, the local teachings, the clothing, everything that defines the world here" (S. Hernandez, biographical interview, August 8, 2011).

The imposition of cultural elements is a noteworthy issue in the narratives of the youths interviewed; belonging has to do with a feeling of rootedness which reveals emotions and attachment to a social group or place. However, when they are criticized about factors they have been obliged to integrate in their daily life, they see it as an attack on their identity. Thus, the relationship with otherness is experienced as an imposition and when discrimination is exacerbated, the population decides to abandon language as a public and significant social element of a community.

In the living conditions of the Valley, few indigenous youths manage to attain a high level of education, like earning a university degree. Such an accomplishment depends on family and economic factors, educational institutions, and—needless to say—the subject's own tenacity. On several occasions, Samuel's father urged him to work hard at his studies, and when he finished high school, encouraged him to find non-agricultural work. Consequently, he sought employment in places "away from the sunlight," taking a job at a drug store as an example of a decent job: "where you work indoors, with an eight-hour

day, and your rights, or at least some of them, are respected, not like in the fields where you have no rights, not even the right to speak up" (S. Hernandez, biographical interview, August 8, 2011).

Madera-Fresno, California

On the other side of the border, youths articulate recognition for their struggle to achieve the American dream, which could be one of the primary belongings acquired in the narratives collected. Jacobo, a member of the dreamer movement in California, analyzes the situation:

> I have to acknowledge that I wasn't born here, I have to acknowledge my reality, my skin is dark, if I want to be like "John Smith," even if we attend the same school, I have to work twice as hard, among other things … I have to remember that I speak Zapotecan and if I dream of being like John Smith, like achieving the American, right; I have to work like a dog to make it, and that's the mentality I possess; I want to be someone (J. Julian, biographical interview, September 31, 2010).

In the context of international migration, there are different migratory statuses which affect youths' narratives; the group formed by undocumented migrants with high levels of formal schooling seek to develop their profession credentials and thereby gain access to jobs suited to their academic preparation. Deferred Action[6] has helped relieve pressure on dreamers in the area of professional development. However, given the current state of U.S. politics, following the electoral victory of candidate Donald Trump, not only is deportation a latent threat to undocumented immigrants, they also fear the derogation of DACA,[7] which would radically alter the situation for such youths' in the United States.

In the case of Madera and Fresno, a central theme in the narratives of the youths interviewed revolves around the issue of deportation, mainly for those who remain undocumented or are United States citizens whose parents still lack migratory documents. In that case, the youths live in a state of ambiguity where they are constantly making plans between the United States and Mexico. Sandra is a visually

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[6] The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program is designed for persons who meet its general requisites: *1)* Have been born after August 16, 1981, *2)* have arrived in the United States as a child (under age 16), *3)* have attained educational or personal improvement (High School, GED, or Armed Forces), and *4)* not represent a risk to National Security or have a criminal record.

[7] Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).

impaired young woman who has found educational opportunities in San Jose, California, due to favorable conditions the city offers for similarly challenged persons. Her aspiration remains to pursue higher education, although for her parents the need to stay employed and their undocumented status represent a twofold source of anxiety, making them think more seriously of returning, about which Sandra observes:

> Yes, I'd like to go back, but if I could investigate if there are programs … I don't know, even in the state of Oaxaca; in fact, I was investigating the other day, but I was told that there are a lot of problems; you can work as a volunteer to help disabled children, and that's what I want to do some day if I go back to Mexico; I want to start a program to help children who lack opportunities and have the same problem as I (visual impairment), teach them what I've learned here (in California), however little or however much (S. Martinez, biographical interview, September 7, 2010).

Jacobo shares the same feeling with Sandra. At age eight[8] he came with his family to Madera, California, and although undocumented, he has earned a bachelor's degree and is actively involved in organizing his ethnic community and with young dreamers. The latter has given him a prominent presence in his community (generational and ethnic), where he is recognized as a leader. Through his social and community involvement, Jacobo has developed an important discourse on his social belongings as an undocumented youth who has benefited from Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). Jacobo acknowledges feeling a special affection for California's Central Valley, imbued with meaning due to the sacrifices his fellow countrymen have made to migrate to the United States seeking employment in agriculture: "I'm proud of this Valley; everyone makes a sacrifice to be here, especially immigrants" (J. Santiago, biographical interview, September 2, 2010).

Youths who are citizens by birth often develop a sense of solidarity with immigrants because their parents, family members, or countrymen have suffered discrimination on account of their migratory status. The context encourages young citizens to participate in migrants' struggles, forming a common front, which explains why someone like Amalia says: "I was born here but I'm a migrant because my parents came here from Oaxaca" (C. Julian, biographical interview, September 31, 2010).

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[8] Age 21 at the time of the interview.

Although the youths repeatedly affirm their belonging to certain territories and social groups, they also face challenges from a Mexican community that questions their identity as Mexicans, with a self-adopted aura of *purity*. This in turn produces a variety of positions on the issue, as expressed in ideas of what it means to be Mexican, Chicano, or Mexican American each of which conveys something different. On the subject, Amalia remarks: "I can't say I'm an Aztec, I can't say I'm a Yaqui, I can't say I'm an American, I can't say I'm a Mexican born here, because in a sense this land doesn't belong to me, my parents are buying a home but it's not my native land and spiritually it doesn't belong to me" (A. Martinez, biographical interview, September 7, 2010).

Among the youths interviewed, belonging to the United States is not necessarily associated with being born there; paradoxically, those who came at an early age cling to their sense of national identity as a way of expressing their belonging and support for their right to be considered citizens. In contrast, youths born in the United States, and therefore citizens, show a critical form of belonging, because they must overcome different issues before openly establishing their identity:

> I started to participate in the dreamer cause because I saw Jacobo and others in the group. Jacobo is someone I admire; he has no papers, but he does a lot, while other young people who were born here have their papers and do nothing and spend their time doing drugs and just don't care … that's why, even though I had my papers and migration was never an issue that affected my family directly, it affected my friends in one way or another, Jacobo, Liliana, Erick … their stories touched my heart and they have the right. Why shouldn't they have the same right as people with papers?! (A. Gonzalez, biographical interview, September 20, 2011).

In another case on migratory status, Sofia gained citizenship by naturalization, which was an important, and at the same time surreal, circumstance, as she describes it. Fluent in the Mixtec language, a daughter of farm workers, and a professional, she offers a distinct view on her new migratory status:

> It was kind of surreal … there was a large percentage of Mexicans, people from India, people from Colombia … it was a big deal for them, because they were part of that nationality. You're an American now! They give you a letter from the president—mine is signed by Bush—(laughs), which said *Welcome Fellow American*; it was a reason to celebrate for many, really excited, my mother, my brother, my sister (S. Santos, biographical interview, September 1, 2010).

Although the United States demands absolute loyalty from newly naturalized citizens, the request is impossible due to the bonds and roots youths have acquired from their family context. Although citizenship opens doors for their professional growth and employment opportunities, loyalty gains relevance against a backdrop of cultural practices acquired within the Oaxacan immigrant community.

Modes of belonging among youths in Madera and Fresno can be seen as elastic, responding to the need for integration in the plurality of receiving societies. As Sara explains, learning English and/or Spanish is part of their efforts to assimilate: "although you might not want to, you are obliged to learn English, as your first step toward cultural assimilation" (S. Martinez, biographical interview, September 7, 2010).

We try to understand "bridge situations" which represent the subjects' everyday social actions, which involve their living experience and perception in the context of immigration (Cruz-Salazar, 2012, p.158). This situation, observed in belongings, actually denotes a conflict in which different social categories in contact come into play, through everyday social interaction with different social groups, in both the community of origin and the receiving community.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The analysis of incorporation of farm workers' children in the study regions involves several confluent elements: a historical legacy of social exclusion constructed within the nation state of origin and the characteristics of the destination, in this case understood as the agricultural labor market, marked by migration immersed in social disadvantages understood as adverse incorporation. That aspect is approached from the narrative constellation of belonging proposed as a hermeneutical category and as the result of an exhaustive analysis of a set of systematized narratives. It is considered a heuristic resource in the complex analysis originating in the voices of subjects located in distant geographies, in which subjectivities intertwine in the context of a common historical origin and interethnic processes converging with attitudes and practices of discrimination and social exclusion, all in a circular territory, conceived after the style of methodological nationalism, which produce social power relationships associated with multiple social actors, including the job market, nation states, and social groups on a common plane of everyday coexistence.

An interesting aspect of the narrative constellation of belonging is that there are dimensions of the ethnic and the non-ethnic in the narrative of young children of farm workers, which we have described as hereditary belonging and acquired

belonging, respectively. In that sense, the incorporation of youths shifts from an ethnic belonging to others constructed in the context of migration, moving like a pendulum, creating bridges between their references and historical memories inherited from their parents and grandparents, at the same time as they develop feelings of belonging to their new home and its actors. The narratives analyzed reveal contradictions in thinking, positions, belongings, grievances, impositions, and identities, in which we can identify awareness of ethnicity, social class, and migratory status, highlighting an experience between two (or more) cultures, as Gloria Anzaldua would argue with the *mestiza* who, as such awareness awakens, "is immersed in a new value systems and suffers a battle of frontiers, an inner warfare" (Anzaldua, 1987).

The conceptual exercise we undertook was to create the categories of *hereditary belonging* and *acquired belonging*, considering aspects of convergence but also of differentiation in each context. In San Quintin Valley, Baja California, we find that recognition of an ancestral culture is expressed from the *roots*, defined in relation to family, ancestors, the people or state of origin, and the three primary cores of attachment to origin.

Recognition of individual identity or awareness of ethnic origin is read in the context of new systems of interpretation, as shown by the case of Facundo, between the traditional medical system using steam baths and the knowledge of a people which does not lose validity in a new territory, but combines new elements in an effort of cultural dialog. Another aspect of hereditary belonging is the adversity involved in recognizing oneself and interiorizing an ethnic identity (Triqui, Zapotecan, Mixtec), in terms of the consequences of being—at the same time—discriminated against by the other settled groups, Mexicans in particular. In response to the risk of experiencing a new socio-ethnic trauma, some youths cease to shout their ethnic belonging *to the four winds*, although, paradoxically, it constitutes a resource of social interaction and also of integration.

The common theme taken from Gimenez (1997) emphasizes the context of Madera and Fresno, California; nevertheless, on both sides of the border, the narratives show that, although the self-identification youths choose in terms of their ethnic group of origin may be challenged from within their own community, that can be explained as a resource of belonging which subjects employ to cope with conditions of discrimination, in other words strengthening their own cultural identity. Expressed differently, it is part of their protection against a racially and ethnically hostile environment.

Moreover, the definition of *acquired belonging* helped to explain the function of youths' social attachments, which also represent their life story and do not respond to an ancestral legacy, but to relationships other than culture or common background, and fuel the process of incorporation. Such belongings even help some youths reassess traumatic experiences from their childhood. In the discourse of migrants' descendants, migration is construed as a chance to attain better living conditions, firmly articulated to the pursuit of higher education. In that sense, having worked as day laborers in childhood is subjectively constructed as a necessary step to achieve better living conditions. Farm labor is an undertaking which is embraced with gratitude, as a means of dignifying one's parents' and grandparents' journey and finding a sense of belonging rooted in experience articulated to a new territory. For his part, Samuel finds a way to *get to the heart of the matter*, and conclude that although day labor was a means of gaining access to new social spaces, it came at the cost of a multiplied effort in relation to the native-born mestizo population settled in San Quintin Valley. Assimilating and incorporating new elements provided by a new territory was part of avoiding being the object of discrimination and mockery. As Aurelio remarks, in the context of social relationships, his generation experienced "a double life" (A. Gonzalez, biographical interview, September 20, 2011), between showing hereditary belonging faced with the need to gain inclusion in new social groups and work in an unfamiliar job market, all to climb, once more, to new situations of hostility.

In the case of Madera and Fresno, *acquired belonging* revolves around the dichotomy of documented/undocumented. The dreamer movement, unquestionably, marks belonging for educated Oaxacan youths, because it appears as a beacon of struggle and recognition of their rights as citizens, not by birth or naturalization, but by virtue of their having lived practically all their lives in the United States. Being dreamers is a means of dignifying their place in a territory which "is not spiritually theirs" (C. Julian, biographical interview, September 31, 2010), as one interviewee says, but has marked their life experience nevertheless. Involvement in the movement allows the youths to articulate a national political discourse in which they encounter peers with diverse ethnic origins, in this case ethnicity played a secondary role, and the most important aspect was to sustain a social struggle to ensure their permanency in the United States, while revindicating some fundamental rights, among them, the right to higher education, to improve their prospects on the job market. This struggle has also had an impact among youths who have some form of legal migratory status, although they give the impression of enjoying a privileged life compared

with their peers, who have to launch a social movement to exercise their rights. In this sense, their openly identifying as part of the groups of farm workers and undocumented migrants consolidates two of the central axes in the construction of acquired belongings which outline aspects of political disputes.

Finally, it bears mention that the study of the incorporation of new generations implies a recognition of their own cultural origins as a fundamental part of our analysis. This, no doubt, is a challenge for the social sciences in view of Donald Trump's ascendency as president-elect of the United States, given that interethnic and interracial relations will acquire special relevance.

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