Undocumented Youth Living Between the Lines: Urban Governance, Social Policy, and the Boundaries of Legality in New York City and Paris

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Undocumented Youth Living Between the Lines: Urban Governance, Social Policy, and the Boundaries of Legality in New York City and Paris

by

Stephen P. Ruszczyk

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2015
This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Abstract

Undocumented Youth Living Between the Lines: Urban Governance, Social Policy, and the Boundaries of Legality in New York City and Paris

by

Stephen Ruszczyk

Advisor: Dr. Robert C. Smith

This dissertation compares the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth in New York and Paris, along with analysis of the construction of illegality in each city. In both the United States and France, national restrictions against undocumented immigrants increasingly take the form of deportations and limiting access to social rights. New York City and Paris, however, mitigate the national restrictions in important but different ways. They construct “illegality” differently, leading to different young adult outcomes and lived experiences of “illegality.” This project uses seven years of multi-site ethnographic data to trace the effects of these mitigated “illegalities” on two dozen (male) youth.

We can begin to understand the variation in these undocumented young men’s social lives within and between cities by centering on (1) governance structure, the labyrinth of obtaining rights associated with citizenship, (2) citizenship, the possibility of gaining a legal status, steered in particular by civil society actors, and (3) identity, here centered on youths’ negotiation of social mobility with the fear of enforcement.

Biographical narratives show the shifts in social memberships as youth transition to new countries, new restrictions at adulthood, and new, limiting work. In New York, most social prospects are flattened as future possibilities are whittled down to ones focusing on family and wages. Undocumented status propels New York informants into
an *accelerated* transition to adulthood, as they take on adult responsibilities of work, paying bills, and developing families. In Paris, youth experience more divergent processes of transitioning to adulthood. Those who are more socially integrated use a civil society actor to garner a (temporary) legal status, which does not lead to work opportunities. Those who are less socially integrated face isolation as they wait to gain status and access to better jobs. Paris undocumented youth are thus characterized by a *decelerated* transition to adulthood as most lack sufficient resources for adult responsibilities.

The comparison of Paris and New York shows how different institutional, social, and political contexts—including different systems of state and local governance, political culture and labor market characteristics—produce specific contours of social life for undocumented youth, with varying outcomes. Using boundary theory to represent these different socio-legal and socio-economic contexts over time, we see the more flexible regularization practices in Paris helping youth cross the legal boundary but remaining stratified vis-à-vis the social boundary. With a low deportation risk, New York’s legal boundary is blurred. Federal restrictions, however, mean youth also end up stratified vis-à-vis the social boundary. A key difference, however, lies in the family and romantic relationship benefits of available low-end work in New York.
Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to all of the admirable young men and women, and others like them, who have shared their stories and lives with me over the past seven years. I find their quotidian strength to superar [overcome] in the face of legal and social hurdles most impressive. The inspiration I have taken from them has been continually refreshed as I revisit and re-read my notes, and will not end with this dissertation.

This ethnographic, longitudinal, and comparative project could not have been broached without an incredible array of steady intellectual, emotional, and financial support. In addition to the extensive guidance each of my Committee members has imparted, their personal support has been equally as important. At the Graduate Center, I would like to single out Robert C. Smith for the myriad lessons he has taught me since 2008. Your faith in the (eventual) strength of this project has been crucial to my confidence in carrying it out. Your feedback has consistently been insightful. At my most stressed, you always managed to elicit a laugh, reminding me to appreciate the human and the academic joys of these graduate school years.

Richard Alba has been helping me before I even met him, letting me into an overbooked course with him in 2008. Without the three foundational courses you taught, my path would have been much more winding and lengthy. Your long-view wisdom and comparative expertise, and occasional chuckle, have kept my spirit in good condition during the past seven years.

Paul Attewell has often been a second advisor to me. After teaching two classes and working together on two projects, your endless curiosity and standards of hard work
have pushed me to new limits. Your selfless willingness to mentor me has left a lasting impression. Thank you.

Nicole Marwell has been instrumental in broadening my vision of how power works. Your friendly and disciplined dialogue steadied me during times when I felt conceptually lost. Your influence on this and another project is plain to see.

I also tell people that I have benefited from an honorary committee. Nancy Foner, John Mollenkopf, Bryan Turner, and Phil Kasinitz have generously provided essential foundations and extra support on comparative immigration studies, urban politics, citizenship, and urban studies, respectively.

Thank you to Anna Hofmann, Jane Bartels, and Christina Sietz at the Zeit Stiftung Settling Into Motion Program for the financial and logistical support, and to my colleagues for their support.

I have been lucky to have received advice and direction from Joanna Dreby, Roberto Gonzales, Ernesto Castañeda, Els de Graauw, and Veronica Terriquez; thank you for your mentorship.

Nathan Warner and Koby Oppenheim have worked back and forth with me from the big ideas to the nuts and bolts, many, many times, and often with little turnaround time. Thank you for the consistently helpful feedback on this and other work. I have presented several papers to members of the Immigration Working Group, and have gained in confidence and smarts from their feedback.

This project would not have been possible without a long list of non-academics. My work began inspired by the students and staff at EBC and FDR High Schools. Those in Paris made me feel at home and inspired me in a personal and civic manner. I count
myself lucky to have crossed paths with many members of RESF, but especially Jean-Pierre Fournier, Brigitte Weiser, and Marianne Cabaret-Rossi. Other groups welcomed me, including RESF 20ème, RESF JM, Autremonde, Archipélia, and Relais Ménilmontant. Doing a comparative project would not have been possible without your daily teachings.

Several professors in France generously gave their time and energy to helping me develop the French case. Above all, the work and personal support of Patrick Simon and Smaïn Laacher helped me, beginning in 2010. Nicolas Jounin, Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, Marie Têtu-Delage, Johanna Siméant, and the doctoral students of the Atelier Migrations of the EHESS also generously gave me needed feedback. Thank you to the Americhs for teaching me French back in the 1990s.

Last but certainly not least, thank you to my wife for your love, your emotional and intellectual support, and being understanding of my (temporary, right?) lack of free time as I’ve completed this project. Esther, I do not overlook your daily support without which I could not have completed this project. My nearly thirty years of studying began with the devotion and social justice orientation of my parents and sisters and the support of many smart, generous friends. Thank you Christian Siener for your old computer!

To acknowledge everyone that has helped me in this project would require a full chapter. Thank you to all the hands that have pushed this collective project forward.
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Introduction: How Do Governance and Citizenship Structure Undocumented Youth in New York and Paris?

Introduction

Since the 1970s and 1980s, laws in France and the United States on immigration and integration have developed divergently, enveloped in contradictions. Even as immigration has continued at high levels in each country—about two hundred thousand immigrants enter France (INED 2011) annually along with about a million that enter the United States every year (DHS 2014)—so-called border policy has moved from formal entrance restrictions at the border to everyday contexts in the interior of each country. Strong global and national inequalities that encourage more and more immigration thus are buffeted by these increasing national restrictions, creating more undocumented residents and most importantly for this study, more families with undocumented youth.

Like other undocumented residents, undocumented youth lie at the confluence of inclusionary and exclusionary pressures. Many employers prefer more accommodating undocumented workers, while anti-immigrant organizations activate citizen animosity towards “illegals,” who seem politically illegitimate. In contrast to their adult counterparts, youth experience the social inclusion of school life. The crescendo towards “illegality” therefore builds around the age of adulthood, as restrictions on higher education and work take their effect in the minds and social lives of teenagers transitioning to adulthood. With concentrations of undocumented youth across large cities, allies there—immigrant and human rights organizations, religious organizations, unions, and local governments—have formed a critical mass, pushing to build new inclusionary projects around these vulnerable youth.
We see these contradictions lived out by undocumented youth. In Paris, Souleymane was told “to go back home” after applying for a visa just after he turned 18. At the age of 20, he arrived to the courtroom to appeal a deportation order, cheered on by his entire school and most of the staff. With the help of an advocate, three years later, he personally met the city’s Police Chief, argued why he should be legalized, and won. In 2014, he has a Master’s in Marketing and Management. All are not so well positioned. Also in Paris, Tarek received a vocational diploma and now works short stints in a restaurant, butcher shop, and part-time plumbing, let go every month or two, told that without papers, the possibility of a raid or inspection is too risky.

Ernie graduated from a New York high school with an unsure future, and followed the most certain prospect: working at a factory where an uncle works. His consistent checks help support his family’s rent and his four year-old son. Luis also graduated from a New York high school and quickly realized the difficulty of paying for college as an undocumented student. At 19 years old, he left his family and returned to Mexico to study architecture and fulfill his dream of becoming a professional. He now has a Bachelor’s degree and works in Public Works in his hometown. What explains the four different outcomes of these cases?

With the onset of formal legal exclusion at the age of 18 in both Paris and New York, these undocumented young adults have access to different resources, including contacts with moral sympathizers such as co-ethnics, teachers, and grassroots organizers. Different governance structures position these sympathizers differently, with a diverse set of Parisian actors surprisingly better located to contest the exclusion of youth against the stronger Parisian enforcement of legal status. In Paris, when contestation on behalf of
sans-papiers young adults does not arise, youth identities undergo a difficult cooling out process; when it does, they forge a more integrated identity. Thus, youth face a more risky legal environment in Paris but have a good chance of winning legal status in their early adulthood years. In New York, youths lack access to legalization, and thus negotiate their future largely outside of public institutions. The city minimizes the threat of deportation, leaving youth to work to support families. In Paris and New York, the different modes of citizenship practiced by youths strongly influence their social trajectories as they come of age.

Thus I argue that we can explain the variation in these trajectories of undocumented youth by (1) contrasting the governance structure impacting the integration of the undocumented in each locality, the historically-produced nexus of the national and local legal contexts, (2) comparing the different modes of citizenship in each locality and (3) describing the ways undocumented youth respond to and are situated by those contexts.

Undocumented residents are those “who are not [U.S.] citizens, who do not hold current permanent resident visas, or who have not been granted permission under a set of specific authorized temporary statuses for longer-term residence and work” (Passel & Cohn, 2009: vi). Undocumented youth who entered the territory without a visa or overstayed a visa include undocumented minors and undocumented adults who spent at least part of their childhood in the US or France.¹ Without immediate family citizens, low-status Mexican would-be immigrants face a decades-long backlog in obtaining a visa, making legal immigration a near impossibility for many (State Department 2013).

¹ In the decades-long absence of legislative reform, indeed a significant proportion of undocumented youth no longer fit the typical image of ‘youth’ and are over 30 years old.
For youth who arrived unauthorized by land\(^2\), virtually no recourse exists for shifting legal status. Having US citizen family, including children, does not facilitate obtaining a visa.\(^3\)

That being said, undocumented youth is a fluid socio-legal category, meaning individuals may move from being without legal status to legal status, or one can lose a temporary legal status (Duvell 2011a; Laacher 2009; Ngai 2004). However, studying the modes of undocumented life does not imply that they are captives of their status, and indeed one goal of my framework is to show how youth may contest their status. Crucially, these transitions to and from legal residence—and the nature of their duration—are not immutable and are managed by a system of governance in each place.

The nature of the production of “illegality,” the social and legal construction attached to unauthorized immigrants, varies according to the policies and practices of various public institutions. Ethnographic and interview-based studies (Gonzales 2011; Abrego 2006, 2008, 2011; Willen 2007; De Genova 2005; Menjivar 2000; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011; Gleeson and Gonzales 2012) have done significant work in showing us which contextual factors are most salient in the production of “illegality” that characterizes everyday and institutional experiences for undocumented youth and adults. We know that the exclusion experienced as an “illegal” person is multidimensional (Abrego 2011; Dreby 2012; Menjivar and Abrego 2012). It affects educational trajectories (Abrego and Gonzales 2010), work experiences and possibilities (Fortuny et al. 2007), family life (Smith 2008), health care, housing conditions (Oliveri 2009),

\(^2\) Youth who arrive by air with a temporary visa may adjust their status by marrying an American citizen.

\(^3\) Sons and daughters may sponsor parents once they have turned 21 years old, though there is a ten-year entry penalty for those who have resided in the US without a visa.
relationships with partners, civic engagement and fills everyday experiences with anxiety, fear, and stress (Gonzales, Suárez-Orozco and Dedios-Sanguineti 2013). With others (interactional partners) in these situations identifying youth as undocumented or “illegal,” we know that the self is remade in a Goffmanian sense as youth are confronted with the extent of their exclusion.

One of the central questions this research asks is how undocumented youth are doing as they transition to adulthood, and the youth in the study do not experience one uniform outcome to their status. The distinction between ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ is by no means a binary, and is contingent on socio-political conditions (see Jones-Correa and De Graauw 2013). Sociologist Gonzales (2011) developed the concept of a ‘career of illegality’ in which youth discover and cope with the impact of legal status as they come of age. This concept attunes us to the role of passing of time as one key contingency in the socio-political context. The relative inclusion of undocumented youth quickly declines at adulthood, as Gonzales and Chavez (2012) put it: “Awakening to a nightmare.” An important time effect of exclusion is youth’s sense of belonging and legitimacy fades with time outside mainstream institutions. Youth are socialized into “illegality.” The effect of time spent legally marginalized has a strong impact on later possibilities. More precisely, the social position of youth waiting for a change in status also shifts as their access to resources—and their dreams—diminishes.

Illegality, in creating a (contingent) socio-political order, does not manifest itself only on individual bodies but on communities, too (Dreby 2012; Abrego 2013; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011). Community-level effects of legal status range from lack of direct political representation, fear of participation in institutional activity (Yoshikawa 2011),
and difficulties maintaining reciprocal relationships (Menjivar 2000). With the increase in shutting down the border and over 25 years since the last legalization in the United States, the expansion in number and prolongation in time of the undocumented population means that mixed status families and mixed social networks also suffer repercussions from the socio-political regime. It affects the over four million citizen children of undocumented families (Passel and Cohn 2009) as well as their schools and neighborhoods. In France, the last amnesty was in 1997. However, other administrative acts have regularized undocumented residents in the past decade, keeping the growth of undocumented population in check (Schain 2012).

We can trace the exclusion of those without residence permits to new immigration technologies, such as the passport, in combination with stricter enforcement procedures and administrations (Duvell 2011b; Caplan and Torpey 2001) that separated irregular from regular migrants following World War One. Today, complex bureaucracies govern entry into France and the United States. While often framed as a border issue in the popular press, governments have shifted their attention to their interior where unauthorized immigrants have been living. Irregular migrants comprise some 11 million residents in the United States (Passel and Cohn 2011) and over half a million in France (my updated estimate based on Courau 2009). Of these populations, tens of thousands of current and former undocumented adolescent residents face legal exclusion in each country.

Nearly a quarter of Parisians and over a third of New Yorkers are immigrants (see Table 1 below). About a quarter of those immigrants are undocumented in Paris and one

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4 Mixed status families refers to families that have both undocumented and documented members.
in six in New York. Youth, those who arrived under 18 years of age but are under 30, make up about one in nine undocumented in Paris and one in six in New York.

**Table 1:** Select Immigrant Populations, Paris and New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paris</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Population</td>
<td>2,234,105</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8,185,314</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Immigrants</td>
<td>509,376</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3,042,315</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Undocumented Immigrants</td>
<td>129,604</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>499,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Undocumented Youth (15-30 years old with 5 years residence)</td>
<td>15,000</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are of the category one row above.

Sources:
- New York, 2010: a) b) c) Lobo and Salvo 2013
- New York, 2012: d) NYIC 2012
- c) Secrétariat général 2011
- d) Author estimate

Thus, while usually framed as a national border issue, this dissertation examines the lives of undocumented youth within the local expressions of illegality in New York and Paris, cities that experts view as having large undocumented populations (Lobo and Salvo 2013; Sénat 2012). The ways in which these youth are excluded has a clear impact on how their identities develop and how they integrate into society after coming of age. Irregular migrants, unauthorized migration, and regimes to control it are a primary consideration for states, media, and popular imaginations (Laacher 2009; Ngai 2004). Governance regimes— instructed with the task of providing universal services but also of limiting the pool of nationals—do not only shape youth identities but also their ability and likelihood of working to shift those regimes.

The second central question in this research is how cities create a context for
reception and integration of undocumented youth. How do the actors create and contest migrant “illegality” in Paris and New York? Just as the effects of migrant “illegality” are not uniform, the ways that countries and cities respond to it are also not consistent. Counter-intuitively, France’s centralized system translates into local decision-making on immigration matters, as local prefectures award residence permits. This division of powers magnifies the salience of the local level on immigration issues, allowing moral sympathizers, whose presence, in turn, normalizes and bureaucratizes undocumented status, to play an important role in the lives of individual undocumented youth. In contrast, federal authority in the US limits the effectiveness of local political mobilization, leaving undocumented youth with a difficult mobilization campaign on a national level and adaptations that makes the grade of mobility especially steep. The actions of New York City in maintaining and promoting an inclusive discourse about undocumented residents point to a degree of social inclusion. How effective are these cities as actors in governing undocumented youth? Are they confined by national restrictive policies, or do they experience considerable autonomy from the national level?

*This study*

Though scholars often assume people without legal status are excluded in similar ways, the contestation of their inclusion and exclusion has been little examined with experiences from everyday life (in contrast to Soysal 1994; Jacobson 1996). To this end, ethnographic methods have allowed me to track change that occurs as undocumented youth come of age. As youths progress through adolescence and develop self-understandings in relation to society, their relationships with institutions underlie their social trajectories. Educational institutions form the backbone of these relationships, with
undocumented youth under the age of 18 included in the normative socialization of ‘nationals’ that occurs in schools. In Paris as in New York, once the threshold of 18 years is passed, youth must adapt to a life rife with (legal and social) exclusion.

The major goal of this project has been to link the lived experiences of my informants in Paris and New York, at a key point in the life course, to the meso- and macro-level factors that structure their experiences of inclusion and exclusion. To explore their experiences without sight of the context risks disregarding how government (Duvell 2011a) and other actors construct their status. In addition to the acts of government actors, discursive practices mirror and communicate moral underpinnings that also comprise the socio-legal context (Newton 2005; Cesari 2004) of ‘illegality.’ This ambitious framework, and the mixed methodologies that support it, takes into account institutional and discursive elements as well as the subjectivity of individual actors, and analyzes them over time using low inference data (Becker 2001). The comparison between Paris and New York then sheds light on how these processes might differ given different schemes of local governance.

These micro-macro issues can coherently be examined in a boundary framework (Tilly 2006; Tilly and Tarrow 2006; Lamont and Molnar 2002) that juxtaposes the experiences of individual undocumented youth with their documented peers in their local context, and so I follow recent scholarship’s move towards framing social processes in terms of boundary work (see Zolberg and Loon 1999; Alba 2005; Massey and Sanchez R. 2010). While most boundary analyses examine movements across a single social

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5 Minors in metropolitan France, though occasionally subjected to deportation proceedings, do not legally become sans-papiers until the age of 18.

6 Low inference data refers to the use of theoretical terms that are close to the terms used in field notes or by informants.
boundary, Figure One (see below) fittingly represents the double boundary undocumented youth encounter, comprising a social and a legal boundary. On a national level, this boundary framework allows a representation of those who support restrictions on legal residence with those who fight for inclusion for the undocumented. At this level, we may observe as the boundary shifts due to social movements that build support for the undocumented or as newspapers frame them as a burden. The relevance of the boundary may diminish, and those on either side may become less distinct, resulting in boundary blurring. Legal boundary 1 could blur due to lax enforcement or few rights being accorded to documented residents. Social boundary 2 blurs with the prevalence of undocumented youth in public institutions. Looking only at the national policy by itself would oversimplify this messy reality: despite national policy on authorized entry and work, localities interpret and buffer those policies in significant ways (Penninx et al. 2004). On a local level, a boundary framework allows me to contrast youth who work in concert with local actors to become documented (3 in Figure One) with those who remain isolated and irregular. Do youth cross a social boundary only to be held back legally, or do those without legal status remain unintegrated? When individuals interact with key institutions, we can describe their movement as boundary crossing (4 in Figure One). By incorporating relevant local and national actors and their alliances and points of departure within a boundary framework, we can synthesize the impact of local and national actors on the paths of undocumented youth while tracking changes over time.
Figure 1: Conceptual Model of Boundary Work for Undocumented Youth

**Existing Literature and Theoretical Framework**

The above boundary framework represents a comparison of undocumented youth with legal residents. One natural comparison is with children of immigrants, those who also have immigrant parents but have residency or citizenship. Several recent studies have described how children of immigrants are coming of age and becoming the newest line of Americans. Do the mechanisms of inclusion and integration that these studies identify work effectively for undocumented youth as well? Findings from the New York Second Generation Project and the Immigration and Intergenerational Mobility in Metropolitan Los Angeles (IIMMLA) study emphasize the differences in family capital—economic, human, social—that seem to underlie trajectories as teenagers become twenty-somethings. The survey level data, however, do not afford a thorough analysis of the integration of those lacking legal status as youth. Using the Los Angeles survey data on the second generation, Brown and colleagues (2011) examine factors that
affect the trajectories of 20-40 years olds with and without undocumented parents, pointing to more English in the home, additional schooling, and greater income for those with legal status. Noting that the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) allowed the vast majority of undocumented parents to regularize and benefit accordingly, the authors imply the changed legal context in the 25 years since IRCA, with a lack of legislation allowing legalization, will negatively affect youth.

The only one of these comprehensive studies to look exclusively at first-generation children is Learning a New Land (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova 2008). Despite their wealth of data, and a recommendation to do something for undocumented children, their model did not take into account legal status. The authors’ call for a change in national legislation to allow undocumented youth to legalize underscores the holes in the scholarship of undocumented individuals in context.

Another study that speaks to legal status but does not include data on legal status in any empirical models is Portes and Rumbaut’s (2001) Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). Though the authors did not gather much data to support it, they include level of support from government and society in their concept of ‘context of reception.’ This focus on the social and legal context is an important step forward, and my project consciously seeks to specify the context and its link to individual trajectories.

Beck and Tienda (working paper) also emphasize that scholars have little explored the ways in which differing political, economic, and social constraints make undocumented youth distinct. In the four years since that working paper was drafted, scholarly literature on the undocumented, and more specifically on youth, has progressed. Yoshikawa (2011) concluded that undocumented status led parents to stay away from
institutional supports that would benefit their American-born children, creating an academic lag before they enter K-12 schooling. An important takeaway from his work is that organizations such as hospitals and schools develop social trust, which allows services to be delivered in an effective way to undocumented populations. In a study on undocumented youth in southern California, Gonzales (2011) shows how youth often discover they are undocumented as they approach the age of 18, then they explore how society excludes them, and finally they adapt to this exclusion. Also working with youth in southern California, Zhou and her colleagues (2008) confirm lack of legal status as a key mechanism that prevents youth from any hope of upward mobility. Using a national dataset, Greenman and Hall (2013) explore the transition of undocumented youth (legal status is imputed) through high school and college and find that high school graduation and college enrollment are lower amongst undocumented youth.

Patrick Simon (2010) has led a large quantitative study comparing those with immigrant parents to those with French parents. The racial/ethnic penalty in both education and the labor market persists across nearly all ethnic groups, but is particularly strong for North and West Africans. Roxane Silberman similarly finds a substantial ethnic penalty for the same groups (2011). Those who defend France’s republican model point out that when family background is taken into account, immigrants do as well as natives (Caille 2007). Interpretation of these findings can be nuanced by understanding ethnic differences, even within the same national group (Tribalat 1995).

French scholars have examined the impact of sans-papiers on political claims-making and the politics of immigration, though very little on the lived experiences of undocumented youth. Several anthologies of the undocumented have been published (e.g.
Cimade 2006), a few focusing on youth (e.g. RESF 2011). These associations, the Cimade and RESF, have become important actors contesting restrictions in immigration policy, and frame their claims so they resonate in the political debate (Nicholls 2013a). Several other scholars have looked at the dynamics of various aspects of the political movements of sans-papiers (e.g. Blin 2010; Siméant 1998; Barron et al. 2011). In France changes in asylum policy have led to large numbers of rejected asylum-seekers becoming undocumented (Noiriel 1998; Schain 2012).

This research frames the lived experiences of undocumented within the local and national contexts. My hope is that the thick description allows for better comparison with other cases. With irregular migration on the rise globally, my micro-macro framework responds to the need to account for local conditions and to bridge national divisions in scholarship. A few related comparisons between France and the U.S. inform this analysis. Chauvin and Jounin (2011) compare the structural elements of undocumented work in the US and France and situate the experiences of the workers in the national context. Comparing France and the US, Lamont (2000) and Wacquant (2008) explain how different structural factors have given rise to different senses of morality and experiences of neighborhood poverty, respectively. Others compare groups over time, allowing us to see how policy changes affect them. Smith (forthcoming) highlights a natural experiment in how legalization affects the trajectories of Mexican immigrant youth in New York. Abrego (2008) contextualizes her study of undocumented college students in California before and after the passage of a policy that facilitates their inclusion. Rincón (2008) documents histories of undocumented students’ struggle to gain the right to pay in-state tuition in public universities in 11 states, showing youth as actors in the struggle for
inclusionary college tuition pricing. These comparisons over time and space allow us to see more deeply how informal and formal changes in policy, implemented by various actors, impact the lives of youth as they become adults.

At the country level, France and the United States exhibit distinct policy approaches to immigration. The French public philosophy (Favell 2001) frames its immigration and integration policy as folding outsiders into the French mold. This civic republican model supposes that foreigners will become culturally and politically French in order to become citizens. In contrast, the American model is seen as “anarchic,” leaving the process of integration to the local level. A more recent trend is American multiculturalism, the legitimacy of recognition of collective identities as a basis for public policy (Schain 2012). In comparisons of the two models, the American model boasts better outcomes in employment, education, and political representation (Schain 2012; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009). In each country, policy and practices have shifted many responsibilities of integration to the local level. The increasingly complex actors involved in integration have led scholars to investigate the local level (Varsanyi 2010; Smith 2006; Marwell 2007). Scholars portray New York as a benevolent city for immigrants (Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009; Kasinitz et al 2008). In contrast, scholars problematize the integration of immigrants in Paris, often evoking suburban riots in which they have been involved and the lack of political representation (Bertossi 2012; Maxwell 2010).

Literature highlighting the role of organizations provides important tools in exploring how the local structures accommodate or exclude certain people and helps explain the four outcomes mentioned above and the larger social processes producing
them. Marrow (2009), Jones-Correa (2008) and Yoshikawa (2011) each show how the missions of schools and hospitals inform providers’ value that undocumented minors are legitimate recipients of services. At the same time, police and national level actors regulate and exclude those residents who lack sufficient identification. The diametrically opposed missions of these service- and regulatory-oriented bureaucracies exemplify the sometimes contradictory functions of the state. While the state allows the flow of capital and goods across its borders to strengthen its economy, it also necessarily excludes certain foreigners when providing political and social rights to its citizens (Joppke 2010). While its democratic ideals promise these rights to all, its social and economic systems run on inequality (Kivisto and Faist 2007). As governments balance these tasks, they look to unions, associations, political parties, and local administrative discretion to deliver services afforded by the state but also to regulate the reach of such services. These extensions of governments—forming, reproducing, and reining in the state ideology—constitute important social and legal contexts for undocumented youth participation in society. Schools cease to be an institution of inclusion as youth become adults, with federal (US), national (France), and local bureaucratic obstacles to funding or entering post-secondary schools for undocumented students. With the loss of their primary vehicle of integration, youth may turn to other available institutions for resources, including family and ethnic networks (Sadiq 2009; Enriquez 2011), religious or civil society organizations, public education systems (Smith 2013), and local political representatives.

These institutions differ by locality, and the comparison of Paris and New York allows greater variation in the variable of interest, undocumented status. From this neo-institutional perspective, we can theorize more precisely on which actors shape the social
trajectories of undocumented youth, and how. For example, civil society actors have examined the role of the police in undocumented youth’s developing fear (Gonzales and Chavez 2012), but they have not looked at the inclusionary projects that some local actors have instituted to combat what they understand as immoral police tactics (Ni Patrie 2008; RESF 2011). They analyze the impact of Sarkozy’s policy of setting deportation quotas (Duvell 2011b) though not in conjunction with the practice of the Préfecture to give residence permits to youth (Tête-Delage 2011). Literature has addressed neither the impact of local policy of police non-enforcement of immigration status nor the new legal work opportunities afforded by DACA, Obama’s recent executive order.

Framework: Governance, Citizenship, and Identity

Examining issues from the perspective of citizenship, identities or governance entails studying different facets of similar social phenomena (Isin 2007). Citizenship looks at the institutionalized ways people act in public, identity looks at how those people interpret their feelings and develop meaning from interactions, and governance looks at how power is diffused into everyday situations. When overlapped, each of these perspectives contributes an important dimension to the definition of the situation. I apply this treble framework to the case of undocumented residents coming of age, with their presence and identities becoming politicized as they experience and claim social, economic, and political rights, and a governance structure that deliberates on and responds to these claims. This process of arbitrating claims, and its results regarding the substance of citizenship, then impacts the identities of undocumented youth as well as their trajectories.

Governance
The ways in which states try to provide services and to restrict the residence (as opposed to the entry) of undocumented persons, including youth, is best described with a process concept, governance, that focuses on various actors’ involvement with, and accountability to, the state. Governance here refers to the way structures of authority are used to coordinate or control activity in society (Bell 2002). In this comparison, the federal structure of the US and the loose centralization of French government strongly shape governance structure.

The three branches of government are positioned differently with regard to policies affecting irregular resident youth. While judicial and bureaucratic actors refine legislative accords (Ngai 2004; Spire 2008) to produce a system of legal residence, executives endeavor to fortify perceptions of national sovereignty. Importantly, local orientations may differ from national orientations (Varsanyi 2010), even within the same political party. In both New York and Paris, the local legislatures have passed bills to protect undocumented immigrants even though national level legislation has become more restrictive.

Local and national governments may partner with business, unions, and civil society not only to provide support services but also to regulate irregular residents (Barron et al. 2011). For example, unions were not only an important interlocutor with the Paris prefecture during strikes by undocumented workers over the last several years but they also provide a platform to publicly protest their situation and set acceptable criteria for regularizable candidates (Barron et al. 2011). Local associations (Ni Patrie 2008) and religious organizations (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2008) prove essential interlocutors in providing services and organizing claims for the undocumented. The extent to which
groups align with or disavow irregular residents has clear implications for representations of undocumented youth in the popular imagination. The organized political participation of the undocumented raises their visibility and thus the reception of their claims making (Ni Patrie 2008; Rincón 2008).

How governance structures political organizing has clear implications for claims of citizenship, which are framed in a language of “the rightful scope of solidarity and the proper reach of justice claims” (Bosniak 2006:7). In New York, inclusion must be argued at the national level to justify claims of legal (though not socioeconomic) inclusion; in Paris, local solidarities prove sufficient to contest legal (though not socioeconomic) exclusion. The different vocabularies for describing a similar lack of legal status derive from this distinction. After a social movement of the ‘sans-papiers’ (without papers), French media has moved away from using terms like ‘clandestines’ and ‘illegals’ (Ruszczyk n.d.). The more flexible French system, adjusted at the local level, says that undocumented “are in an irregular situation” and that candidates can apply for ‘regularization.’ The US system, in contrast, requires a bold ‘legalization’ or ‘amnesty,’ and media frames are more ambivalent, using both ‘undocumented’ and ‘illegal.’

**Citizenship**

Citizenship is a concept with many incarnations, oriented around the relationship between rights and responsibilities. As T.H. Marshall (1950) famously formulated, political citizenship has been extended to social citizenship (social welfare and access to public institutions) as moral claims to inequality were met by material possibilities of

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7 To maintain the contextual relevance of the different terms, I use sans-papiers, regularize when discussing the French case, and undocumented when discussing the American case.
broad social provisions. A major function of citizenship, then, is to placate socioeconomic inequality with a state-backed social solidarity (Turner 1997).

How we interpret the dynamics of citizenship—whether it is being eroded or expanded, and who the decision makers are in this process—depends greatly on where we see citizenship at work. Assuming impermeable boundaries, many thinkers have conceptualized the body politic as pre-determined and static, putting citizenship at work only within countries. The increasing number of immigrants, and the question of their integration, calls these models into question. Others propose a contested boundary with full inclusion for those inside (the “hard outside, soft center” model proposed by Walzer (1983)). The ‘introjection’ of the borders, in the form of restrictive policies targeting unauthorized immigrants, brings the boundaries between citizen and non-citizen inside the physical borders (Bosniak 2006). If certain rights are distributed based on a ‘soft center’ universal basis and others are restricted based on a ‘hard outside’, exclusionary basis, then we must recognize that citizenship is “not a unified condition but a set of different institutions and practices” (Bosniak 2006: 35) that are located in different fields (Bourdieu 1984) with their distinct discourses.

While the bundle of rights and responsibilities has sometimes been simplified as benefits in the form of access to the safety net, social insurance, and social investment (Aleinkoff and Klusmeyer 2002), responsibilities such as paying taxes, obeying laws, and raising children often justify claims-making by non-citizens. In leveraging their daily responsibilities and political participation, the undocumented can come to express “certain subjectivities” that underlie claims making (Isin 2007). Youth participation in and socialization to public institutions, including schools, local associations, and places
of worship, tend to produce such subjective meanings, with the imbrication of legal, behavioral, and psychological elements of citizenship (Conover 1995). These subjectivities develop from two common goods shared in citizenship regimes: participatory self-rule and a specific settled community (*ibid*). The local cultural community, comprised of public institutions and local social groups, then plays a major role in orienting citizens and others towards a common life.

*Identity, Possible Selves, and Trajectories*

In late adolescence, undocumented youth suddenly face the barrier of a heavily regulated workforce and post-secondary educational system. Teenagers’ sense of self-image is particularly vulnerable as identities and self-narratives crystallize for the first time (McAdams 1993). An analysis of self-image must examine social identity, personal identity (i.e. unique personality traits) (Abrams 1996), and constructed possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986; Oyserman et al. 2006). Social identity, a collection of (possible) group memberships, arises with socialization into various institutions (Suárez-Orozco *et al.* 2011), as youth encounter social networks and opportunity structures, comparing themselves to others, negotiating their identity and partaking in collective action (Deaux 2006:142). Just as possible selves, these future aspirations, can guide action, their absence or attenuation can influence social trajectories. The immigrant family produces a series of intensified obligations (Smith 2006; Fuligni and Yoshikawa 2004; Fuligni, Hughes, and Way 2009) that make roles in school and at work particularly salient. Connecting social identity with participation in social groups, Smith (2008) develops types that correlate social identity with predicted educational, occupational, and social outcomes.
Gender differences influence numerous realms of social life including work opportunities, politics, home life, and family roles, among others (Donato, Gabaccia, and Holdaway 2006). Indeed, the entire process of immigration is highly gendered (Grasmuck and Pessar 1991). Given the important constraints of legal status on social life, “illegality” also affects how undocumented residents negotiate gender (Schrover et al. 2009). For the data on my two dozen primary informants, I analyze gender in so far as its performative and dynamic aspects are visible. With this study’s selection of male informants, a broader analysis of gender, one that includes a full analysis of female undocumented youth, is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Using identities as a key concept orients this study away from a more deterministic perspective, instead allowing for a multiplicity of potential pathways as youth become adults. The usefulness of social identities and self-image point to how subjectivities develop that reflect integration and allow for potential claims making. Despite a lack of formal membership, undocumented youth can develop a sense of citizenship as well as engage in civic activities (Conover 1995). Where and how the identities of these youth develop constitutes a fundamental aspect of the “contours of our contemporary understandings of citizenship” (Bosniak 2006: 20).

**Research Questions and Hypotheses**

My broader argument brings together these varied levels of analysis and orients further research. I argue that we can explain the variation in trajectories of undocumented youth by (1) contrasting the governance structure impacting the integration of the undocumented in each locality, including national and local socio-legal elements, (2) comparing the different modes of citizenship in each locality and (3) describing the way
undocumented youth respond to and are situated by those contexts.

Before turning 18, youth are socialized in educational institutions with an inclusionary, universal mission to produce productive citizens. First, in both cities, while most peers enter higher education, the academic careers of undocumented youth typically end abruptly, filtering them into unenforced, undesirable or hidden sectors of the job market. Second, the agency of civil society and decentralization in France have allowed local conductors to support undocumented youth in gaining their legal status while the federal division of powers prevents such (individual) crossing into legal status in the US. In France, youth who unite with conductors, whose actions are rooted in a populist solidarity and who espouse a human rights discourse (Koopmans et al. 2005), weave into the legal and social fabric, and develop a positive self-image. The possibility of regularizing allows youth to tell a romantic coming of age story (McAdams 1993) and make good on their family obligations (Smith 2006). Those traveling the regularization
road without the help of *conductors* are often less integrated with less ability in the French language (Spire 2008; Têtu-Delage 2009). In New York, the boundary between those with and those without legal status is blurrier for three reasons: 1) fewer social services are provided by the state, 2) police do not enforce immigration laws, and 3) the labor market is less regulated. Third, while the sociopolitical context allows for greater inclusion in France, with more flexible case-by-case regularizations, the policies of both countries are shifting towards a more exclusionary or punitive direction. Overall, then, undocumented youth face a brighter legal boundary in Paris though with a possibility of boundary crossing to full legal status and all that that accords; in New York, blurry boundaries mean undocumented youth can sometimes live as documented without sanction though a shift in status is unlikely. These different legal situations cloak underlying similarities. Paris youth, even when regularized, have difficulty finding a stable job. After regularization in Paris, the threat of deportation is very low; likewise, in New York, local police policy minimizes the deportation threat. In both cities, most undocumented youth find themselves waiting. Waiting for legalization, and the socioeconomic benefits it promises, in New York, and waiting for social inclusion and stable work in Paris.

*Paths of Undocumented Youth*

Protected before reaching the age of majority, how do undocumented youth adapt to their new excluded status? How and where are they excluded? Are they able to continue their prior trajectories in education and work? How does their undocumented status impact on their personal relationships? How does it change their self-image? Ethnographic work with youth before and after the age of 18 shows how students often expect to follow the
paths of their documented peers, only to be confronted with how their lack of legal residence impedes their continuation. In New York, Ernie postpones the idea of attending college again and again until, he says, he has enough money and can find a program that fits with his work schedule. If the lack of financial aid and sure job prospects after graduation make college attendance risky for undocumented youth, in Paris youth cannot find internships or jobs in mainstream channels, which require identity cards. They find jobs instead in temporary work centers, which protect businesses from a possible inspection (Chauvin & Jounin 2011), or in small businesses, often run by co-ethnics. These exclusionary contexts during the transition to adulthood capture Gonzales’ (2011) concept of a three-step process of learning to be illegal that begins in high school.

Research Objective II: Legal and Social Contexts

How do the legal and social contexts impact those questions? Who are the institutional actors that orchestrate and contest the system regulating legal residence by immigrants in France and the United States? In Paris, the police check the documents of undocumented youth on the street, leading to arrests and deportation orders after the age of 18. Faced with such scrutiny, undocumented youth can turn to the dense civil society sector that provides assistance with legal issues (Monforte and Dufour 2011). Local community centers and activist networks of parents, teachers, and citizens work with youth schooled in France to present cases for regularization, or at least provide advice on how to avoid contact with the police. The sans-papiers movement has generated local pressure to protect rights of undocumented, countering the hardening of regularization laws (ibid).

Beyond their role in legal contestation, the conductors of French civil society promote the integration of youth through informal mentorship and information sharing.
One activist took up the cause of Souleymane, who became friends with her son. Her ability to fight alongside him, in courtrooms and the prefecture, gave him the resources and self-confidence necessary to aspire to become an upwardly mobile young man. The story he tells is not one of fighting against the system but of working within it to become an adult. With few exceptions, relevant local organizations in New York target poor immigrants rather than undocumented ones, and are often organized at the ethnic level. In addition, the distancing of undocumented from institution-rich networks (Yoshikawa 2011) and the inability of moral sympathizers (Marrow 2009) to effect change at the local level leave New York undocumented youth limited in their adaptation to the exclusionary effects of their status. Legalization occurs only under very exceptional circumstances (see Wasem 2010).

**Methods Overview**

To respond to these questions, I developed a longitudinal dataset based on the two nested cases of undocumented youth in New York City and Paris. *Within* each city, longitudinal data on twelve cases of male undocumented youth support analysis between individuals. Below I briefly discuss my methodological process in developing and analyzing the Paris and New York datasets. For a full discussion of methodological process, see Chapter 10 and Appendix B.

*Developing the first case:* The first data I collected was from two years of schooling experiences of Mexican-origin youth in two New York high schools where I had previously taught. As the students’ legal status became the most important factor in their educational and social outcomes, the project’s focus shifted from schools’ practices to the impact of legal status on undocumented Mexican youth.
Informant selection: Primary informants were chosen based on Mexican origin, gender, and age of migration, belonging to the 1.5 generation. Given the original focus on school outcomes, I also split selection criteria on identification as high and low achieving students. Academic profiles have been associated with different high school experiences and expectations for post-secondary life (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008). A final selection criterion was the grade of the informants, and I selected equal numbers of underclassmen (9\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} grades) and upperclassmen (11\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} grades); this allowed data on the different processes related to legal status at different points in high school. Five initial informants were documented, and I recruited five additional New York informants through snowballing techniques to replace the five documented ones. This second stage of recruitment followed the same criteria as initial recruitment, seeking 1.5 generation Mexican-origin (undocumented) young men.

Developing the comparison. Pilot work justified pursuing the comparison with Paris, though illuminated differences in how policy created the category of undocumented youth there. Most important of these was the CESEDA law that allows undocumented youth with at least five years of continuous residence to regularize at adulthood (i.e. those who entered before their 13\textsuperscript{th} birthday), with exceptions. I spoke to experts, did volunteer work with four associations in eastern Paris, and crafted a strategy for informant recruitment. 8 of the 12 Paris informants came from multi-sited work with one civil society network. Two informants, Souleymane and Abdul, made friends with some network members and cooperated with this network after their regularization. I met Tarek and Marcelo through an RESF citywide workshop for undocumented youth. Three others I met while doing neighborhood work with the network; these youth were not otherwise
engaged with the network. From these last three informants, I used snowballing techniques to meet four of their undocumented acquaintances. Like those four snowballed informants, one final informant, whom I met at a neighborhood association, did not have contact with RESF.

Similar selection criteria between cities, with all informants 1.5 generation undocumented males, ensured axes of comparison. Legal differences in who can regularize at adulthood led to Paris undocumented informants being three years older at entry, on average, than their New York counterparts (see Table 2 above). In each city, about half of informants had above average academic profiles, with averages above 80 in New York or above 12 in Paris (see Table 3 below). By 2015, two-thirds of informants in each city had experienced some form of legal shift. An important distinction is that these Paris informants had regularized their status while these New York youth had gained ‘DACAmented status’ (Gonzales and Terriquez 2013); DACA offers fewer rights than regularization (see Appendix D).

Country of origin differences also exist between the cities’ informants. All New
York informants were born in Mexico, while Paris informants come from different regions: four from China, four from Sub-Saharan Africa, two from North Africa, one from Eurasia, and one from Brazil. The variety of countries of origin reflects the diverse population that I encountered in two neighborhoods in east Paris.

In each city, I did field work with neighborhood organizations and conducted informal and formal interviews with members and leaders. These members and leaders pointed to national and local government policies and practices that affected how they support undocumented youth. The dataset thus consists of longitudinal data on a dozen male informants, local organizations including high schools, and documents that attest to government policies and practices that affect undocumented youth.

*Analytical methods and scope.* The strength of such a dataset lies in its capacity to trace the multiple actors, policies, and practices that have affected my two dozen undocumented informants over time. As a hidden population, no sample frame exists from which to draw an unbiased set of informants (Magnani et al. 2005). The analysis thus focuses on two goals: representing the variation in undocumented experiences within and between cities, and tracing the individual and structural mechanisms that led to this variation. To respond to these goals, I triangulated analytical methods: comparative case-study analysis, an inventory of informant social participation, and analysis of local-level governance actors in each city provide multi-level data over time. We can thus compare the experiences of being undocumented, informants’ social trajectories, including the possibility of gaining legal status, and the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion between cities. Finally, boundary theory represents these empirical findings in a novel theoretical model that can be applied to other cases.
Key Contributions

The process of data collection and analysis—longitudinal, comparative, local, and socio-legal in its focus—is equally as important as the findings of this project. Chapter 10 and Appendix B examine this process in depth, but here I highlight a few points. First, the longitudinal study allows me to illuminate the transition to adulthood. Though teenagers in high schools at the start of the project, the youth with whom I worked now work full-time and some have children of their own. While variables such as educational attainment or household income are often used as proxies for quality of life, I have been able to track holistic changes from both my point of view and from theirs. In the six years since I began the New York project and the four since I began the Paris fieldwork, the policies governing undocumented youth in New York and Paris have also shifted. My informants have adapted themselves to the new allowances, which allows me to highlight the nature of structure and agency in the lives of undocumented youth.

Given its demands on researcher resources, comparative ethnography is relatively rare; longitudinal comparisons more so. My research in two different global cities highlights similarities and differences. Both France and the United States (and many other industrialized countries) have heightened enforcement of border entry and of legal status in the interior of the country. Given the restrictive national climate, Paris and New York have developed local policies and practices that position them as best-case cities for undocumented residents. Despite these similarities, each city responds differently to its undocumented population. Regarding its police, New York has greater autonomy. New York also uses its immigrant organizations to provide symbolic inclusion to its undocumented residents. Paris, in its approach, offers organizations that contest the
exclusion of the undocumented. These organizations then provide a means to attaining legal status.

This strategy to move from the peculiarities of individual youth to the local governance of their lives requires additional time and immersion in additional literature. The ambitious aim of this approach—making links between the micro experiences of the youth with which I worked and macro forces that encouraged them to immigrate and then settle—justifies the additional effort. The guiding governance concept, which has contributions from multiple disciplines, promotes a more comprehensive representation of the context from the top-down. Data on governance overlaps fieldwork with public statements, documents, and media coverage of government, market, and civil society actors. It also allows me to speak to questions of citizenship and how they’ve been framed.

Finally, I represent both socio-legal and socio-economic conditions. This addition is important in that undocumented youth experience social exclusion that derives from both sources. Their overlap creates the particularity of the undocumented experience, what I call marginalized inclusion. The case of historical African-American social exclusion instructs this approach. Without a radical change in the governance of their lives, the effects of legal emancipation of slaves by Abraham Lincoln were less important than they could be. The creation of institutional links with African-Americans, first in Civil Rights legislation and then in the War on Poverty, benefitted their life chances. And yet social exclusion remains. Evidence for the continuing exclusion of African-Americans can be seen across multiple social, political and economic domains (Alexander 2012; Bonilla-Silva 2006; Roithmayr 2014). Likewise, multiple aspects of the social life of
undocumented youth are affected by their socio-legal and socio-economic exclusion, from educational attainment to the nature of intimacy with a romantic partner.

Distinguishing social-economic exclusion from socio-legal exclusion allows us to see how they may function in conjunction or independently. This dissertation seeks to provide empirical data about the case of undocumented youth and to develop a theoretical boundary model that may be applied to other cases. In Paris, socio-economic exclusion remains a formidable obstacle for undocumented youth even after obtaining a temporary legal status. For New York youth, the overlap of both forms of exclusion leaves them with a limited opportunity structure vis-à-vis other youth. The result of each set of experiences tends to exclude them from mainstream society. Importantly, in each city, exceptional cases also exist in which youth have acquired a middle-class trajectory.

Though this work focuses on the local level, the local level is the nexus of multiple large forces. Global attention sometimes focuses on the governments of Paris and New York, and the international labor and capital flow through their gateways. Global civil society transmits international norms of human rights. While the population of Paris is about a fourth of that of New York, the population of greater Paris is on par with that of greater New York. In addition to incentivizing immigration, such mature economies with significant finance sectors attract considerable human and financial capital. Civil society actors also attract and vie for international, national, and regional capital. Local forces that seek conditions for optimal investment, including cheap labor, confront national forces that patrol national boundaries and sovereignty. International flows, nation-state distribution of citizenship rights, and local prerogatives for social cohesion converge on the local level.
These conditions may give Paris and New York more power than other cities and regions in shaping their context of reception and integration, and they can be considered best-case scenarios in France and the United States, respectively. Some of this stems from labor conditions, as immigrants settle in these cities primarily due to spaces in the labor market. The labor market in each city has shifted considerably in the contemporary post-industrial period, and offers jobs in multiple sectors (Mollenkopf and Castells 1991; Piore 1979). Job opportunities differ, by education and legal status. Roughly speaking, one sector offers jobs to those with college educations; a second sector offers jobs to those with less than a college education and some immigrants with education; and a third sector that offers jobs to those with a high school education or less, or those without legal status. These split job sectors, based mostly on educational credentials, stratify many daily experiences.

Civil society also contributes to the context of reception and integration. The many nonprofits, community-based organizations, religious, and other organizations place New York as the largest civil society in the United States. With the historical legacy of immigration and ethnic incorporation, ethnic-based organizing is widespread and legitimate. Paris also boasts the largest concentration of associations, unions, and other organizations in France, though ethnic organizing is viewed as communitarian and therefore antithetical to France’s civic republican philosophy (Favell 2001).

The local government of each city also provides some pro-immigrant measures. In New York City’s 2013 primary elections, out of 250 candidates, 21 were first generation immigrants, another 11 immigrated as children, and 23 were the children of immigrants (Mollenkopf n.d). A majority of New Yorkers are (a diverse set of) immigrants and their
children, and thus politicians have passed many pro-immigrant policies. While Paris politicians are much less likely to make immigrant-friendly policies, the move towards participatory governance means that certain areas have more representation than previously was the case. I argue that the overlap of these market, civil society, and government actors offers undocumented youth some protection from deportation and other resources that youth in other cities and regions do not enjoy.

Being in the field for an extended period shows how these myriad actors act, sometimes in concert and sometimes in opposition. It also shows the extent to which these systems of governance are more like governance constellations, shifting over time due to changes in grassroots mobilization or in national policy. Contingent they may be, the effects of these systems of governance are multiple. In the United States, the effects of being undocumented harshly impact the transition to adulthood, as exclusion from education and most work sectors leads to changes in peer groups and romantic relationships. In France, undocumented youth also face exclusion as they turn 18 though police tactics increase the threat of deportation compared to New York. Some youths react to this risk by excluding themselves from public life, and others find ways to confront it through collective action. Exclusion from work in Paris can create a domino effect of negative repercussions through the social lives of undocumented youth.

Chapter Summaries

The broader governance-citizenship-identity framework is broken down to highlight different facets of the project. This study thus takes a nested approach, drawing on the relevant literature at the scale and locality being discussed. The first section centers on cases of individual undocumented young adults and what they tell us about
assimilation and integration. The second section focuses on variation of undocumented social life within and between cities. More than children of immigrants, nearly all of whom have or can have citizenship, the integration of undocumented youth in New York and Paris depends on the contours of the local citizenship regimes. The third section thus frames the case of undocumented youth as a public policy issue in each city, in dialogue with literature on political and social incorporation occurring on the city scale.

The first section presents comparative cases of undocumented youth using a biographical logic of analysis. Chapter 2 contrasts the biographies of Ernie and Luis, two young men whose transitions to adulthood I have followed for a decade. Both come from a similar rural Mexican childhood separated from their parents to arrive in New York as pre-teens. Their aspirations and decision-making are guided by their lack of legal status, transnational resources, and important for young men, romantic relationships. As suggested in the opening paragraph, Luis returns to Mexico to gain his Bachelor’s degree while Ernie remains in a factory job in New York. Luis’s relationship encourages him to settle in Mexico, apart from his nuclear family, while Ernie’s relationship keeps him in New York, working to support his family.

Chapter 3 follows the biographies of three young men that immigrated to Paris without legal residence. For Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane, State bureaucracies, especially the distribution of visas, strongly influence the transition to adulthood. At the age of 18, these young men expect to get “papers,” though the path to get them is a long one over hot coals. Without a visa, Tarek struggles to earn enough to pay rent. For Bao and Souleymane, the rules for getting a visa encouraged staying in school. After getting temporary visas, Bao’s family resources made work opportunities the easier path and
continued schooling offered the best hope for Souleymane to get a full-time job. These two young men characterize their struggles to get papers as romantic coming of age stories, learning skills and the French system along the way.

Part Two examines the variation of my informants within each city and then between cities. Chapter 4 examines the transition to adulthood among 1.5 generation Mexican-origin undocumented male youth in New York. As these youth come of age, federal restrictions in access to education and employment along with the severe deportation regime exclude youth from mainstream opportunities and de facto citizenship. New York City mitigates this restriction with several inclusionary projects including municipal practices of opposition to enforcing immigration status. Using an inventory of social participation across 11 domains and biographical narratives, this chapter demonstrates the social exclusion informants undergo as they come of age and how they adapt. Scores on this inventory show three patterns. Low scores correspond with some kind of crisis in high school, which leads to aspirations of getting back to a ‘normal’ life through low-end work and a romantic relationship. Medium scores add family stability but experience similar work opportunities. Those with the highest scores use in-school and transnational resources to continue their studies, hoping for middle-class jobs. All possess limited local rights and assume responsibilities, positioning them more as second-class citizens of New York than as non-citizens. Rather than “learning to be illegal,” my informants “learn to be in limbo.”

In Chapter 5, I take a similar approach to examine the experiences of undocumented youth in Paris. At 18 years of age, access to education, employment, and other domains shifts as youth become deportable and excluded from the labor market in
Paris. Using the same inventory as in Chapter 4, we see shifts in social life as youth leave school and face difficulty finding work. The most precarious pattern corresponds with family and housing instability, unstable or lack of work opportunities, and lack of relationships with peers. Most other youth report somewhat more hopeful trajectories, based on their regularization of immigration status. Youth with low and medium scores manage to find unstable jobs in the ethnic economy while those who continue post-secondary studies experience difficulties in the labor market similar to second-generation French youth.

Using three methods of comparison, Chapter 6 explores the between-city variation in undocumented social life. First, I compare scores and mechanisms from the inventory between cities. We see the results of steady, if low-paying, work in New York in more stable housing and romantic relationships. To compare the process of becoming “illegal” between Paris and New York, I employ fuzzy set methods that highlight the role of language, social networks, and social capital in explaining variation in trajectories. Third, boundary theory helps to clarify the relationship between the social and legal integration of undocumented youth in each city. In New York, low deportation risk, strong ethnic communities, and available jobs blur social and legal boundaries. Gaining a legal status is rare. In Paris, undocumented youth face the opposite: brighter social and legal boundaries, but with a greater likelihood of gaining legal status.

The third section presents analyses of the local socio-legal contexts that strongly influence the trajectories of undocumented youth in New York and Paris. The centrality of the regularization process to the trajectories of those in Paris merits further inquiry, as these Paris youth do not gain a legal status on their own. Chapter 7 describes the process
by which a civil society actor contests the state and enables undocumented youth to gain *political* membership. A civil society network whose mission is to regularize undocumented youth and their families in France has become an effective collective actor with a delicate balance of internal values, orientations, and division of labor. After majority-age youth have been refused when trying to regularize their status, the Education Without Borders Network (RESF), through a series of actions contesting governmental policy and practice, works to protect undocumented youth from deportation and secures visas for them. Local alliances with civil society and governmental actors, along with specialized knowledge about legal residence, give them leverage to obtain visas from the Préfecture de Police de Paris. The resulting *civil society exchange* between the network and state actors enables the network some (contingent) external power over governance over areas assumed to be under national control.

Engaging literature on neoliberalism, governance, and undocumented youth, Chapter 8 examines various local measures that affect degrees of social membership of undocumented youth. New York City actors strongly affect the conditions under which social life of undocumented youth residents develops. Government, market, and civil society actors support undocumented youth, albeit for different reasons. I analyze the shift of three domains of social life—work, family & romantic relationships, and housing—amongst undocumented New York youth as they transition to adulthood. With available low-paying jobs, symbolic and cultural inclusion, and low deportation risk, we see that the circumscribed spaces of inclusion created by New York actors for undocumented youth strongly influence the range of social life in these domains. Despite this buffer zone, political and socio-economic conditions interact to produce a distinct
experience of marginalized inclusion for undocumented youth.

The conclusion addresses how these findings contribute to debates in different literatures. The methodological contribution tackles balancing retaining rich ethnographic data in its context with a move toward more abstract theorization. The case of undocumented youth, some of whom regularize their status, provides important data with which to examine the mechanisms of citizenship. Citizenship regimes, which act at different scales, act as a means of control on undocumented residents.

Chapter 10 presents how I’ve developed the methodology of this longitudinal, comparative ethnography. It contributes the voice of a comparativist to the debate over representing context in ethnographic work. This research began with inductive fieldwork with undocumented youth though took deductive and abductive turns when the fieldwork became comparative. The comparison developed context in a dialogue between the cases. This conversation between the cases problematizes the comparison of cases but also facilitates the shift from empirical induction to theory-oriented deduction and abduction.

With its topical breadth, this dissertation engages a number of different literatures. Because of this, each individual chapter presents relevant theoretical background. The chapters of the first section center on how the young men’s biographies speak to literature on the integration of children of immigrants. In New York, that includes the emerging literature on undocumented youth. In Paris, it also includes some literature on undocumented adult experiences in work and regularization. The sections on within-city variation speak to immigrant stratification and transition to adulthood literatures. The final section on local contexts engages literature on governance and immigrant political
incorporation. Literature on civil society, organizations, and the bureaucratic State allows the clearest representation of the socio-legal context of Paris, while in New York, local understandings of political economy are central to the governance of its undocumented youth. These lively engagements show how relevant the case of undocumented youth is to various areas of scholarship, from transatlantic comparisons of immigrant integration to governance and citizenship.

The cities of Paris & New York provide some uneven spaces of inclusion. We see in this last section how cities benefit from undocumented residents, balancing neoliberal policies with progressive politics. This research argues that exclusion from social membership can have two dimensions: socio-legal and socio-economic. Social distance from mainstream institutions, the key factor in accessing rights, is therefore non-linear. Governance models allow us to see how “rights” are distributed from above and how they can be accessed from below. Contesting state policies aims to reduce the distance between youth and local institutions. Contesting actors frequently invoke criteria of deservedness, and this binary excludes others.

Reflecting this contestation, the policies and practices of each city have shifted in the six years of this study. Undocumented youths, in turn, have reacted to the changing spaces of inclusion and exclusion, dampening and re-alighting their dreams. Though this project provides empirical data on the contingency of “illegality” in two places, it also shows how two distinct approaches to dealing with undocumented youth may result in a similar outcome: a non-deported but deeply stratified population.

Part One: Individual Agency in Case Study Comparisons
In this section, case comparisons show the everyday lives of a handful of individual undocumented youth as they become adults. Their thoughts, adolescent and emerging adult feelings, and their actions emerge as they interact with family members, classmates, friends, and work partners. We see how institutional arrangements in school, work, and regularization affect the decision-making of these young men.

The biographical logic of analysis used here aims to give a holistic view of their lives, getting away from framing their everyday lives as political objects, and more as a subjects in often-difficult situations. These comparisons reveal the agency of undocumented youth. We sense their available resources and the cycle of developing multiple aspirations and making choices that open new possibilities while leaving others behind. We can also sense deep frustrations and disappointments as legal obstacles and other hindrances undermine a happy coming of age.

In the first of the two chapters, Ernie and Luis decide whether or not to stay in New York, with irreversible consequences. In the second chapter, Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane struggle to gain a temporary visa and look for work in Paris. We see how shifts in legal status shape these young men. Though Ernie gains DACA status in early 2013, his social trajectory remains unchanged, as he cannot raise money to pay for college. As we will see, Ernie experiences an unending uncertainty of whether he will one day have the means to gain the credentials that his high school friends have used to gain better jobs; Luis sees an out from this limbo in the stability of returning to Mexico. Bao’s and Souleymane’s expectation of—and eventual experiences of—gaining a family-based visa reflects a different terrain of “illegality.” Though gaining status is not a given,
as we see in the case of Tarek, once gained, it becomes a suffering endured: a release from *purgatory*.

In discussing each chapter, I rely on a set of ideal types to show shifting social memberships. Potential social memberships are multiple and here, six memberships are considered for each undocumented youth. These ideal types highlight relationships and attitudes towards school, work, family, acculturation, space, romantic partners, and identity.
Chapter 2: Shifting aspirations for undocumented youth: Legal status, romantic relationships, and transnational resources

Based on six plus years of ethnographic data, this chapter compares the trajectories of two 1.5 generation Mexican immigrants as they transition to adulthood. Each attended the same high school, have similar family structure and experiences, and come from the same region of Mexico. However, they have responded differently to obstacles related to their undocumented status. Ernie has remained in the workforce since high school graduation; Luis returned to Mexico to study and has recently begun working following his college graduation.

Using a biographical logic of analysis, this chapter traces Ernie’s and Luis’s narratives with a focus on their changing aspirations. While scholarship on undocumented youth sees their learning to be ‘illegal’ as a US-based question of becoming disappointed in the work and life possibilities that accompany lack of legal status, this case comparison illuminates the role of transnational resources and the importance of the life course context to understanding how experiences of ‘illegality’ affect the social trajectories of undocumented youth. In particular, romantic relationships and having children shift the obligations that affect aspirations as well as the social meaning derived from work and education. These relationships (or their absence) then dim (or brighten) the salience of transnational resources. Romantic relationships in the US discourage Ernie from returning to Mexico to study; his son becomes a motivation for work. With transnational resources, Luis takes his American-fed college aspirations to a Mexican university for pragmatic reasons; his romantic relationship keeps him from returning. The findings engage assimilation theory, qualitative and comparative methods, and issues of legal status.

January 2009. “The next time you go [to Mexico], I’m coming with you,” 18 year-old Ernie told me as his grandmother handed me the phone to talk with Ernie’s family back in New York.

March 2013. Theresa asked when I was going next to Mexico. Could I take Luis’s 13 year-old sister and 4 year-old brother with me in the summer? Luis had only seen his youngest brother by Skype. I gulped. I was aware of my traveling privilege but was having a baby of my own in a month. It would be tough to travel, I said. Theresa winced and smiled politely at the same time.

Like his counterpart Ernie, Luis had thoughts of going back to Mexico. Unlike Ernie, he bought a plane ticket at the age of 19 and flew back. This return, influenced by
negotiating his dreams and the obstacles from being undocumented, is irreversible, cutting off Luis from his parents and four siblings in New York. Both young men share many things in common: same region of origin, immigration experience, family situation, being a first son, social networks, housing, academic readiness, and job prospects. By 2015, some consequences of the decision to stay or go had become clear. This chapter describes how they made those decisions and the impact they have had on their trajectories.

In sketching out how the aspirations of these two young men interact with “illegality” but also other dreams they hold, we begin to understand “illegality” in a more contextual, dynamic sense. Ernie’s transnational resources are ultimately neglected as his emergent family takes hold, leaving him in a position similar to other first-generation immigrants. Luis, on the other hand, follows a different sequence to social mobility, only beginning to find his emergent family as he finds professional work in Mexico.

How have Ernie and Luis adapted to and fought against the “illegality” that comes from not having legal residence status in New York? This chapter tells a theoretical story by walking us through a comparison of their lives. In the seven years of fieldwork with Ernie and Luis as well as the years I spent as their school teacher before that, I’ve witnessed key transition points in each young man’s life that are not discernible to most methods of data collection. Over those ten years, Ernie and Luis have shared with me their lives: daily school routines, sprints and scores on soccer fields, complaints and coming of age dances, family celebrations, dozens of dreams for the future, and questions about legal status.
The comparison of these two longitudinal, ethnographic cases allows us to a) see how the complex bundle of possible future selves shifts over time for two undocumented Mexican young men; b) see how the effects of illegality affect those future selves during the transition to adulthood, and how youth responses are embedded in their position in the life course; c) recognize the intermittent relevance of transnational resources to the young men’s visions of themselves (Smith 2006); and d) engage assimilation theory to understand the stratification processes of such youth.

The context of Ernie’s and Luis’s transition to adulthood for this analysis is transnational, both as a dual frame of reference (Ogbu 1991) for success and as a source of social resources and future possibilities. Immigrants often maintain a dual frame of reference, with reference groups in the country of origin and the country of arrival. Given this dual frame of reference, the poor, rural towns Ernie and Luis left when pre-teens remain important reference points for them. Luis moved back to a small Mexican city that had fewer than 300 college graduates out of more than 100,000 residents in 2010; he now lives in a Mexican town with 158 college graduates out of over 30,000 residents (INEGI 2014). For comparison, Ernie’s Mexican hometown has 50 college graduates out of just under 15,000 residents. Most residents of each small town work in cultivating agriculture and raising livestock.

Methodological Note

Both Ernie and Luis were students of mine, 1.5 generation ESL students, at ABC High School in Brooklyn. I was Luis’s teacher in junior English and ESL in 2005-06 and Ernie’s teacher in English, ESL, and History from 2005-2008, their soccer coach from 2005 until 2008, and began fieldwork with each in 2008. I have visited the extended
family of each in Mexico two and three times, respectively, between 2009 and 2011. In addition to fieldnotes from participant observation, I have done interviews with their parents and informal interviews with all household members. The advantage of experiencing the different educational, family, and neighborhood contexts with Ernie and Luis is participant-observation data to compare with interview data, and insight into how steady and multiple their aspirations are.

Context of reception: a working-class Latino neighborhood

Ernie’s third-floor apartment is in a tenement that, despite the Puerto Rican flag out front and the Chinese factory across the street, has remained solidly Mexican despite swift gentrification. Standing out front, people regularly say hello to Ernie, *primos, tios* [cousins, uncles]. While the greater neighborhood is predominantly Latino, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans form the larger portion of this panethnic group. According to data from 2008-2012 5-year estimates from the American Community Survey (see below), Ernie’s and Luis’s zip code is over three quarters Latino. Less than half of residents hold a high school diploma, most people do not speak English well, as nearly half are foreign-born. The per capita income is half that of New York as a whole, $15,692 compared to $31,661 for the city. A third of the residents live under the poverty level, as well as nearly half of children. In contrast, labor force participation and employment do not vary from the city averages.
Table 4: Neighborhood Demographic Context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zip code</th>
<th>New York City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foreign-Born</strong></td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hispanic</strong></td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Family Income ($)</strong></td>
<td>$33,750</td>
<td>$57,113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Per Capita Income</strong></td>
<td>$15,692</td>
<td>$31,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median Age</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Residents with HS Diploma</strong></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Do Not Speak English Very Well</strong></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Under Poverty Level</strong></td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Children Under PL</strong></td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labor Force Participation</strong></td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployment Rate</strong></td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey

**Theoretical Engagements**

Such a low-income Latino neighborhood with youth gangs, concentrated poverty, and few Mexican organizations, presents the threat of downward assimilation, according to segmented assimilation theorists (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). Downward assimilation—an outcome argued to be particularly prevalent for Mexican
youth—is the assimilation of certain children of immigrants into poor minority populations, with the children of immigrants then acquiring the natives’ social problems. Portes and his collaborators would also predict that the legal status of undocumented children would push them to downward assimilate, as their job possibilities are limited by legal status. But neither Ernie nor Luis follows assimilation into inner-city tracks of gangs and oppositional attitudes (see Smith 2008).

According to segmented assimilationists, one mechanism that leads to those negative outcomes is the loss of parental authority. For children whose parents do not learn English, do not participate in their ethnic community, or do not become mainstream Americans, lack of family harmony is understood as a weak link that negatively affects youth trajectories. Though the possibility of role reversal does exist, it is less relevant for 1.5 generation youth who share the re-socialization experiences of their parents.

Other scholarship offers a view on family dynamics and social membership that is more in line with Ernie’s and Luis’s experiences. Smith (2006; also Louie 2012) describes the negotiation of parent and child roles within immigrant families as the immigrant bargain: parents’ sacrifice in emigration is expected to be compensated by child achievement. As parents lose their social position and status in the immigration process, they often justify their decisions by pointing to the American advantage they give their children. The achievement expected of children is negotiated, however, and might entail educational, work and/or family goals. As we will also see clearly in the case of Luis, Louie (2012) shows how the immigrant bargain can motivate educational success in the children of immigrants.
The immigrant family produces a series of intensified obligations (Smith 2006; Fuligni and Yoshikawa 2004; Fuligni et al. 2009) that make roles in school and work particularly salient. Children’s interpretation and internalization of these obligations then shape their dreams for the future. Developmentally, teenagers’ identities and self-narratives crystallize for the first time (McAdams 1993). This gives us the starting point for analyzing constructed possible selves (Markus and Nurius 1986; Oyserman et al. 2006), imagined future possibilities. This aspect of social identity, influenced by (possible) group memberships, arises with socialization into various institutions (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2011), as youth encounter social networks and opportunity structures, comparing themselves to others, negotiating their identity and partaking in collective action (Deaux 2006:142).

Others highlight the role that schools play for immigrant youth social mobility and sense of self (Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008; Bartlett and Garcia 2011; Gonzales 2011). Leisy Abrego (2008) argues being undocumented lowers educational aspirations: “[Legal status] sensitizes them to the reality that they can’t integrate legally, educationally, economically.” Gonzales first describes the inclusion that undocumented youth experience in schools: “Through school, respondents developed aspirations rooted in the belief that they were part of the fabric of the nation and would have better opportunities than their parents” (2011:608). They “awaken to a nightmare” (Chavez and Gonzales 2012) as they learn of the limitations of their undocumented status, placing them “in a developmental limbo” (Gonzales 2011).

In this presentation of Ernie and Luis’s experiences, I weave together the impact that neighborhoods, families, and schools have on the two young men. Schools are not
necessarily a uniform positive for undocumented students. While they offer legal inclusion, they may not respond to the challenges particular to undocumented students (e.g. lack of financial aid and entry into a limited workforce). The high school Ernie and Luis attended emphasized college attendance for all but was not able to support this aspiration with sufficient resources. Furthermore, family circumstances also affect aspirations. Schools in poorer neighborhoods, as well as the local public universities that reflect post-secondary educational options for New York undocumented youth, are often unable to finance adequate support of even native-born students without legal issues.

In the sections that follow, I trace the immigration and family context of each young man, describe their school-work decision, and follow the trajectories of their most recurrent dreams. One advantage of this biographical analysis is the lack of tacit determinism of statistical models like segmented assimilation. The attention to the development and changes in aspirations for the future is more in tune with their (multiple) social positions. Their point in the life course is also crucial, as relationships to girlfriends and children strongly impact the prioritization of aspirations and ultimately, their settlement decisions.

_Intra-Family Dynamics and Immigration: Ernie_

Ernie was born in Tijuana to migrant parents who worked in _maquiladoras_. His grandmother had moved nearby, as did an aunt and three cousins. The hometown remained Cuautilla in the state of Morelos, however, and Ernie lived there from age four to six. When he returned there again from Tijuana at age nine with his parents, Armando and Silvia Ramales, he settled into life shepherding horses in the afternoons after school. One Saturday in 2001, Ernie, the older of their two children, returned from the _campo_
with his uncle and couldn’t find his parents around. *Where is my mother? Where is my father?* His grandparents told him they had left, along with Ernie’s younger brother, who was two years old. They had left to join Armando’s eldest brother in New York City.

Three years later, his parents had saved enough money to pay a *coyote* and Ernie crossed the border through mountains and desert with twenty others including his uncle and a young cousin. After crossing, one half of the people were made to wait in a ditch for twenty four hours without food or water. When Ernie arrived to the kitchen of his parents’ apartment for the first time, following a nearly three year absence from his parents and a clandestine trip across the Mexican-American border, and he remembers his father telling him he “looked scared, skinny ... ugly ... and like a rat,” he began the complicated transition to his new life. This is the point from which he began re-building his family life.

Most Mexican immigrant children face family separation like this (Suarez-Orozco et al. 2008). Though one might reasonably expect Ernie to hold a grudge after being left behind in Morelos and his rude welcome to the United States, his New York family life has become more than just the centerpiece of daily life but also the base of his sense of meaning. I will first describe Ernie’s relationship to his family in the tight physical space they occupy together and the changing emotional bond as Ernie moves from adolescence to young adulthood. As he learns “illegality,” he is also learning how to be a young man and a dependable family guy.

Portes might see Ernie’s New York start as a case headed for dissonant acculturation, with Ernie acculturating to a low-income minority neighborhood but parents not adapting to their surroundings and losing their sense of parental authority. But
that is not what we see. As a teenager, Ernie said his apartment is where he feels safest, explaining the potential dangers of young gang members in the neighborhood. His adolescent strategy for avoiding the streets keeps him close to his parents and two younger brothers. When I arrive, he walks out casually from the bedroom, where he sleeps in the large bunk bed with his parents, and his two younger brothers. A few family photos spot the walls, a vanity mirror shines next to stacked crates with clothes and an older computer Alvaro found on the street. A cot is kept there folded up during the day, and is brought to the kitchen at night; Ernie sometimes sleeps there. A second bedroom along the hallway is rented out to boarders. His mother is usually in the kitchen, either cooking or watching television. The apartment itself is usually clean and tidy despite the cockroaches that regularly crawl up and down the walls. Posters the father found on the street line the hallway. The hallway opens to the kitchen, the largest room. The television that was there when I first came has been substituted for a bigger one with more buttons; both were found on the street. Mexican decorations predominate, with a small shrine to the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, a national wooden map, and tricolor tinsel. In the compact bathroom with an unfinished wall, a wrench holds the toilet valve in place, a deeply stained bathtub streams water, and the sink is in the kitchen. Most of the building’s eight apartments don’t have a shower, and at least one uncle or cousin from another apartment shows up when I am there to use the Ramales shower. The fire escape outside one of the two kitchen windows serves as a conduit for younger cousins from other floors to come down and say hello. His youngest brothers’ toys across the kitchen floor have become his son’s. This is where Ernie spent the vast majority of his time outside of school, when he was younger, and today, outside of work.
Shifts in Family Life and School Hopes

Even when they do not agree, Ernie’s surrounding family and their various resources inform his theory for action and for the future. As his primary social space, he’s normalized the constant proximity of family. As a teenager, though, he contrasted the spatial with the emotional: [his relationship with his parents] “…isn’t the same as [with grandparents] in Mexico, it’s not close like trust…[I want it] not just like father and son but like friend, who you can talk about your problems with, [but] they play too much. I don’t trust them. They make up things” like “stories that never happened.” This emotional distance that I noted in 2008 has shifted over the years.

As Ernie was in his senior year of high school, it seemed closer to the segmented assimilation portrait of ambivalence about parents that comes with dissonant acculturation. When he was in high school, he viewed his parents in terms of what they can buy for him: “they treat me more bad, sometimes more nice” explaining that they can sometimes afford to buy him things, and sometimes they ask him to be patient and wait. One more point of conflict which has opened up recently is his mother’s stance on his long-term girlfriend, who asked him “to find a girlfriend who lives around” the neighborhood. Like most teenagers and their parents, the Sanchez fight. Ernie explains: “They talk a lot when they don’t know the right thing. I talk and sometimes they don’t believe me. If they get angry at me, I just stop, and they don’t say nothing.” The fights are often over seemingly small things that teachers tell him to do or bring, such as printing out a paper he writes, or over activities/trips that students do/take, especially senior year when there are school spirit days where you dress up silly. Moreover, in the past learning (and Ernie’s upholding of the immigrant bargain) was a cause for a family
fight, as when his father said, “What’s the point of being here for four years and not knowing English?” when he wanted Ernie to translate, comparing him negatively to a girl who learned English quickly after arriving. Ernie saw these types of tensions between adolescents and their parents as normal, explaining to me how “[two friends’] parents don’t like them, [so] they have trust with others, like friends.”

Nowadays, however, those kind of arguments happen much less frequently. Although Ernie still only eats dinner with his parents twice a week—he is often at the gym—they wake up and sit in front of the television together while Silvia makes him a warm breakfast. Having his girlfriend Leticia in the house has obligated them to talk and negotiate more. The gossip about her mother’s alcohol problems eased the process of Ernie asking his mother about Leticia staying with them when she had serious family problems in 2009. She, too, stayed in the family bunk bed. Ernie and Leticia stole kisses when his parents and brothers were in the kitchen or out running errands, giving him something besides parental vexation to think about. A year later, it gave him a son.

Ernie’s school aspirations have also shifted. In 2008, when I began to broach the possibility of his going to college in New York, he said it wasn’t possible. I’d asked about his plans for the future, “I’ll get a job for a few years ... then I’ma go to Mexico for college.” As Ernie moved through high school, school was where others pushed him to articulate college dreams. One Friday in November 2008, I sat next to Ernie in his Advisory session, a group of fifteen male students who attend a daily half-period class on the unwritten curriculum8 for all four years. The veteran teacher handed out application

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8 Various activities include community building, self-esteem support, trips to local colleges, support in filling out the forms for the SAT (and obtaining fee waivers), review of the CUNY application, creating a resume, and writing the college essay.
forms for everyone to peruse and draft “all your information.” All the other students scribbled away, but Ernie left them untouched on his desk. The next week, Ernie nervously alerted me he was going to tell his Advisor, who would be the first person in the school to know about his undocumented status, that he wasn’t going to college and why.

Lack of legal status can inhibit not just individual but family expectations. Without status and a clear idea of how college admissions and financial aid would work, his parents also presumed he would begin work after graduating. Their lack of contact with—and information from—his school meant that the first real discussion about possibilities for applying for and paying for college was with me. After Sunday mass, when I asked about the possibility of Ernie attending a CUNY college, I met uncomfortable empty smiles, a lack of questions, and long silences. I realized the topic of college had been untouched by his parents. Weeks later, I proposed having a talk specifically about it. We met in a corner of the neighborhood park. Doing my best guidance counselor impression, I talked in Spanish about the different programs that related to the interests Ernie had expressed; described how paying was possible in $400 monthly payments; and the jobs he might expect afterwards, even without papers. Silvia said a cousin had entered LaGuardia and dropped out. Armando said that it had been a waste of money. She told me they were happy to know about it, but they both looked relieved to introduce me to Ernie’s godfather when he walked by to change the topic.

Even after he began a job in a candle factory in July 2009, Ernie continued to think about how to possibly fit studying into his work schedule (see the opening anecdote of Chapter 8). His interest in graphic design or arts in 2009 shifted to becoming a
mechanic by 2011, and we identified CUNY programs that supported those career paths. Besides the rare mention with Leticia, he says I am the only person with whom he discusses these college options, as we did again in fall 2012. “How far away is that [campus]?” he asked. The three-hour back-and-forth would mean he could only take courses on the weekends, when he spends time with his son. “Maybe I could do it later,” he ended our discussion, staring blankly into the distance. As I describe in a later section, in 2014, he said, “For now, I’m not thinking about school, I just want a regular job.” These narrowed expectations for a “normal” future fit the pattern identified by Gonzales (2011) of undocumented youth “learning to be illegal.”

In summer 2012, Armando’s domestic violence when binge drinking motivated Silvia to find another partner. Though Ernie did not confront his father directly, he has stopped interacting with him, “just going through the routine.” Ernie described the family issues the separation caused: “My uncle Rosario and my aunts are saying bad stuff [about my mother] ... that my brothers shouldn’t be around her.” He has defended his mother to them. This experience has brought him closer to his mother, whose name he has tattooed on his arm.

Multiple Futures

If the transition to adulthood begins with certain conditions set—for example, parents’ educational careers are most often complete—youth continue to accumulate educational and cultural resources (e.g. secondary schooling, norm of college attendance) beyond their adolescence that enable multiple possible endings. In this section we follow the trajectories of the most recurrent inner narratives that drive Ernie’s and Luis’s negotiation between varied future possibilities. Changing social resources and social
commitments, in particular romantic relationships, drive their negotiation of these narratives. In contrast to the predicted assimilative pathways of segmented assimilation theory, we see the multiple possibilities of future paths youth can take (Smith 2008). We can observe shifting membership to the subcultural groups most often touted in assimilation literature: first-generation immigrants, second-generation strivers, members of the rainbow underclass, and upper-middle class society (ibid.). We also see the relevance of home country dreams (Anderson and Solis 2014). These aspects of identity shift as Ernie and Luis move to different socio-legal contexts.

Return Fantasy

A central preoccupation for most young adults is belonging (Henderson et al. 2010); for immigrant youth, belonging is often portrayed as incomplete as they transition between two or more contexts (Perreira et al. 2013). Lack of legal status adds to this sense of incomplete belonging. For Ernie, the sense of settling into a New York future was softened by the temptation of returning to Mexico.

Like many first-generation immigrants, Ernie’s high school expressions of desire for return were about seeing family, and they came up in our conversations about every month or so. With a stern chin, he first told me how he couldn’t go back and see his abuelita Virginia when she unexpectedly passed away. She had been like his mother, he said. “When my grandma died, my mom and me was wishing to go back for [the funeral], but she was thinking about paying again” for a coyote and decided it wasn’t possible. His uncle who lived with them for several years had returned, and his paternal grandparents lived in the large two-story family house in the center of their small hometown. He had
lived there from age 4 to 6 and from 8 to 11. “In the towns of Mexico, you have more freedom,” Ernie said.

ES: That’s why I want to go right now to Mexico [eyes focused, fist tightened]. Right now, to see how it’s changed, to see people, then you see them differently, like their faces, how they are…the people, the faces, the places…the years of my childhood, and then when you’re an adult.

As he completed high school and contemplated future plans, second-generation characteristics became clearer. In 2009 and 2010, as he wrestled with the possibility of college and the difficulties of achieving it in New York, his expressions of return mixed with a desire for social mobility. He is thinking of “just going to Mexico for four years” with his parents staying here in New York. “Sometimes I wanna just go to Cuautlilla and study for college, even without their permission, I’ll go anyways, because I know I’m gonna do something good.” The first- and second-generation characteristics conflate in his plans, and he also is “planning on saving money to go to Mexico and get a house.”

Ernie’s transnational resources supported this hedging of his options. The first in his extended family to do so, his youngest uncle Jesus studied in Puebla finishing his undergraduate degree. “I could live with him and his fiancée.” This family support was the only concrete idea of how to re-enter his old reality of a return to Mexico. For example, I asked Ernie what would happen to his then four-year relationship with Leticia if he were to go study in Mexico. He said they’d both go, but Leticia’s family was in New York and though she had lived in Mexico for a few years as a child, she told me she planned to go to college in New York. His decision-making balanced the patent
advantages of his relationship with Leticia with the obscure possibility of getting a college degree in Puebla.

This aspiration dissipated quickly after the birth of his son in 2010. He just stopped mentioning it. He began writing loving messages about this transformation to becoming a father in the US on Facebook. “Daniel, you are my entire life” was the recurrent theme. Though his relationship with Leticia had its hiccups, the newfound centrality of his son to his life has not, to date. In 2012 and again in 2013, I noted that Ernie doesn’t mention his dream of return any longer. Each time, he shrugged his shoulders and said, “Daniel...I guess, my son, I have to be there for him.” If Ernie used to sometimes send money to his grandparents, now he invests his money in things and activities for Daniel (and rent).

Masculinity Vision

In Ernie’s everyday life, his sense of masculinity plays a (not the) guiding role. His social position, like that of most 1.5 generation Mexican young men in New York, reflects limited financial, political, and social resources in a city where many possess those in large supply. In households like Ernie’s, lack of legal status and tight budgets dictate possibilities, any surplus is sent as remittances, and all seek to some degree the material success they see around them in popular culture (e.g. phones, televisions, computers, a nice apartment, jewelry). Most first- and second-generation of Mexican-American teenagers desire the American dream of social mobility, although they are often in a position where it is incredibly difficult to attain.

When he was in high school, Ernie expressed his sense of masculinity in relation to neighborhood gangs, athletic commitments, and his girlfriend. Gangs work as a
negative reference group for social trajectory but a positive reference group for asserting security in the neighborhood. Several gangs inhabit Ernie’s everyday social space: the Latin Kings, MS-13, Wild Chicanos, M-18, LDC, TMB, and Aztlan. “They have no life, like no future”, Ernie dismissively says. Though he bears no sign of belonging to a gang and has said to gang members that he doesn’t represent anywhere (i.e. he doesn’t claim any territory in the neighborhood), he has friends from junior high school and high school who are in gangs. When he sees them, he will say hi, chat with them for a short time, and continue on (at least when I’m around). On the other hand, he explained his concept of reciprocity with gang member friends: “Like, if there’s a fight, and one of them is getting beat up, I’ll come in and help out, and if I get attacked and they see it, they’ll help out.” This fantasy makes him feel safer when he is on the streets. Importantly, this has never occurred, but he admires gang fighting: “Sometimes, some kids like to act, they like to feel higher, more better than you, when you fight, you feel sad for them, like lástima, they’re like too gangster…they don’t know how to fight.”

He also admires the potential me-against-the-world possibility he interprets as a possibility for gang members.

ES: I got respect [for you] if you’re [in] a real gang, you’re by yourself and you go by another gang, you don’t care about it. You don’t care if they kill you, you’re being valiente, brave. For them, I got a lot of respect.

SR: Why?

ES: It’s one thing, just imagine, to have that person on your side, he’ll give his life for you. Like the gang feels proud of you, representing, like letting them
know you’re a real gangster. It’s like you’re teaching them, why be in a gang if you’re going to do nothing…if you only do stuff when you’re with all the gang.

SR: What would happen next if you did that?

ES: Sometimes they get scared, they will leave, and sometimes they step to you.

SR: How do you know?

ES: From TV, or you talk to people from different gangs, or you watch them. You just know…I’m always like that, [even] just walking normal. Like, for example, if other guys come to me and they want problems, I’m going to defend myself como saca el demonio [like they brought out the devil in me].

One more way in which Ernie bolsters his sense of self as a young man is through soccer, as I saw as his soccer coach for his high school years. Soccer teams are a stage that gave Ernie a chance to show his talent in relation to his peers. As a youngster in Mexico, he began playing with boys two or three years older than him. Remnants of that early confidence return when we play soccer, and Ernie is comfortable dribbling with the ball in contrast to his reticence in conversation with nearly everyone. “Corre, Ricardo, corre!” he commands while laughing at his friend who does not exhibit the same level of skill.

“I want to get bigger,” he declared, walking home from school in 2008. When we walked by a sports nutrition store, he asked me about the benefits of using some of the products, and ended in his first purchase of protein powder. The importance of getting stronger, and in doing so getting respect is not different from other American teenagers. What is interesting is how Ernie evolves his ideas about masculinity to combat the vulnerability of his life, whether the danger comes from gangs, ethnic slurs, his
undocumented status, his family’s low socioeconomic status, or just his own sense of having been transplanted to Brooklyn. Several years later, Ernie has become a gym buff. He has made gym friends, and like the case for soccer, uses his talent to make fun of less accomplished athletes. Regular posts on Facebook in 2014 show overweight or underweight men pretending to go regularly to the gym, oblivious to their lack of success. If I used to give him advice on exercises, now he teases me for my lack of form with a chuckle.

Third, his seven-year on-and-off relationship with Leticia also boosted his self-image vis-à-vis his peers. “She’s got family problems,” he told me. “I can be there for her.” His protective role also protected him, as they mostly stayed inside and off the streets.

Marriage Fantasy

Ernie’s relationship with his girlfriend allows him to contend with his and others’ view of masculinity and how it plays into his vision for the future. One cold Saturday morning in 2006, Ernie showed up to soccer practice with an eighth grade Mexican-American named Leticia, who waited and watched Ernie for two hours. Having met her through his cousin before she attended ABC High School, they spent free time between periods together, talking and flirting. When the two of them walk through the streets of Bushwick, he says “[gangs] don’t mess with us,” allowing him to project a masculine image without belonging to a gang.

In addition to this function of the relationship, her family troubles also put his in relief. Her mother is an alcoholic and has a restraining order on her former husband. When she was a high school senior in 2011, her mother’s drinking issues had them put in
foster care. At many points, she and Ernie have made plans to live together though she slept at his family’s apartment on weekends or on an emergency basis. Her unstable domestic predicament is offset by her legal status, as she was born here and is a citizen. Not to be ignored, Ernie’s relationship with Leticia, full of love and trust for many years (they separated for good in 2013), was often his strongest daily emotional support. One afternoon in 2009, though, we were sitting on a bench talking about Leticia, and he asked me at what age one can marry in the U.S. He was genuinely surprised that one needs to be 18 years old (she was 16 at the time), or have the permission of parents, and he slipped back into the thoughts in his head.

Growing up mostly in Brooklyn, confident Leticia speaks English with an American accent. Her grades average about 80, though her family instability has had a negative impact during a few semesters. She helped Ernie with homework occasionally, and in comparison to his lack of vision for his own educational future, he is sure about Leticia’s. “When she goes to college, I will pay for it.” This application of the immigrant bargain to his second-generation girlfriend positions him as a first-generation immigrant. He sees his sacrifice enabling Leticia’s future success. It also reflects his understanding that Leticia is better integrated than he is, and gives him a claim on American success. “Her diploma will be hers but for both of us,” Ernie replied to what he wanted out of his investment in her education.

I was surprised that he never spoke of marriage as a way to get legal status. His parents, however, encouraged this vision of a marriage with an American citizen. He acknowledges that his parents think of it as “strategic,” and Armando invoked her status several times in conversation with me. Ernie points to how his ability to get papers could
impact his future: A future child might also benefit from American citizenship, and has decided “if we have a baby, we’ll have it before going [back to Mexico].”

When 16 year-old Leticia became pregnant, they debated whether to keep the baby; she decided she wanted it. Leticia gave birth to his son Daniel in May 2010, and Ernie was there. As someone inexperienced in caring for babies, I was impressed with his skills and care for baby Daniel. More importantly, he also found deep personal meaning in his new life. “It doesn’t matter how long I have to wait, I will always be here in the same place, to protect them from everything, and what happen, happens, I will never leave them alone. There’s a time in life when you get tired of everything... you dedicate yourself to your family, you work, and it’s only for your family but a lot of people don’t understand...when that day comes, you stop playing around and you will learn what it is to care for a family, what responsibilities are!” he said in Spanish in 2012.

Though they split for good in 2013 after Ernie had been unfaithful, he hasn’t abandoned his dream of marriage and the long-term stability it implies, showing how important this fantasy is for him. Afterwards, he “talked with girls on Facebook,” which led to a long-distance relationship in 2014 with Aracelis, whom like Leticia, “has problems.” For six months, they’ve talked online and by phone every night. “In the best case, we get married next year,” he told me in Spanish about a young woman with whom he has never lived in the same city. He told her about his lack of legal status—though he has DACA—and they are hoping to have a civil marriage to help him get a visa.

**Regular Job Dream**

At one quinceañera where he was chambelán, 20–year old Ernie hit it off with a visiting family friend and wanted to visit her in Minnesota afterwards. Even greater than
his fear of traveling there by bus was the constraint that his boss wouldn’t give any days off. In these first years after he began factory work, his desire for greater worker rights (vacation, sick days, respectful superiors) grew. Searching for a better work environment, he changed factories three times in four years.

He also channeled these hopes into a desire to return for additional schooling, and we spoke of the possibilities for and process of doing this regularly. We found CUNY programs that corresponded to becoming a graphic artist, a tattoo artist, and a mechanic. He imagined taking courses on the weekends or at night, working during the week to pay for tuition, his son, and part of his family’s rent. But paying for courses would take money away from the family budget.

When Obama announced the opportunity to have a temporary work permit as part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program (DACA), Ernie applied with the assistance of his parish church. He wondered if DACA would let him go back to college or find a better job. By 2014, his work prospects haven’t changed, and he is disappointed to not be able to visit Mexico (which DACA does not allow). “I just want a regular job,” he says, feeling let down by DACA. A regular job would be “like working at FedEx, making a little more, getting holidays off,” he said after objecting to another Thanksgiving and Christmas that he was obliged to work. “If I get a regular job, I will be okay for a long time ... maybe we can move into a bigger apartment,” he envisioned in November 2014.

_Intra-Family Dynamics and Immigration: Luis_

The first time Luis met his stepmother Theresa was when she stepped into the dusty _rancho_ where he lived with his grandparents during the years his father was
working in New York. Pregnant, she had come to take Luis and his brother to New York. He was ten and his brother was nine. The coyote guided their crossing of the border, which took a day and left them impressed with their hardy stepmother. When they arrived in New York, he gave his smiling father a hug.

Luis and his brother moved into a one-bedroom apartment in the same neighborhood as Ernie lived. Like Ernie, the rural to urban trip made him nervous, and he spent much of the time indoors. A few years later, they upgraded to a two-bedroom only a few blocks away; his father had secured a better job at a pizzeria and occasionally earned extra singing in a band on weekends. When I first visited in 2008, I noted the long narrow entry hallway leads to an open kitchen/living room, with a small, tidy bathroom off to the side. The furnishings are spare but tidy: plastic stack and aluminum chairs outline the plastic-covered dining table in the living room. Manuel, his father, sits in a chair in front of shelves that hold a small TV/VCR and a mini stereo. Toys spread across the room’s floor, as Manuel and Theresa have a baby son. Luis has not yet seen him in person. You can see in the two modest bedrooms from the living room. One is for Theresa and Manuel and their baby; Luis’ two brothers and sister sleep on the queen mattress in the second. Except for school, soccer practice, and work, Luis spent nearly all his high school years in this apartment.

*Shifts in Family Life and School Hopes*

When Luis’s father Manuel first came to work in New York, he met Theresa. His first wife stayed with his parents in Mexico caring for her sons. When she found out he had a new girlfriend, she left her sons and returned to her hometown. Luis rated his happiness as 8 or 9 when his father lived with them, which dropped to 5 when he left for
New York, and 3 when his mother left. Arriving in New York, he said, “It felt good to be
together again...we [Theresa and I] didn’t have any problems.” He welcomed the new
addition of a baby brother, and two years later, a baby sister. It gave the family a common
focus.

Luis and his brother Fred entered bilingual classes after arriving, though drugs
and informal gangs drew Fred’s interest. “People I called friends [from that junior high
school] tried to get me to smoke weed, but I refused.” He saw drug use and gang
involvement as character weaknesses, but Fred was more tempted. “I tried talking to him
about [gangs] but he just wouldn’t listen,” Luis says with contempt. Many times Luis
tried to help Fred with his schoolwork but “he’s just lazy.” Fred usually spent time
outside with friends, and Luis came home after school to do homework and help watch
his younger brother and sister. When he was 15, his father helped him get a job at a
nearby Mexican bakery. “It gave me money to buy clothes and stuff for soccer.” He
showed off his new Northface jacket in the hallways of ABC High School.

We see the negotiation of the immigrant bargain very clearly in his family life.
Luis and his father have had a combative but friendly relationship marked by repartee. In
2008, his father explained that their bargain is simple: “I work. Money is not a
problem....he just has to study.” For his stepmother (whom he just calls “Mom”), Luis is
“a good son, never in trouble.” “He sacrificed for me,” Luis said poignantly, then
qualified it with “… [it was] mostly money.”

In 2005, I met Luis as a junior who would show up early for the 8:10 am English
class. He was a diligent, quiet student with a ponytail whose work was average. Though
in the hallways he mostly avoided the crowds, in the cafeteria he had a few friends with
whom he would joke. His grades were mostly average, with no standout subject area. Later on, when he gave smart remarks about various teachers and students in the yearbook, I realized I had wrongly thought of him as withdrawn. But his passion showed itself at the first soccer practice we organized, where he arrived in full Real Madrid uniform, including socks. Our school had organized advisories, groups of students that stayed together all four years of high school. Luis’s advisory had a reputation as particularly rowdy during his junior and senior years, though Luis did not usually participate in disruptions. Though the school hopes advisory groups develop a sense of intimate community, Luis told no one in the group about his status.

*From College to Career: Changing Aspirations*

Luis got his high school diploma on time in June 2007. Without disclosing his legal status to anyone (including me), he had already applied for admission to CUNY. “I always expected to go to college,” Luis later told me in 2009, “I had to make it.” “He wanted to go to college,” his father told me, “We didn’t know what it was about...how much it cost.” He negotiated with his father about paying the annual tuition and fees, about $4,000. His father got an informal loan for the cost, for which they paid $500 in interest. Luis would pay him every paycheck. When he began at LaGuardia Community College, four of his six classes were remedial classes. He did not do well and interpreted his grades as discrimination: “It’s not the same for people that weren’t born in the U.S.” But he knew he wanted to keep studying. A course in drawing and design has piqued his interest and he “wanted to work with big trucks.” Thus, his professional hopes had crystallized around becoming an architect. “When I decided to study architecture, I knew I couldn’t stay there. It was so expensive. It was a waste of time and money.”
In the short term, Luis said his options were to join an uncle working in Utah or study in the city closest to his family’s town in Mexico. The first option would give him the same kind of life as his parents and the second would give him the chance to be a college graduate. Though he “didn’t want to come back to Mexico the way [he] left,” he transferred his dream of “making it” from getting an American degree to getting a Mexican one. “I just really knew that I wanted to keep on studying until I had a degree.” When he told his father he wanted to study in Mexico, he met some initial resistance. “Why would you go back, after the efforts to bring you here?” Luis stood his ground: “the cost will be less, I can see abuelita, I’ll get my degree.” His father realized Luis could stay with relatives 40 minutes from the college, college costs would be very low compared to New York, and as a college graduate, he would be able to find a way to return. He relented.

With his usual composure, Luis explains his move back to Mexico. “The night before I was excited but when I was in the airport I didn’t want to leave cause I saw my sister crying.” He doesn’t think about it often, though: “I just left and didn’t look back. I was just thinking how my life will be back in Puebla.” He also wanted to see his grandmother, his primary caregiver for his first ten years.

In 2008, Luis moved back to Mexico and four months later, did not pass the entrance exam for the public university. His stepmother worried to me that he didn’t know Spanish as well as he thought. To his credit, Manuel paid for Luis to take private preparatory classes and bought him a laptop. When I visited Luis during this first year, I expected him to show more frustration at not yet being in college but it seemed a happy
second childhood. He lived with his uncle, who worked two jobs, and his homemaker aunt and their four children.

Luis and his father continued their repartee by Sunday skype calls that have dwindled to once a month. The first time I visited Luis in Mexico in 2009, he skyped with his father as usual on Sundays. He raised his voice, “Why didn’t you send the video camera [on the plane with me]! Cabron! You sent this [camera] and not even the adaptor!” They argued back and forth, “Who is sending you money every month?” (His father didn’t realize I was listening, as evidenced by asking about how ‘Wonder Bread’ was doing.)

Juxtaposed against his hopes for social mobility, the developing suburb where his relatives lived struck me as quite poor. The driver of the bus I took to get there didn’t believe I was on the right bus but dropped me off on the side of a highway. Luis led me down a ravine, across a filthy creek, and up the steep opposite bank. We entered the concrete, unfinished single-family house his relatives were building. A plastic curtain separated the bathroom from the living room, and the toilet did not have running water or a seat. “I was disappointed when I got here, but I can move forward here,” Luis humbly explained. “It’s not great yet but we’re going to add a second floor.”

When I returned the following year, the context communicated Luis’s hopes. A permanent bridge had been built over the creek and the second floor of their house had been built and lay empty. Luis also began speaking to me often in Spanish, and it seemed English required some effort for the first time. When I returned a year and a half later, the walls of the main room had been painted. New concrete houses filled in the empty spaces of the neighborhood. “It’s changing fast,” Luis noted. If in 2009, his parents sent
electronics with me for better communication with their son, the following year, he asked me to bring some architectural supplies.

Two buses got us to the university in under an hour. New construction projects at his college also promised a brighter future. On campus in 2011, we walked through the architecture buildings, the new cafe, and the sports facilities. I asked why he didn’t play soccer there. He had played there once or twice, he said. Despite the centrality of college to his life, his social life remained apart. He walked the college paths in athletic gear. The students I saw on my two visits exuded Mexican middle-classness: polo shirts, fancy purses, paler skins, and cliques.

*Masculine Fantasy*

*January 2009.* I had arrived with some presents from his family, including a school project done by his 8 year-old sister. It had her favorite food and favorite person: Luis. He put it up on his dresser as the only piece of non-soccer paraphenalia. An iconic Mexican soccer team, Club América team photos and posters turn the gray walls blue and yellow.

In the concrete-floored living room, Luis and the other *chambelanes* (escorts for the birthday girl) practiced choreographed dances for a friend’s *quinceañera* (15th birthday ceremony and celebration). “She’s his girlfriend,” his aunt whispered to me, smiling. Luis turned comically (?) serious, “She is not my girlfriend,” which did not spare him being teased by his teenage cousins. “I’ll show you who was my girlfriend, she’s prettier,” he said. We entered a small grocery a hundred meters from his house, and smug Luis introduced me to a teenage girl that he said he dated for a few weeks. “There’s a couple other girls that I was with, just for a little bit, like [the *quinceañera* girl].” My
field notes comment that “he feels cool showing off this new phase of his life to me.” He hadn’t had time for a girlfriend in New York, he said. His cousins had teased him, saying “You can’t even get a girl!”

Both sporting Spanish club team jerseys, we went to play a full-field soccer game ten minutes from his house. Afterwards I told Luis he was the best player on his side. He also pointed out the basketball courts where he played on Saturdays. These fields were where he spent most of his weekends, where he won the respect and friendship of his peers. These sports teams, both informal and formal, gave Luis access to a performative masculinity that he otherwise would lack.

Between his role as chambelan, his role as flirty and aggressive young man, and his role as a sports-oriented muchacho, Luis relished a new sense of masculinity that eluded him in New York. He had never been asked to be a chambelan in New York nor was he playfully aggressive with anyone outside of his family.

Every time we spoke on the phone or chatted, Luis asked me about ways to come back to the US. Over the long term, he imagined he would get his degree and return to work in New York. “Can you get a visa with a [college] degree?” he asked. Two years after his move, he told me he heard of a temporary visa program: he could do an internship in Florida, and then visit New York afterwards. “[Where I go] depends on a job... I don’t know if I can get a good job here,” Luis told me in 2011. A year later, we spoke about the Deferred Action (DACA) program. He wanted to know who could get it, if he could qualify. I described the main criteria, including continuous residence from 2007 to the application date. “Oh,” he said, a little disappointment in his voice.
His career, however, carries a strong sense of pride. His Facebook name was Arq Luis, as in Architect Luis. He regularly posts memes about architects. “Sabes que eres arquitecto cuando oyes dos o tres veces tu playlist por la noche” [“You know you’re an architect when you hear your playlist two or three times at night”] This value of being up late working on a project is held in high esteem by his working-class relatives and other architecture students. “Sabes que sales con arquitecto, cuando le urge ponerte una casa. Amor de arquitectos.” [“You know you’re going out with an architect when he urges you to get a house.”] His girlfriend responds with a “Sere el arquitecto que disene tu corazon” [I’ll be the architect that designs your heart”].

Adulthood & Negotiating Upward Mobility

As he finished his junior year in college, he became excited about getting closer to graduation. Asked about his post-graduation plans, he replied, “I was thinking of going back but now I’m not sure.” “I’m ready to work.” He saw going back and forth as unrealistic given the need for visas, and said “If I could live in only one place, it would be [my hometown].

Luis sees “the moment I left NYC” as the beginning of his adulthood, because “I knew I was all by myself even though I had the rest of my family here [in Mexico].” Finishing college, however, was really the clearest marker. “I really knew that I wanted to keep on studying until I had a degree.” The dream to finish college was the sign of making it. “My dad always told me I was his boy, that he knew I was going to make it, that he wanted me to make him proud.”

In fact, he uses transnational family arguments to motivate his goal of finishing his studies. After an argument when his father was unimpressed by his post-college job
prospects, Luis took to Facebook to write, “Overwhelmed, desperate, and bewildered. They say I push away those who love me. Please life. I have made it through worse things. If you want to see me beaten down, it won’t happen. The bigger the challenges the greater my fight and my victory...”

“I always wanted to be more than what I am. You saw where I was born. I didn’t want to come back as a nobody,” Luis told me later in 2014. He also didn’t want to return as a stuffy society person: “We’re going to celebrate in my town in July but I’m not going to start being a snob.” It’s a story that justifies his educational achievement and highlights his social mobility, but also keeps the explanation off his legal status.

He moved back to his hometown to work as an architect on a municipal project. “If you want a good job, you need at least two years experience,” he says, adding, “it’s so different from New York.” But he also feels comfortable there, with family around and a chance to enjoy his success. For example, his soccer playing still gives him time with friends and a chance to show off. In October 2014, he told me, “I play with the President’s team (of the town) and in the colonia [where his grandparents live] I play with my old pals.”

After Luis graduated from college, his father expected him to make good on the transnational immigrant bargain. “He is really pissed off...he just wants me to get a better job, an architecture job. We just argue about everything. He just wants me to get a better life. He thinks I’m going to do the same [kind of job] as my brother.”

Plans for Marriage

His dream is now to “get known better, leave his hometown, and get a better job.” This dream precedes his nascent dream of marriage. After a few romantic relationships
with young women from his neighborhood that lasted only a few months, he began a long romantic relationship with a younger architecture student who also used to live in the United States. He first told me about his girlfriend in early 2013. “Arielis is from Virginia but she came back here to study ... she’s cute.” “It’s almost like my story except that she came back to study high school.” “She encourages me even more to become an architect,” adding to become an architect in Mexico. They don’t talk about what his legal status was in the US, but “Arielis and me both know I won’t be able to be an architect in New York.”

He strategized marrying after he is better placed career-wise. “I just don’t want to get married yet. She is the right one but not right now.” Now with a degree, a serious relationship, and his Mexican family, Luis says, “I’m going to be just fine here.”

Hindrances to Family Dreams

His activation of transnational dreams and use of transnational resources to fulfill them is a success in his eyes. But Luis is not blind to the difficulties it has created. “I can’t get [my family] happy, man,” Luis said after graduating, “They both want me to be with them, in Mexico and in the US.” His girlfriend Arielis’s family returned with her, and she doesn’t want to go back to the US. His long-term commitment to Arielis plays an important role in blocking off a return to his nuclear family.

He also understands that legal status is the main reason he can’t see them, but he’s normalized it. “It does affect my life but like I say, I don’t think it’s being a big deal. It’s not our country. If we just want a better life in a different country, then we just have to deal with the rules they have.” Before graduating and becoming serious about a partner, Luis struggled more with the demands of transnational family life. His younger sister
wrote him a birthday message on Facebook: “Happy birthday Arq Luis u the best bro i ever had even though we not together u still in my heart no matter what hopefully u having a good day in your birthday i wish u the best and hope one day we could be together once more like we use to te kiero hermano con todo mi vida and again happy birthday.” He now was able to write back, “Love U. U R the best sister anyone could ask for.”

*Comparing Shifts in Membership over Time*

To condense these narratives of the transition to adulthood while retaining the multiple futures evident in the central aspirations of Ernie and Luis, I use a modified version of Smith’s Fuzzy Set Social Locator (2008; Ragin 2000). Fuzzy set theory allows degrees of membership in subcultural groups that youth could belong to; this is helpful because it can capture shifts in the degree of membership over time. To make this analytical tool appropriate for these two cases, I add three groups (hometown campesino, socially mobile Mexican, and working-class native) to the three of the social membership types proposed by Smith (first generation immigrant, and rainbow underclass). Because spatial restrictions are particularly salient to the comparison of these four types and to this analysis of undocumented transitions to adulthood, I also contribute spatial possibilities associated with each type. See Table 5 (p. 84) for table of types.

The *Plyler v Doe* (1982) Supreme Court decision that allowed undocumented students to study in public schools justified it on the basis of avoiding an unwanted “underclass.” Likewise, for Portes, Rumbaut, and Zhou’s segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Portes and Zhou 1993), the *rainbow underclass* is a very real threat for children of immigrants, characterized by dropping out of high school, irregular
work, oppositional attitudes on race, dissonant acculturation, having kids before marriage, a racialized identity, and gang membership. Members of this group are also assumed to lead highly circumscribed lives, without the resources for international travel.

Alba & Nee (2003) have described Mexicans as on average engaged in horizontal mobility. This possibility is expected for undocumented youth who are understood to share the same labor market chances as their undocumented parents (Zhou et al. 2008). The first generation immigrant works if not in school; is a hard worker; sacrifices for own children or siblings; keeps the parental side of the immigrant bargain; marries and has kids. First generation immigrants often maintain transnational links. Further, they often retain a desire to return to their homeland, the fulfillment of which is limited for those without (or with a liminal) legal status.

Assimilation theory and segmented assimilation theory grapple with the issue of into what group(s) immigrants assimilate. When immigrants become middle-class, we can see the reduction in their ethnic salience (Alba and Nee 2003). When immigrants remain in the working class, their ethnicity may remain salient, and assimilation is attenuated. Portes and his collaborators describe a downward assimilation in poor, racialized neighborhoods. Here, in order to juxtapose possible assimilation into the working-class rather than a racialized underclass, I include a working-class type. Irregular post-secondary education; insecure romantic relationships; unstable work history; mobility to find work; parental dissatisfaction with achievement; and personal therapeutic ascriptions of meaning and progress characterizes this type (Silva 2013; Attewell, Heil, and Reisel n.d.).
Upward mobility for undocumented youth is not possible (Zhou et al. 2008) or is a dream for undocumented youth that is ‘cooled out’ (Gonzales 2011). Scholars understand these aspirations to depend primarily on parents’ education, peer influence, and ethnicity (Portes et al. 2013). Many of Ernie’s and Luis’s peers, however, are able to use their ethnic and non-ethnic resources to continue to post-secondary studies (Kasinitz et al. 2008). These *second generation strivers* finish high school and college, get a career, go to professional school; keep the immigrant bargain; knows how to work in a mainstream setting; delay having kids until finishing school and marrying; and are ethnically Mexican. Second generation strivers also return to their parents’ homeland to visit and celebrate family, which facilitates selective acculturation.

Transnational moves and means to social mobility have not been considered by this literature. One possibility raised by the deportation literature (Kanstroom 2014) is return to the hometown. This is the pre-immigration horizontal mobility story, which I call *hometown campesino*, with hard agricultural work; childhood friendships; having kids and marrying within the town; and a primary town identity. For returning youth, it also means a difficult re-culturation in which social networks and life possibilities are restricted. A growing number of youth are returning to study, attracted by the possibility of becoming socially mobile in Mexico. This *socially mobile Mexican* finishes college; gets a professional career; later marries and has children; and lives in a city. In contrast to the *hometown* type, these youth experience assonant re-culturation, with diverse social networks and broader possibilities compared to life in the United States.

In this chapter, we’ve followed how Ernie’s aspirations have shifted based on family and legal status restrictions as he has come of age. His notion of ‘active family’-
whether his nuclear family, extended family in Mexico or his own emergent family—
colors his lens of possibilities and choices. In 2009, I asked Ernie to name the five people
he felt closest to, and two of the five people were in his hometown in Mexico (his
mother, aunt, and girlfriend were the others). Today, no one from Mexico makes the list;
his son, mother and girlfriend head it.

As a teenager, while Ernie retained a campesino dream, his aspirations negotiated
with perceived danger in his neighborhood and the expectation of college attendance
from a school using the ‘college for all’ model. This context elicited underclass and
striver imaginations. Given his lack of legal status and his family’s expectation of a
worker son, his striver leaning has not been supported, and with attrition over time, has
now crumbled. Further, the potential mobility inherent in a campesino dream has also led
to a highly localized existence for Ernie, as he adjusts to a more urban masculine self-
presentation.

If Leticia and their son Daniel correspond to traits associated with the underclass
(i.e. kids before marriage), they have also rooted him to a future in New York and faded
his campesino dream. The obligation to support them and his family then sustained his
obligation to work. Given his lack of legal status, he works hard for low pay—first
generation characteristics—though in sharp contrast with the working-class type. Most
important, his consistent ideal and expectation of long-term marriage—in spite of his
own parents’ separation—holds him in a life of responsibility that offers little chance for
mobility up or down. By 2014, Ernie hopes for a “regular job” that pays more and offers
holidays and sick days off.
Pushed by his father to “make him proud” and by his school to attend college, the *striver* dream in Luis surged. He had imagined making it in New York, and made the tough choice to pay for his education, yet was also held back by obstacles that stop other disadvantaged students (e.g. remedial education). When he decided to study in Mexico, this *striver* aspiration—and due to the comparatively high cost of college for undocumented students—aligned geographically with his *campesino* identity. Staying with what has become his second family, transnational resources gave him way to make good on the immigrant bargain.

By 2014, his Mexican extended family, professional career, and long-term girlfriend—not forgetting the legal obstacles to travel—had stifled his dream of return to New York. He had filled the linchpin spot of both *striver* and *socially mobile* types by completing a college education in a professional major. His father’s pressure to “get a good job” underscores the continued negotiation over being a *second-generation striver*. Luis’s everyday life, however, centers on balancing two different identities. In a shuffle between the *socially mobile* and *campesino* types, he takes the bus weekly from his hometown job close to his abuelos’ dusty *colonia* to his extended family in the city.

In their narratives, we see how different aspirations in the transition to adulthood bring about a contextual, dynamic impact of “illegality.” For Ernie, the influence of his parents, transnational family, and emergent family on his aspirations interacts with legal status and leaves him stratified in ways similar to other first-generation immigrants. For Luis, the same factors intertwine in a different sequence to lead to social mobility in Mexico but stranded from his nuclear family.
For both young men, decision-making was influenced less by ethnic organizations and family acculturation (as predicted by segmented assimilation theory) and more by how the transition to adulthood events transpired. For scholars who study the transition to adulthood of immigrants, the centrality of romantic relationships here is twofold: a) influencing the settlement decisions and b) becoming a central locus of meaning for those stratified by legal status. While these are clearest in the case of Ernie with his son, Luis’s long-term aspirations with Arielis and the clearer career path in Mexico, informed by his “legality” there, made his decision to not return to his family in New York, as first expected.

*Pushed off course by illegality*

Here, my goal was to show how “illegality” interacts with the complex possibilities that adolescent Ernie and Luis imagine, rather than keeping the lens solely fixed on legal status. Nonetheless, we can see how legal status has impacted the lives of two undocumented Mexican young men. Despite thinking of returning to Mexico to overcome legal obstacles to college in New York, Ernie’s long-term romantic relationship, culminating in the birth of his son, has rooted him in New York.

Education has few openings for undocumented students. Ernie is not a posterchild for the Dream Act—meaning his grades ranged from below average to average and he arrived to the US at the age of 12—but his friends and most of those who performed like him in high school have accumulated post-secondary experience. Even to get some vocational training, some post-secondary experience is needed in the US. The relative risk of post-secondary education added to his family’s lack of experience with college has limited Ernie’s job opportunities. The passage of time from high school graduation in
2009 until 2014 has made educational re-entry too challenging: the penalty of waiting for immigration reform has hit Ernie’s educational opportunities hard.

Work opportunities are plentiful but potential industries are limited. Despite working full-time for the past five years for four employers, Ernie has yet to find a job that offers what he considers respectful working conditions. Ironically, it is partly through his job search after receiving DACA that he feels the limits of not having legal residence status. “Regular jobs” with basic worker protections seem attainable yet nearly two years into the program, he hasn’t been able to get one.

The effects of “illegality” also bleed into romantic relationships. For example, Leticia called Ernie “lazy” and “unmotivated” for not pursuing college. When his current girlfriend Aracelis asked if he had a car and could drive, he lied and said yes. With DACA, he has the right to apply for a driver’s license but doesn’t have the resources to prepare. She offered to marry so he could adjust his status but neither knows how that process works. One week before she planned to move to New York, she had a health emergency while visiting family in Mexico. She asked for Ernie to come and stay with her in the hospital. “I really wanna go,” he texted me, but he could not travel to Mexico with DACA: “all because of papers!”

The effects of “illegality” on Luis’s life course are very different. In pursuing a professional dream—possible through transnational networks—Luis has distanced himself physically from his parents and brothers and sisters. With a similar background to Ernie, Luis took the risk of studying at CUNY for more than one semester. Finding it too uphill a struggle—financially, time-wise, and academically—he took a much bigger risk to move to a poor neighborhood to live with relatives and study. Having graduated from a
strong university program, he works in his grandparents’ pueblo as a respected college graduate. With his girlfriend, he cannot introduce her to his parents. Were they to plan a wedding, his family—with the exception of the US-born children—could not attend.

Each of these divergent paths has high costs. Each young man has also done much to counterbalance and overcome his lack of legal status. Ernie engages in personal activities like weightlifting both to avoid issues in the neighborhood but also to maintain a strong sense of self. He focuses his aspirations on his weekends with his son. The difficult path Luis has taken showcases the active transnational ties of 1.5 generation youth (Anderson and Solis 2014). These resources increase the agency of undocumented youth as they confront “illegality.” In 2015, enough youth find themselves in this position that a Mexican nonprofit organization, Dream Mexico, offers support for study and work opportunities in Mexico.
### Table 5: Ideal Types of Six Social Memberships for Young Immigrant Adults, New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Generation Immigrant</th>
<th>Second Generation Striver</th>
<th>Rainbow Underclass</th>
<th>Working Class Native</th>
<th>Hometown Campesino</th>
<th>Socially Mobile Mexican</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>work if not in school</td>
<td>finishes HS and college</td>
<td>drops out</td>
<td>irregular post-secondary education</td>
<td>agricultural work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td>hard worker</td>
<td>gets career</td>
<td>irregular work</td>
<td>unstable work</td>
<td>hard worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal attitude</td>
<td>sacrifices for own children or siblings</td>
<td>knows how to work in mainstream job setting</td>
<td>gang membership; oppositional attitudes on race</td>
<td>mobile to find work</td>
<td>maintains childhood friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Acculturation</td>
<td>keeps parental side of imm. bargain</td>
<td>keeps imm. bargain/consonant acculturation</td>
<td>dissatisfied acculturation-conflict over imm bargain</td>
<td>disrupted parental expectations</td>
<td>dissonant re-culturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>lives in US immigrant community; transnational possibilities</td>
<td>visit parents’ hometown</td>
<td>lives in a low-SES community</td>
<td>lives in hometown and celebrates its culture</td>
<td>lives in city and celebrates Mexican culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td>marries and has kids</td>
<td>delays having kids until after finishing school and marrying</td>
<td>has kids before marriage</td>
<td>insecure romantic relationships</td>
<td>has kids and marries hometown resident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>ethnically Mexican</td>
<td>racialized Mex identity; primary friends in this grp</td>
<td>personal therapeutic notion of progress</td>
<td>strong hometown identity</td>
<td>middle-class based identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit for Emie</td>
<td>Strong and increasing</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
<td>Partial and attenuating</td>
<td>Very weak and stable</td>
<td>Partial and attenuating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fit For Lux</td>
<td>Weak and stable</td>
<td>Partial and attenuating</td>
<td>Weak and stable</td>
<td>Very weak and stable</td>
<td>Moderate and stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 3: Through the Bureaucratic Woods: The Impact of “Illegality” on the Family, School, and Work Opportunities of Three Young Sans-Papiers in Paris

Based on four years of ethnographic data, this chapter compares the trajectories of three young immigrants as they transition to adulthood. Each lived in the same area of Paris, and began administrative regularization procedures after turning 18 years old. Here we trace their shifts in school, family, and work as they transition to adulthood. For all three, lack of legal status affects family relationships as well as the transition from school to work. Each experiences rejection in their attempts to regularize their status, creating a period of distress. Unstable work and the uncertainties that accompany being irregular postpone forming strong reciprocal relationships.

Without legal status and ethnic operating identities, Tarek struggles to find part-time work in a situation comparable to 1st generation sans-papiers adults. With access to middle-class resources but no education credential, Bao is able to play the role of a 1.5 generation son with only short period of irregular status. Overcoming three rejections and two deportation orders, Souleymane eventually comes the closest to a 2nd generation case of immigrant advantage operating identities but in a different, more restrictive context of work opportunities.

“My life, it’s out of my hands.” – Tarek, 19 year-old sans-papiers

“There is too much bureaucracy here. Too much depends on court cases.” – Bao, 19 year-old sans-papiers

“I posed dilemmas [to the Chief of Police of Paris]: What is it to be 18 for you? What is it to be an adult to you? [The Chief replied] To be an adult, it’s to leave your parents, to finish your studies this, that.... [I told him] When I was 18, I got a deportation order.” - Souleymane, 24 year-old with a renewable, temporary visa

Introduction

How have Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane adapted to and fought against the “illegality” that comes from not having legal residence status in Paris? This chapter makes a theoretical argument about the different nature of “illegality” by walking us through a comparison of their lives. Each lies at a different point in their careers of purgatory. In the four years of fieldwork with Tarek, Bao and Souleymane, I’ve witnessed and recorded key transition points in each young man’s life that are not discernible to most methods of data collection. Over those years, they have shared with
me their lives: daily routines, family birthday parties, questions about the future, questions about legal status and later, overseas online chats and Skype talks.

Though each had immigrated from different countries and have different ethnic networks, the three young men featured in this chapter shared the expectation of eventually being regularized. Their institutional experiences shape these expectations (Gleeson and Gonzales 2012), and the three cases tell us about different paths through “illegality.” Over time, they each realized the bureaucratic process was much more difficult than they had imagined, and had fears of being forced to return to their country of origin. Each gained a certain bureaucratic savoir-faire as they went through this process. For Bao and Souleymane, social support was necessary to their stories of regularization. For those without family-based access to work, like Souleymane, lack of work opportunities translated to lack of French integration. For him, his studies feel unrecognized, and for the State, without a better-paying job, he does not meet the criteria for becoming a French citizen.

This chapter describes how they made important decisions and the impact they have had on their trajectories, with a focus on school, family, and work. The comparison of these three longitudinal, ethnographic cases allows us to a) see how the complex bundle of possible future selves shifts over time for three teenagers who immigrated to France without residence visas; b) see how the effects of “illegality” affect those future selves during the transition to adulthood, and how the overlay of State and societal receptions structure these youths’ coming of age; c) recognize the intermittent relevance of transnational resources to the young men’s visions of themselves (Smith 2006); and d)
engage assimilation/integration theory to understand the stratification processes of such youth.

The context of these transitions to adulthood for this analysis is transnational, both as a dual frame of reference (Ogbu 1991) for success and as a source of social resources and future possibilities. Given the dual frame of reference, the poor, rural towns Ernie and Luis left when pre-teens remain important reference points for them. The hope of Souleymane’s town is moving from an informal cultivation of cashew trees to a more industrialized one. Hopes in Tarek’s Tunisian town are for political and economic stability. Bao’s hometown is more a business or worker place but geographic mobility is also a family strategy to success there.

Methodological Note

I met Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane in my various work with the Education Without Borders Network (RESF), a civil society network in France that assists undocumented youth. Tarek and Bao were both high school students when I first met them in 2011. In addition to spending time with them in parks, cafés, and my apartment, I have visited their high schools, homes, and sometimes places of work. In addition to fieldnotes from participant observation, I have done interviews with their friends and family. The advantage of experiencing the different educational, family, and neighborhood contexts (Zhou and Xiong 2005) with Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane allows one to compare participant-observation data to compare with interview data, and provided insight into how steady and multiple their aspirations are.

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9 See Chapter 8 and 10 for further description of RESF and my work with it. Though I worked with several youth that did not come into contact with RESF, these three informants had come to workshops for assistance with their visa applications.
Moving to a neighborhood

Belleville-Ménilmontant can be understood as a gentrifying place, with several older ethnic groups (Simon and Tapia 1998) sharing space with newer young ‘bobos.’ The average yearly income of households is just above 25,000 € in each neighborhood, compared to over 40,000 € for Paris (INSEE 2011). On average, a third of all households are in social housing, double the rate for Paris (ibid.). Unemployment is higher than the city average of 11%, at about 17% (ibid.). In comparison, per capita income in Wenzhou is under $7,500 (wenzhou.gov.cn). Tarek’s and Souleymane’s local economies are much less developed and do not report per capita income.

Theoretical Engagements

Most scholarly research on sans-papiers in France has centered on the socio-political movements of adult immigrants to be included in French society (see Siméant 1996; Nicholls 2013a; Monforte and Dufour 2011). By forming alliances with unions, churches, and human rights organizations, sans-papiers have fought for regularization. This history allows the advent of RESF, and so this context is relevant for Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane as well. A few scholars have ventured from this to explore the work life of sans-papiers (Barron et al. 2011; Chauvin and Jounin 2011; Têtu-Delage 2009; Laacher 2009). This body of work mostly depicts undocumented workers as exploited by their bosses and by the precariousness of often-difficult physical work.

These studies often understand State power as underlying the difficulties faced by these workers, as we see in this passage from Têtu-Delage: “...we see to what extent State policies and laws are part of the daily life of sans-papiers and influence their strategies. The use of rights and recourse to illegality in contrast to the law are not separated, but
imbricated, one on top of the other” (2009: 219). Têtu-Delage (2009: 10) sketches out an “administrative career” of regularization for Algerian adult sans-papiers near Lyon in which they learn “legal and social norms” as well as “laws, rights, and their uses.” This route of regularization for adults, often achieved by marrying into French society, begins in clandestineness, quite different from the scholastic start that youth experience.

For the precarious adults in Têtu-Delage’s study, “It becomes increasingly difficult to make up plans for the future in such a legal precariousness” (2009: 210). In contrast, in this study, the focus on how youth aspirations shift over time allows us to see how legal status overlaps with other aspects of the coming-of-age process. The biographical logic of analysis centers on the lived experiences of informants without representing only the legal aspects of youth lives (cf. Ribert 2006). With this approach, I hope to more clearly represent agency and the specific impact of legal status as they play out over the transition to adulthood.

**Legal structures that influence work insertion**

As you will see in the narratives that follow, ‘legal status’ does not reflect a black-and-white, deserving/ undeserving, meet-the-criteria process of applying for legal status. The legal code that justifies bureaucratic practices has shifted and is shifting. Based on a policy of ‘chosen immigration’ (i.e. non-family human capital migration), the French legislature and Department of the Interior directives (called *circulaires*) have passed a series of laws that make immigration and subsequent regularization more difficult (Cette France-là 2012; Têtu-Delage 2009). In 2006, a change in the law took away the right to regularization after 10 years of residence and replaced it with a discretionary policy. In practice in Paris, they give visas for this, but now require more proofs of residence (gas
bills, pay stubs, documentation of social life). Also in 2006, (and in response to strong mobilization in Paris and other cities) then Minister of the Interior Nicolas Sarkozy established criteria for the regularization of *sans-papiers* parents of French students, and then only regularized a fraction of those that met his criteria. Biographical cases like those of Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane show the results of actual bureaucratic practices.

My data on bureaucratic practice highlights the hierarchy of visa categories offered by the Prefecture. The family-based visa offers different rights and is more easily renewed than the student- or health-based visas. The criteria for renewing a family visa is retaining those family bonds that justified the first visa; support for renewing the health visa must justify a continued need for health care support that is not available in the country of origin. The student visa allows fewer work hours and requires ongoing studies.\(^\text{10}\) For those without such visas, restrictions affect work possibilities but also many internship possibilities that are a key component of France’s system of vocational education.

*Local work opportunities*

Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane live in juxtaposition with other young migrants, French adult immigrants, the second generation, and the broader French working- and middle-classes that mix in everyday, diverse Paris. Rather than take up the narrow paths of segmented assimilation and its context of ghettos, oppositional culture, and downward assimilation, some theorists of European immigration have proposed ‘super-diversity’ (Vertovec 2007; Crul and Schneider 2012). Super-diversity is a stratification theory at the

\(^{10}\) In a public show of tightening restrictions, in 2011 Minister of the Interior Brice Hortefeux denied student visas to PhD students that were “not making sufficient progress.”
base, with country of origin, migration channel (social network and labor market niches),
human capital, and legal statuses as key immigrant factors that affect integration; access
to work and local receptions are also incorporation factors (Vertovec 2007). Crul and
Schneider focus on “differing institutional arrangements in education, the labour market,
housing, religion, and legislation” (2012:29).

Super-diversity also recognizes the importance of the local economy to the
integration of immigrants. Opportunities for young men like Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane
in Paris vary with social networks, human capital, and legal status. As Henderson and
colleagues (2007:4) stress, “It is not possible to talk of standard ‘youth transitions’ in a
society in which young people’s lives are shaped by such uneven material, social,
cultural, and symbolic resources.” Global cities like Paris are marked by a concentration
of resources (relative to other regions) but also by great social inequality. Reports have
concluded that immigrants face a particularly rough entry to the French labor market and
are often not rewarded for their human capital (Safi 2014; Simon and Steichen 2014).

Because, as a 48-year old Chinese legal volunteer told me, “All they want to do is
get a job,” labor market integration is often the central issue for young sans-papiers.

Given how ethnic discrimination on the labor market is widespread for the children of
immigrants in France (Simon 2010; Silberman and Fournier 2010), 11 work experiences
may not necessarily improve with greater assimilation and greater educational attainment.
Portuguese and Spanish children of immigrants have often used the skilled trades to find
mobility; Chinese children of immigrants (in Spain) look to entrepreneurial and business
niches for the same ends (Portes et al. 2013).

11 Portuguese and Spanish-origin immigrants and their children have fared much better
on the labor market than African- and Asian-origin immigrants.
Tarek

Tarek’s trajectory is the most typical of the three presented in this chapter (see Chapter 5): he comes from a working-class family, has bouts of poverty due to inconsistent, irregular work, and has lived in Paris for four years. Tarek’s story shows a dependence on family networks, which have certain resources but also reveal gaps in information and lack leverage in regularization proceedings. His work possibilities are in his specialty at lycée (plumbing-heating) and unskilled work though each is constrained by his legal status. With the help of RESF, he tries to fit the bureaucratic visa categories.

Immigration

Tarek is a native of a Tunisian fishing town on the Mediterranean coast, and his father works in the fishing industry. His mother stays at home with his two younger brothers. He is the second-oldest brother and has another undocumented brother with him in Paris. With extended family in Paris, few work prospects, and an unsettled country at the start of Arab Spring in 2010, his father paid for him to board a boat headed for Marseille in December 2010. His youngest brother was born just after he left.

Nearly 16 years old, he arrived in Marseille and took the train alone to Paris nervous about his passage but comforted by the extended family that awaited him there. Two cousins took him to his uncle and aunt’s two bedroom-apartment in a middle-class neighborhood of Paris. The apartment, in an older building, featured a basic kitchen and bathroom, and was kept tidy despite the surfeit of newspapers in Arabic, the neatly folded clothes in boxes, and various cultural knick-knacks. With three of his cousins in the second bedroom, where his brother had also moved, his bedding hid behind the solid, old gray couch where he slept. This family had lived in Paris for 25 years and knew the
system, he said. He already spoke accented French though he lacked literacy skills, so they got him directly enrolled in a vocational high school. His Tunisian family hoped he could get a steady job, send some remittances in a few years, and receive better care for his epilepsy.

*Simultaneous Social Life and Homesickness*

Tarek’s extended family gave him a social life with obligations but did not substitute for his parents, brothers, and family in Tunisia. Everyday social life began with his cousins (especially the males), with whom he had a mostly good relationship, going to sit in cafés and to mosque, marked by large extended celebrations for marriages. Extended family also lived outside of Paris, which gave him the chance to visit other regions. He has been swimming on a beach in Normandy where some relatives live; south to Montpellier for a marriage; and to Lyon with a cousin for the weekend. In contrast to many other undocumented youth, he has become comfortable heading to central Paris for social events, such as meeting friends or participating in the cultural activities of the capital. Two years after arriving, Tarek continued to call his mother once a week, though no computer in his parents’ house means he cannot make free or video calls. He regularly chats with friends back in Tunisia on Facebook. “Of course I miss my family,” he responded when asked about it, his eager face suddenly mixed with distress and a tinge of distaste in his sneered lip. “I have a little brother,” he reminded me in 2014, “that I’ve never seen.”

When I first met him in winter 2012, it was a damp evening at the RESF workshop for undocumented youth. A slender teenager with trimmed hair and glasses, he sat quietly at a table in a track suit. In 2011, his high school teacher had spoken to him
about RESF, and he and an outside social worker had ‘godparented’ Tarek in a civil
ceremony. At an arrondissement city hall, they signed an official certificate pledging to
support Tarek. I agreed to go with him to a pre-screening appointment at the Préfecture
with his godmother.

Inside the office, his nervousness calmed a bit as six RESF people dominated the
cramped interior space. When the clerk asked if he entered with or without a visa and for
his former passport, Tarek responded sheepishly and his godmother jumped in and
clarified. The office gave him an appointment six months later based on his application
for a health visa based on his epilepsy condition. As I tried to calm Tarek after the
procedure, his godmother listed the future steps to take: get the medical dossier together,
collect proofs of social life, and with his uncle, apply for the Islamic adoption, kafala. The
bureaucratic strategizing, both at the RESF meeting where I met him and in this
example, reflect the specialized knowledge of the organization.

Spending time with him outside of his regularization attempts, I found him to be a
young man of quick smile and laugh, with a fondness for brand names such as Redskin,
Adidas, Lacoste and Nike on his t-shirts, track suits, and wallet. His glasses have become
more stylish over time, as the careful stubble on his chin. He admiringly told me about
the luxuries—gastronomy, rented cars, and formal dress—of an upcoming wedding of his
cousin. “Yes but not yet...I have to get a job and ... [meet] a woman,” I asked when he
would like to get married like that. His hopes are what he calls the “good life”: a regular
job, a wife, and some nice things, a car and name-brand clothes. These goals in this order
appear to correspond to a traditional transition to adulthood norms.

12 See Chapter 8 (p 282-283) for more detail on RESF godparenting.
13 Kafala is an Islamic practice of caring for a child who is not biologically one’s own.
High school

Assigned to a large vocational high school, Tarek began studying heating and plumbing in a small class of 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation West and North African male teenagers. Though the literature (e.g. Alba and Silberman 2009) sees the vocational track as limiting for social mobility, Tarek’s small class with extended time with a lead teacher did ease his social integration, even in a large lycée. His writing in French is poor, though his grades in his vocational classes are quite high. Throughout his three years in high school, his average has been about a 13 out of 20, or slightly above average. He proudly told me when his grades had risen. Internships are very important in the French vocational system, and Tarek was able to complete these stages by working with a cousin who owned a small company that did construction and renovation work. Driving gleefully with his cousin through greater Paris to get to jobs gave him a glimpse of the autonomy that could come with a full-time job. These internships also gave him confidence and taught him the pleasure of creating new spaces and new furniture.

Tarek understood that there was an interweaving of his legal case and getting a job in his high school specialization. “When I have a carte de séjour, I might be able to get a job in [plumbing].” Inspired by his cousin’s model, his aspirations went beyond the first diploma in plumbing, the CAP (Certificat d’aptitude professionelle). “I’m going to continue [studying]. His cousin Hamza had explained to him that degrees can get you different jobs. “One more year, another diploma, another year, another diploma ... with all of the diplomas you can be a site foreman,” which he pronounced as an appropriate if far-off ambition. “I’ll go as far as I can.”
At school in 2013, he had improved his French skills and became accustomed to using his social capital to get more resources. A teacher helped him apply for a small school scholarship for low-income students. With his godmother’s help, he has tried to find publicly available money wherever it is available, with limited success. “To get [public aid] you need to be French ... or at least have a [visa].” A carte vitale, with which he pays 65% for all health services, was available because he lived with a citizen uncle.

In November 2014, he got his “second diploma,” a mention in heating on his CAP, and was impressed with his own success. With this diploma, he wrote, he could get a job in either plumbing or in heating. He struggled with his need for work and what his godmother told him was an important chance at getting his visa, staying in school. He explained his leaving school was partly his limitations and partly the norm: “Yeah, that was the end, the bac pro is too hard... almost no one from my class went for it.”

Getting and Keeping a Job

In 2012, his uncle began pressuring him to begin contributing financially to the household. A large gap loomed between his vision of becoming a foreman and his inability to get any freelance plumbing gigs. Using his family network and also his RESF godparents, he proposed doing plumbing work but only got one little job. The summer school break arrived and Tarek lamented, “All I want is to find a job! I’ll do anything,” he continued, “plumbing, restaurants, whatever.” His classmates worked temp jobs over the summer, but his lack of papers eliminates that possibility. For sans-papiers adults, this temp work has been an important entry to full-time jobs (Chauvin and Jounin 2011).

14 This pattern holds true for France in general, with only a third of students continuing to the bac pro track.
Tarek was not interested in getting false papers that would make this a possibility, however. His Prefecture appointment was in September.

His work connections seemed more promising from his family, I thought. His cousin with whom he did his internships did not have the money to pay him for helping out, he said. “I have too many cousins to count but to get a job, you need diplomas... you need to keep studying until you can land a job.” His uncle has worked for 25 years at a restaurant, but has no leverage in getting Tarek a job. The owner of the restaurant doesn’t hire anyone for extra work, even if employees are sick, to keep employees showing up.

Despite having plumbing and welding skills, he could only fantasize about what he said plumbers make: 3000 euros/month to start plus extra for extra work. His eyes bulged as he told me about per-visit fees: in an emergency, 500-600 euros per job not counting the 100-euro appearance fee. His uncle got him a job working at a kebab fast-food restaurant in the suburbs, but it was only during a work shortage for a month. His problem, he tells me, is the long spells without work: “it’s been a long time since I’ve worked.” He got a job an hour outside of Paris—inspections are less frequent there—in a butcher shop but it again was a short-lived stint.

The butchery was halal, and Tarek is a practicing Muslim. He easily slips from his brand name-based clothing to the qamis, the traditional long clothing worn by Muslim men. During Ramadan, he fasts. These parts of his identity have not shifted since coming to France. He also longs for his hometown culture, and relishes the special occasions of having the tomato-sauce fish couscous specialty of his hometown. These identities also influence his fantasy of marrying a Maghrebin Muslim woman, preferably one that wears “at least the headscarf.” His female cousins in Paris practice in this way, balancing jeans
with a headscarf. In reality, he hasn’t had any romantic relationships, telling me the excuse “because he works every day, little time for a girlfriend.” His social network emphasized serious relationships, and for a young sans-papiers, the precondition of a stable job makes the prospect of a relationship seem distant.

“All my cousins are working,” he told me in early 2013, but the kebab spot was only using him as a fill-in worker, sometimes not working for weeks. In June, a friend of a cousin got him a job that pays just over 1,000 euro/month to put advertising in people’s mailboxes. It’s actually very tiring, he told me. When the school year ended, he began working at a pizzeria at night as well. He was not sure about how much he would be paid; it is his family’s business and they did not discuss it. When we met in June, he felt a bit more comfortable in the city, in the Parisian spirit, in particular that of immigrant, chaotic Paris, three years after immigrating.15 His ad-distribution job ended in August, though, and his pay at the pizzeria was low.

His legal status influences these up-and-down work experiences in two opposing ways. One involves finding the rare jobs that disregard work visas. The second involves those employers who hire flexible workers for those positions. A desire to minimize salaries and maximize flexibility, in both scheduling and firing, motivates the move by these employers to hire people like Tarek. “I don’t want to look for a job all the time,” he complained about his short working stints. “The pizza job is like the other jobs, even if it’s [owned by] family. I don’t make the SMIC (minimum wage).” On the weekends, Tarek continued to work at the halal butcher shop more than an hour out of Paris when they needed work as well as a pizzeria in that same town.

15 For instance, he took me to a phone store that he knew and confidently negotiated for me to have my iPod unlocked.
His cousin’s friend said he could do plumbing work for him, though it wouldn’t be regular hours. Tarek accepted. He likes the work, he says, though he doesn’t work enough to make ends meet: one or two days per week. “It’s hard to make the 200 euro rent,” he complained, “I have to ask family to help.”

Get away from extended family living situation

In tandem with this precarious work, his living situation shifted. In the two-bedroom apartment, the large family meant tight space and “normal arguments.” His uncle said he could stay there but he didn’t have money for him; he needed it for his own family. His uncle and aunt “didn’t feel responsible, they weren’t my parents,” and Tarek hadn’t been contributing to the household budget. When he began to work “little jobs,” he and his brother strategized to find an apartment in the suburbs. They moved in with an acquaintance of his cousin in a near suburb, only five minutes outside the city by commuter train. That space was small and cramped, but the rent was very low-200 euros each and—he felt more independent. When the acquaintance moved out late in 2013, Tarek and his brother moved again, to a suburb accessible by subway. “There can be [police] inspections in [commuter] train stations,” he said, although his work outside of Paris required taking the commuter train. “If you buy your ticket, it’s fine,” he justified.

Even without living with his uncle and aunt, his family circle remained the center of his Paris social life. He longed to see his parents on a daily basis: “Life is so hard when you’re far from your parents!” Friends have told him not to be weak, he said. “As soon as I get my visa I would go back and visit my parents, my town, and my family,” he said.

Legal strategizing: medical services, family, bureaucracy
Four years after arriving in Paris, 19 year-old Tarek still hopes to get a visa. He has been denied three times and received his first deportation order in April 2014. Despite the Prefectural refusals to give him legal residence, Tarek continues to use his resources to fight against the Prefecture and ask for a different type of visa.

His first request for a visa, noted above, was based on Tarek’s medical needs as an untreated epileptic. His explanation to me, partly constructed in reference to the criteria for a health visa, centers on the lack of care in Tunisia. When he was younger, his attacks were treated by doctors without access to modern equipment; he was not prescribed medication to prevent attacks. In 2011, the State had already begun denying many more of these cases, attaching with their rejection letter an Internet printout of medical services that are available in the home country. Lack of access to those medical services due to long distances or cost is not a valid consideration.

Tarek’s brother steered him towards getting AME medical services available for sans-papiers.\footnote{Aide médicale d’état} He began to get treatment every three months for his epilepsy, and regularly took medication. His attacks stopped. Once he got in contact with RESF, his godmother used the network to understand the steps in creating a medical dossier. His uncle could be the host, since he made more than 150% of the minimum wage; he refused to contribute the necessary paperwork that attests to that. His own work might have some illicit elements that he didn’t want examined, she suspected.

Tarek also became accustomed to RESF. In the undocumented youth workshops, he heard the stories of other youth in circumstances more difficult than his own, who didn’t have family, for example. His godmother invited him to see the acting troupe of
young *sans-papiers* represent on stage their experiences with the administration of visa. When I asked him about it, he smiled big and jokingly said, “It was good ... the Prefecture are idiots.”

His bureaucratic path, meanwhile, has been difficult. His first application in 2012 was met by a refusal. “I need a lawyer...how much do they cost?” he asked me. With the assistance of his RESF godmother, he filed an appeal. In accordance with growing restrictions of State support for *sans-papiers*, the Préfecture told him he didn’t qualify for his medical aid (AME) and he should apply as a dependent of his uncle. This change affected his ability to pay for his treatments, which became about 260 € a year plus the cost of medication. Meanwhile, his school was a locus of social problems. In 2013, a dozen undocumented students from his high school were in contact with RESF and submitted a ‘collective’ visa application. In 2014, human rights associations and unions responded to the plight of nearly 80 homeless students.

Tarek, however, continued with his medical case, and each step required small fees. Every bureaucratic appointment was met by a refusal, he told me, as he began to understand the indeterminate nature of the regularization process. “It’s long, very long, the process,” Tarek said frustratingly. “I still don’t have papers.” The Prefecture had long waits for an appointment for the Africa Room and the North Africa Room, and his appointment was not until December 2013.

In March 2013, we discussed options by phone. The new Hollande government issued a *circulaire* (administrative order) to reduce the number of years of residence needed to regularize, but without parents in France, Tarek could not apply. “I need to
marry someone,” he semi-joked. He tried a dating site but “it didn’t work.” In March 2014, he received the response to his appeal: a deportation order.17

RESF advised him to appeal again with a lawyer. The French system allows a means-tested reduced-price access to a lawyer, but because his official address was with his uncle who makes more than 150% of the minimum wage, he applied and was denied. The lawyer told him they needed 300 € to start the process, and he scraped it up from his family. The next step would cost 200 € and then to represent him in court, the total would be 1,000 €. “I don’t know how to get that...I can’t always pay the rent. I’m lucky my brother and cousins help me with the rent.”

I sense his lack of options as I list the possibilities and he shoots them down. “Kefala adoption?” I ask. “In Tunisia now, the courts say it’s not good.” Your godmother? “She moved out of Paris.” Teachers at your school? “Most of them are Maghrebin and they don’t like foreigners.” Your uncle? “He has a family. He can’t give me money, and he helped me with his visa for my job now.” “My life, it’s out of my hands,” he told me. “I’m 21 years old and with no papers.” “[Waiting to file a dossier for] 10 years is a long time.”

Bao

When I met him in 2011, Bao was a slender 18 year-old in blue jeans with fashionable black glasses, Sketcher sneakers, and dimples. I interpreted his high-spirited manner and skater haircut as friendly, earnest, and a little bit nervous. In line with the regularization process by marriage described by Têtu-Delage (2011), his mother Bin regularized her status after three years of being undocumented. His work possibilities are

17 Obligation de quitter le territoire français (OQTF).
better than Tarek’s, given a more mixed social network and access to capital at the family level. These resources also help in eventually regularizing his status.

Immigration

After being born in an inland village in China, Bao grew up in Wenzhou where his father had a circuit breaker factory. His father worked with his mother; he was also an alcoholic, which led to domestic violence and his parents’ eventual divorce. His mother, Bin, planned a new life in France (where a neighbor had moved), leaving in 2003. “I hated my mother when I was younger; she was not there,” he told me in 2012. He stayed with his father—who remarried—for four years. “My mother called me rarely and my father said bad things about her. And life was good in China.” But Bao did not get along with his new stepmother, and he began to see rejoining his mother and older sister—who migrated in 2007—as a way out. Both had used strategic marriages—drinking, arguing, and violence were again themes—with French men to regularize their legal status.

Bin paid 20,000 euros for her 14 year-old son to get to Hong Kong and then across eastern Europe to the EU. “You haven’t changed much,” his mother joked, who had come to meet the smuggler in Strasbourg with his stepfather, who was French of Asian parents. She also set the expectation for a difficult time. “I thought she was super poor ... and thought I was going to be working,” he said. Sleeping in the one-bedroom apartment kitchen his first year, his first year of life in working-class Chinese Paris was “a little tough.” His sister, 19 years old at that time, lived nearby with her French husband and was regularizing her situation. When I met Bao in 2011, his family had moved to a neighboring apartment with two bedrooms. His full-size bed, though on the floor, was all his own; his dresser featured the family’s large television. Like most Paris apartments,
the split bathroom had a small room for the toilet and a second room with the bath.

Stepping onto the street, I regularly heard spoken Chinese and witnessed a diverse mix of working-class and middle-class residents walking in front of Chinese grocery stores and restaurants.

_French language, breaking stereotypes & integration_

Learning French is fundamental to France’s philosophy of integration (Wright 2000) and is largely left to schools to instill in immigrant students (Zanten 1997). This is seen as a particular obstacle for Chinese immigrants (Bouvier 2003; El Qadim 2008). Bao’s fluency in French thus takes many by surprise. Studying in mixed environments, being sociable, and above all, having a French girlfriend have helped him perfect his French. Language facility then opens and closes certain parts of middle-class French life to Bao.

Like other Chinese informants, Bao told me, “In the beginning, I was hanging out only with Chinese people, because I couldn’t speak any French.” Bin enrolled him in a private school for newcomers of all ages, where he says his teacher, born in China, “pronounced [words] with his accent, and not a French accent, and so I had a huge accent!” He began at an academic lycée after spending three months at a State newcomers school for learning French. Speaking little French and then only with a heavy accent were barriers to socializing with classmates, and brought insults and teasing from his Black and “Arab” classmates.

“It’s always the Blacks and Arabs who say clichés about Chinese people... They call us ‘nems’ (spring rolls) because we’re Chinese. You’ve got a nem dick, they talk like that. They say that you eat dog, they always say that, it’s so annoying. As
soon as I get pissed, they joke, they make fun of me, they say to themselves (in their circle) be careful, he knows kung fu, he’s going to hit you.”

His mother’s advice also steered his aspirations. Having been previously robbed by a Black and a Maghrebin, his mother advised him to steer clear of Blacks and “Arabs.” She also thought classes might be difficult, telling him “if you fail your classes, you’ll come with me (in the restaurant), (where it’s) hard. But if you do well in your classes, you can work in an office, peacefully.” “She doesn’t know much about my studies, she can’t help me,” Bao reasons, “but she could help me with a restaurant.” His mother also told him “he was luckier than” other Chinese sans-papiers he knew that had to work nearly full-time while going to school or that had no parents in France.

One Chinese sans-papiers friend changed his life for good when he needed some support to flirt with some girls that attended a private collège (middle school). “I was scared. When you are a foreigner, and you don’t speak very well, and as soon as you speak, people make fun of you. I preferred to not talk,” but one quiet white eighth-grade student, Thérèse, gave him her number and they began texting. “I would write a sentence and there would be mistakes. I would translate it online. She got my message but she understood almost none of it (laughing)...since I met her, I got so much better in French!”

Over time, many of her friends became his, and her parents have had a lasting effect on Bao, taking him on family vacations\(^\text{18}\) and giving him an insider’s view of a French family.

His lycée was ethnically heterogenous, and with his improving French, he began to make friends with youth of different backgrounds. Academically, however, he found

\(^{18}\) Bao could only go with them on domestic vacations because of his fear of being deported without a visa.
classes very difficult, especially French and history, which required a lot of reading. He “gave up a little” and began skipping school. His mother downplayed the implications of his lack of engagement: “It’s not a big deal if you are terrible in French and everything, but in life, it’s money that counts, so if you make money, we don’t care if you have an accent.” His mother’s move from managing a restaurant to owning one in 2012 gave Bao a secure plan: “If I fail at school, I’ll go work with my mother. I’ve always thought like that.”

In 2010, a counselor told Bao that his low grades and absences meant he would have to transfer to a vocational lycée. She also connected his legal future to his continued schooling, saying, “in any case, you have to keep on studying to have your papers; if you stop, you won’t have papers, that’s it.” In 2012, he told me he’d matured since and realized a new rationale for studying: “I don’t want to start my work life super early, because I realize that if I start to work now, my life will be lousy. I won’t be able to enjoy my life.” He wanted to have a part-time paying job, because having a girlfriend also meant asking his mother for money for the movies, which made him ache for independence.

Family narrative of mobility

In 2013, Bao finds great meaning in his mother’s business success story, based in pragmatism and strategic ambition, and it has implications for his own story. She graduated from middle school in a village and moved to Wenzhou to work in a factory and eventually an accessory store in a mall. Her ill-fated marriage to her first husband had been arranged by their parents. She also had moved within China a few times to escape business regulations and find work, leaving her children in relatives’ hands.
Moving to France thus was a change in distance and culture but not in survival strategy. She paid to have a tourist visa, arriving in Paris to live in a shared apartment in a Chinese enclave. She sold knick-knacks in the suburbs and then clothes in a flea market. “I tried just to live... my success was not my goal,” she told me. Nonetheless, she became a cook (still sans-papiers\(^1\)), then manager, and finally owner of a pan-Asian restaurant. Along the way, she first met and married a Vietnamese man and divorced. Then “she met a Frenchman,” Bao said, interrupting his mother with an air of pride and legitimacy about his French stepfather—Bao’s stepfather had Vietnamese parents—and after a few years, adjusted her legal residence status with the help of a lawyer. In a sharp contrast to his feelings before immigrating, Bao proudly judges his mother as a prestigious rags-to-middle-class figure: “My mother has worked so hard and she’s a success.”

Like the code-switching youth in *Inheriting the City* (Kasinitz et al. 2008), Bao is not tethered to this story and its power over him. His interactions with (middle-class) “French people,” often through Thérèse, led him to change his attitudes, acts and even values. Thérèse has encouraged his interest in playing guitar, and he has learned to carry one with him to add a cultural air. Learning only by ear, in 2012 his enthusiasm is not yet matched by his skill. “French people often ask, have you traveled a lot?” he recounted, “they think someone who hasn’t traveled a lot has no sense in life.” Thérèse’s parents have taken them to several regions in France, in rental houses and on houseboats. “I would never have traveled, with my mother.” The kind of respect he sees from having these experiences can also be garnered from earning money, he tells/asks me when we

\(^{19}\) Along with two other employees, Bin worked in a subcontracted company, protecting the restaurant from possible liability. Work inspectors came to the restaurant once a year without warning.
were people-watching in a quartier chinois café. Ethnically, he was also adaptable but within certain limits: “I don’t want to be 100% French...they don’t care about their families...50% French and 50% Chinese is fine for me.”

Many of Bao’s work opportunities and aspirations are variations on his mother’s trajectory. Starting in summer 2012, his mother got him a part-time waiter job in a Chinese restaurant at a rate just under ten euros/hour. In addition to the higher pay, people treat you better in a non-Chinese neighborhood, he told me. He had refused a higher offer to work at a sushi restaurant because he would have had to drop out. I pointed out that it seemed funny that all the other Chinese kids I knew [who didn’t speak French as well as him] were or wanted to be waiters in Chinese or Japanese restaurants, and that he wanted the same thing. He said for now, that kind of work is easy to find. His mother’s advice and story, mostly closely matched with his available resources, strongly influenced Bao’s vision of how he best fit into French society. “To have my own restaurant, that’s my dream! A French restaurant, though, not a Chinese one. French food is more chic than Chinese food. And easier to make!” He had cooked a French soup for Thérèse’s family and it had been a smashing success.

Getting papers

Besides not being able to travel outside of France with Thérèse’s family, his lack of legal status shifted his high school studies. “I wanted to go into cooking (as a major) but I couldn’t because of papers,” Bao explained. “It’s an apprentice school and you need to have papers to enroll, people have to report their taxes.” Within school, however, he didn’t see his being undocumented changing his experiences very much. With Chinese
friends at school, he and others recounted their clandestine immigration stories and their circumstances.

When I first met him in 2011, he told me, “I’m going to get my papers.” Expecting one day to obtain a visa is a common expectation of *sans-papiers* in Paris. Bao described his experience: “It’s something like if you had your bac, [that’s like] you get your papers. If I get refused, it’s like a *redoublement.*” Redoublement is repeating the school year, being held back. Later, he explained, “my mother knows the system, she went through it herself. She has lots of foreign—Chinese—friends, and they had gotten their papers.” Most were through marriage, but some waited 10 years to regularize. Ten years of residence used to be legal basis for regularization and usually still is.  

How long the process would take was not clear, however. His mother knew someone whose processing alone took over 10 months. In 2011, Bao had gone by himself to the pre-screening and Préfecture appointments. He felt there was a racist undertone to the exchange. “Last time, the [clerk] was Black. He asked me all kinds of questions, how I came to France, that he knew the answer to…. I asked him how long it would take to get a response and he said, I don’t know.” Bao had to wait over three months to get his rejection. The letter said that he didn’t meet the criteria for a family visa because his family connections were not strong enough.

“It’s tough in France without papers!” his mother laughed in a knowing way. The importance of having papers fluctuates for Bao. At his most confident, he says, “in France I’ll be okay, I don’t need papers. I find that the French, they don’t think it’s that

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20 The right to regularization after 10 years of residence was repealed in 2006 but continues to be granted in a discretionary manner.
important, what’s important, it’s you. Even my friends, they know that I’m *sans-papiers.* They don’t care.”

At other times, though, Bao acknowledges the widespread effects of his lack of legal status. He can’t go back to China and had to stay in Paris when Thérèse and her family went to Italy on vacation. He has to stay in school in order to eventually get his papers and sees obstacles to paid work. He feels his status keeps him dependent on his mother:

“ I’m never going to work in a family thing, it’s a pain. It creates too many problems. My mother has to give me money every month to go to the movies, etc. It’s too much for my mother, I’m an adult. It’s because I can’t work. If I get my papers, I’ll be able to work. I’ll have my own money.”

Unlike most families of undocumented youth, Bin said, “We’ve spent 34,000 euro on him since we brought him here, all the legal process.” After his rejection, a lawyer helped Bao to be formally adopted by his stepfather. Even this step underlined his lack of legal status: “When I went to court for my adoption, I asked to be put in the *livret de famille,* but he said he couldn’t because I was *sans-papiers.* When I got my papers, he could add me in.” His family resources also protect him from some forms of irregular work.

“Yeah, I could work off-the-books, but personally, I prefer not to. Off-the-books working is hard. People [employers] take you to be someone they can take advantage of. Restaurants, baby-sitting. Me, I have family in France, that’s why I don’t have to do off-the-books work.”

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21 A *livret de famille* is a bureaucratic family register that recognizes various family changes (birth, adoption, marriage, death, expatriation).
As I followed Bao through the legal appeal process and with a second application that I helped him to submit, the bureaucratic process weighed on him: “It is heavy, heavy on my heart and my mind, it’s like I am not complete.” He complained to me about things he didn’t “like about the French. The law here. There is too much bureaucracy here. Too much depends on court cases.” The evening before his fourth Préfecture appointment, he nervously asked questions again and again about how it would play out. He printed out photos of himself at soirées with white French people to add to his dossier. His girlfriend’s mother and my French roommate wrote him letters attesting to his integration. We practiced how he could respond to questions about how he entered France, his family links, and his studies. As I left he told me in a serious tone, “If I don’t get it, I’ll be depressed.” A month later, Bao also felt vulnerable during the appeal proceedings, running through his doubts about his lawyer’s actions at every step of the process. The lawyer had made arguments for getting him a student visa and others for a family visa. “If I could just get it!!!” Bao implored, looking up at the sky.

The court judgment arrived three weeks later, asking the Préfecture for a re-examination of his case. Referring to the 8th Article of the European Constitution, the court noted that in fact the family bonds were much stronger than supposed by the Prefecture in their initial judgment. A more confident Bao and I went to another Préfecture appointment, he obtained a récépissé, a temporary form of a temporary visa. He asked to have his stepfather’s French last name put on his visa, but only the Chinese Embassy could do that. Nonetheless, he felt like “running around and doing two laps of the room.”

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22 The Prefectoral guide notes that an adoption that happens after age 18 does not count as a proof of family link (Secrétariat général 2011).
Life changed

“Thanks to you I can do lots of things that I want,” he wrote me in August 2012. One month later, with his family visa in hand, Bao dropped out to work full-time, first outside of Paris and starting in 2013, with his mother. The family restaurant had purchased delivery scooters, was expanding to Internet orders thanks to his help, and he was attracting more customers by being friendly, he told me proudly in 2013. His French girlfriend was planning to go to cooking school herself after getting her bac that year. His faith in business as means to success follows his mother (and sister, who opened a nail salon) and makes her happy. “We are happy with our two children...we appreciate euros!...that we can make money here,” Bin grinned.

During down periods at the restaurant, Bao and Bin co-construct business dreams of attracting more middle-class clients and moving the restaurant elsewhere. As I observed in 2013, a neighborhood waitress invited him to a karaoke party, his friendliness with others in the neighborhood—supported by his fluency—served both of their needs: his young adult social life and her business reputation.

Fruits of the Entrepreneurial Life

“The worst thing happened after you left,” Bao texted me in August 2013, “my mother got cancer of the liver...we’ve all been sad.” While she was undergoing a treatment, 20 year-old Bao took over running the restaurant. His girlfriend also helped out more. Happily, his mother successfully recovered, and the business has continued to expand. In 2014, Bao wrote me, “Frankly, I am really happy about this year!” His parents moved out to another apartment, leaving him alone in the apartment above the family.

23 For the first time, he didn’t want to broach the topic of education.
restaurant. He got a driver’s license and bought a car, his two years of legal travails a teenage achievement.

**Souley mane**

Souleymane’s story, with its triumphs and nadirs, will show how the State engenders a close relationship between the social and the legal. His story with RESF makes his a consummate case for maximizing the benefits of civil society leverage. This positive story mitigates the effects of friction with his family. His achievement of educational credentials also illuminates the limits of such integration as he struggles to stay in the labor force, like many 2nd generation youth.

*Immigration: Fated Journey*

Souleymane is from a village in the north of the Côte d’Ivoire, a place where his ancestors have lived as far back as memories go. They speak Dyula amongst themselves though French is taught in schools and is increasingly spoken in families. The local economy produces yams, rice, oranges, potato, and peanuts and recently, cashews. Souleymane remembers a happy childhood where “you go out with bare feet, all the doors that were open.”

His maternal grandparents immigrated to France in the late 1960s to work and were quickly regularized. Until 2013, they primarily lived in Paris, with regular trips back to their Ivoirian hometown. His grandmother wanted Souleymane, her first-born grandson, to live with her since the time he was born. His mother would tell him: I dream that you are in France. With rumors circulating in the community that he was headed for Paris, he felt pressure to migrate from this “‘choice’ that imposed itself on me.” His only trip outside the region was to Abidjan, at 13, to prepare for an earlier
aborted trip to Paris: something did not work out. He was sent back to his village until he tried again the following year. He moved to Abidjan for a month while his tourist visa was sought.

A three-month visa in hand, the 14 year-old flew for the first time along with several teenagers his age and an adult chaperone. He entered a center for youth in Narbonne, where he and other youths were readying for a soccer tournament. He realized while there that it was a smuggler’s way of getting children to France.

Finding a Path in Schools

When he arrived in Paris a few weeks later, his grandparents were in their 60s; they shared an apartment with two aunts, one uncle, and a handful of young cousins. This gave Souleymane all he needed: a bed, some space, food, and some friends to socialize with. The apartment felt small, especially compared to the open nature of social life in his hometown. He began in 7th grade warned by the principal to avoid the delinquents in the school. Shocked by a classmate that told the teacher, “Go fuck yourself!” and the racist reaction to his accent, Souleymane separated himself from students on the bad track but stuck up for himself. “When I arrived, they thought I was a blédard [pejorative term for those from ‘backwards’ villages].” But “a blédard is someone that doesn’t understand what people say to him, so when kids would try to make fun of me, I would try to ridicule them or respond.” Despite his less-than-perfect French, his grades were above average, and he felt he could defend himself from such remarks.

He was used to being the best student in the class, like his Uncle Babu, as everyone said. He believed, “If you go to school, you will be someone.” The track of
academic or professional lycée\textsuperscript{24} has profound implications for educational trajectories and later work possibilities (Alba and Silberman 2009), as Souleymane was partly aware. He had done a weeklong internship with a plumber, which he did not “appreciate.” Of the five high schools to which he applied, three were academic lycées généraux. “When I started at the lycée,” on the opposite side of the city, “it really saved me,” he reflected. “If I had gone to the school nearby, I would have had a different life, [like] my pals, hanging outside the building.”

One advantage in strategizing was that the school system was similar to that of Côte d’Ivoire. He sees dividends from his path to an academic lycée:

“So instead of going to a lycée pro and getting a diploma in two or three years and leaving from there, I went to a general school, did sports, and continued my education from there. I don’t know if it’s luck or strategy... Today, if I were to have done a bac pro in accounting or mechanic, no. I really prefer to have a broad base of competences, even if they are not deep, to have ideas about things.”

Souleymane describes his high school as racially mixed, and he noted students with potential who did well and others who didn’t use their intelligence in the classroom. “I worked hard at school, I was really into it,” he says, though his grades were much lower than in collège, averaging 9.5 out of 20. “In French, my worst subject was literature, and I wasn’t good at it. It wasn’t interesting for me,” he explains. Socially, he made friends from different backgrounds, most from playing soccer. “I went to a couple

\textsuperscript{24} The vocational lycée professionnel is often shortened to lycée pro in speaking, just as the baccalauréat professionnel is abbreviated to bac pro. The academic lycée général/technique offer the baccalauréat, abbreviated to bac. For a fuller discussion of the different academic tracks in France, see Alba et al. (2013).
parties, but with girls, I had a strong accent, so it was a lot more complicated for me to get girls.”

His grandparents qualified for better subsidized housing and left his uncle, his two aunts, and their children, and they moved to a neighborhood with a higher percentage of middle-class residents. There was a long hallway as you enter, covered in rugs, and each of the two bedrooms easily fits a full-size bed, a dresser, with plenty of space to spare. A large park lay across the street. The new space gave Souleymane a sense of greater independence as he entered high school.

Rejection

Souleymane’s trail of legal-administrative troubles lasted from his high school years until after he completed his BTS [Brevet de Technicien Supérieur], a two-year postsecondary degree. He initially became aware of his undocumented status from a teacher that told him that he couldn’t go on a class trip to Spain with his passport; his grandparents told him that he needed to go to the Préfecture to fix his visa situation. He first went to ask for regularization when he was 17 and he was told to come back when he was 18. As he began his second year, he went again to apply for a temporary visa and they gave him a récépissé [a three-month temporary visa] to continue his studies, but when “I came in to renew it, and they said, no you should go back to your country [rentrer chez vous]. The school year is over.”

Souleymane went into a silent period after his first rejection. “When I arrived [to France], I think I took time to adapt to my environment, I was quiet,” Souleymane said. “The [problems with] papers made things worse where I stopped talking to people, I felt really awkward...I went through the motions but I felt really useless...” “Instead of talking
to people, I used to write it out [like in a journal]; I made a character, like I was a schizophrenic. I wasn’t; it was just how I expressed myself.” He describes his state:

   Materially, I had what you need but not beyond that. I was in a crisis for three years. For years, I talked to no one. I was in my world, I went to soccer, I went to school. Once in a while I went to get-togethers of friends of mine but it wasn’t more than that because beyond that, it was people in whom I didn’t have confidence, things just didn’t go right for me. To live in a place where you have freedom, [in contrast] here it was restricted, you don’t know anyone, you don’t have trust in people, whereas for me, trust is all that helps me moving forward.

His family in Paris wasn’t able to support the difficult transition of Souleymane leaving his mother, whom he has missed since he left. His quiet period didn’t make things easier. He had a contentious relationship with his grandfather, “who would say, you are bad, you don’t respond to my questions, you have a bad base [fond].” They proved particularly futile in his legal struggles. He felt that his family didn’t help him in ways they could have, like claiming him as a son, as others had done: “I accuse them all of being selfish.”

After his grandfather accompanied him to a Prefectural visit and criticized him afterwards, Souleymane vowed never to ask for his help again.

*Education Without Borders Network*

To this point, this portrait of Souleymane feels strange compared to who he has become in 2012. A turning point occurred as he became aware of an organization present at his school: RESF. The demonstrations of Chinese *sans-papiers* students, in which he and some friends participated, opened his eyes to seeing his troubles as a public issue.

When he told his friend Pierre about his status, joking in case it went badly, “You know
I’m *sans-papiers*?” he was encouraged by Pierre’s response that they would talk to the non-francophone teacher Mme Americh the next week. She then told him, “tomorrow, come to the RESF open session of the 13th [arrondissement], I’ll be there, bring this and this.” Through RESF, he was later godparented by his English teacher (who was the *arrondissement* deputy mayor) and two others. As was the case for Tarek, some godparents proved more useful than others.

His first deportation order came in 2007. “I was freaking out, what will happen when I take the subway, what will happen when I see a cop, what will happen...they were freaking out, it was contagious. They were always doing inspections in the 13th.” Mme Americh got him a lawyer, free after applying for legal aid, to appeal the administrative order. As important as the legal support was the socio-emotional support he received via RESF. “[Members saying] we can do this, this, and this, it limited the brutality of it.” In order to show that Souleymane was socially integrated, he would need to ask his classmates for their signatures in a petition and letters of support. Emotionally difficult, he imagined being outcast and made fun of. But “no one was an idiot to me,” he recounted, “I guess we were seniors by then and they knew me well enough.”

Similarly, he portrays the appeal being won by his peers’ large showing outside the courtroom rather than legal arguments inside. For him, the struggle was as much about social inclusion as a legal right to residence, after nearly five years of residence. “We all did this for him,” he narrated. He’d passed his *bac* and felt that with the family-based visa he had, he was on the right track.

But as he began his BTS, the Prefecture appealed the ruling. In 2008, the State won their case and his deportation order was again active. Two important decisions
opened new possibilities for Souleymane. First, he chose a post-secondary program housed in his lycée campus. The teacher support he enjoyed—“they know your case, your story”—would remain crucial to his regularization efforts. He was still “fragile,” and the BTS structure helped him. The freedom and partying of university would have been too much for him, he says. Second, he used the visa temporarily accorded him to get part-time work at a popular clothing store. In what began as a required internship, he told his boss he needed a work contract to secure a visa. The boss, who was Indian-French, liked Souleymane and his keen work sense. He did the necessary paperwork. This job gave him 400 euros/month, his first work experience, and a sense of integration that had avoided him. “That sneaky strategy [of using an expired visa] got me a job,” he proudly stated. “As soon as I began working, it made me so much more at ease. It didn’t bother me to get up at 3 am to go to work, I had freedom... everyone liked me,” he said.

Deportation orders normally expire one year after they are decreed, and in 2009, his reapplication was met by a deportation order. He appealed, and his lawyer changed at the last moment. Having letters of support but no petition, his school support was less visible. In the courtroom, three professors and his two cousins were with him, but the judge “already knew what she wanted,” Souleymane estimated. “This time, I didn’t freak out, I let the year pass, I let it run out.”

Certain key procedures were put in danger by his lack of legal status. Taking his BTS exam, for example, required finding an alternative legitimate official identification to the national identity card. An RESF member helped him to strategize: the principal signed a school certificate and his photo was attached, and he passed the exam. Further, the Prefecture voided his work contract and he remembers, “I was fired. I had no salary, I
was sans-papiers. It was heavy.” Teachers made his continuation possible, personally putting up the insurance usually paid by the employer so Souleymane could complete his internship.

RESF then made strategic connections for him. An RESF leader managed to organize a meeting with the Préfet of Paris (see Chapter 8). The prefect, chief of police and the deputy prefect met with three leaders and two students and it felt like “a big exam.” His “head was pounding boom boom boom ... I was so determined in what I was going to say.” He asked the men questions. What is it to be an adult for you? “To be an adult, to leave your parents, to finish your studies,” came the reply. “When I was 18, I got a [deportation order] (OQTF, Obligation de Quitter le Territoire Francais),” he cut back. What does it mean to be integrated? “It’s to participate in active life of society,” the Prefect said before Souleymane described all the ways he participated. The coup was when Souleymane gave his aspiration as stockbroker, and pointed out he would have no chance to follow this dream in the undeveloped financial markets of Abidjan. “Let’s do something for this young man” came the eventual response. “I got the paper a month after, I was fixed and ready to go,” he concludes the story.

Staying in school increased his chances of getting a visa in two ways. First, by continuing to postsecondary education, he was able to conform to a moral category of a deserving person (Nicholls 2013b; Newton 2005). Second, his connection to RESF and the social, legal, and strategic support they elicited were centered on his campus (see Chapter 8). The initial strong school support at the courtroom gave him hope that RESF could do what his family couldn’t: get him a visa.
Five years had passed since he first applied for a temporary status. He explains this shift in attitude that happened during this period. He perceived “a barrier and I started to dare, I said, you don’t have a lot to lose. If I don’t (win), too bad. But I will have tried.” He used the nadir to come back: “The fact that I went to the edge (*au bout*); That I saw that I could fight as a *sans-papiers*, it really forged me. How I succeeded in talking to people. The fact that I got my papers. And something that I realize now, that I could work, be more independent. I don’t know if it’s pride or something else, I don’t like to be useless, I often don’t like to ask people [for things]. ‘Get to work! You messed up, [so what] ... I am not handicapped, I have two arms, a brain in good shape, two feet, frankly, start again!

While his regularization as mobility story gave him a set of clear roles to play: student, apprentice strategist, and object of justice struggles, he also hewed out a continuing role to support other youth (in contrast to most that RESF helps) through participating in RESF office hours [*permanences*], organizing RESF events, and acting in the RESF undocumented acting troupe. In this community, he felt useful, in contrast to his unclear family roles.

*Making Contradictory Influences Make Sense*

During regularization, the period of his domestic silence and reconstitution, he was not absent from his family. Daily, he prays at home with his grandparents and weekly attends mosque. Beginning at the age of 16, Souleymane fasts during the month of Ramadan. He reads the Qu’ran “to be able to do things better.” His wife, he imagines, will be first and foremost a Muslim woman. These practices allow continuity with his Paris and transnational family.
Exceptionally, Souleymane’s regularization has engendered an appreciation for human and social work. While he characterizes himself in the past as competitive guy “who has to make money,” by 2012, he shifted to “want to do social [work] but I don’t want to give away my life for it.” Both Islam and his work in the human rights organizations affiliated with RESF have impacted his ideal of conscious people with dignity that appreciate their lives and have respect for others. While he taught French to new immigrants, he also housed a young Moroccan man that was homeless while his grandparents were away.

The business interest of his teenage years tangled with these influences. As noted above, his communications bac led to a two-year BTS degree in marketing, a two-year degree in Business Administration, and then a two-year Masters degree in Marketing and Management. “I really love management. The ideas of management come a little from everywhere, from Finance, gestion [management], Sociology, I think it’s really what I’ve always wanted to study, manage people, talk to and understand people, understand how people work... I think it’s through RESF that I understood that. Here, there are a ton of things to learn. It’s a real center of apprenticeship.” Management also seemed to be a means to afford “rent and electricity” in Paris. “If I stay in Paris, I want to be the manager of a business thing.”

Future Plans

After finishing his exams for his ‘bac+5,’ the equivalent of a Master’s in Marketing & Management, he planned a trip to visit his mother and his village. But he fantasized about a world trip or at least a sojourn in another country: “If I manage to get some money, I’ll go ... To get a job somewhere, to reflect on the world ... and how people
live.” These appealed to his synthesized idea of a job search and identity exploration, something that corresponds to Arnett’s theory of emerging adulthood.

As you can see from Table 6 below (p. 131), Souleymane still draws on a broad range of identities, including transnational ones. He described his trip to Côte d’Ivoire in 2012 as a dual purpose: to see his family after ten years but also to see if he had a future there. Before leaving, he estimated, “I think I’ll have more resources there, because with the diploma that I’ll have and the experience that I’ll have... if a company asks me to work, I’ll accept.” Most happy to see his mother, his father, and siblings, he nonetheless described a somewhat disappointed initial reaction when seeing his mother after ten years: “I arrived and she didn’t run to me, she finished up what she was doing first.” He played soccer with his brothers but felt the acute difference in lifestyle: “They don’t really understand my life in Paris.” From Abidjan, he wrote me in Spanish, “I am still in Côte d’Ivoire. I like this country, its people. I would like to live here!” An RESF member picked him up from the airport.

Less than three months later, he returned to Abidjan to test out an inclusionary project idea sponsored by a French university. ‘Culturelandia’ would be an afterschool space for teenagers in a poor neighborhood in the capital, with games, study areas, and a multimedia library. A café and Internet stations would help pay for the venture. He met many people to ask about the feasibility and costs of the project. Though he tinkered with the idea of staying to implement his project, he found too many barriers and doubts to proceed.

*Out of labor force/study*
When I saw him in June 2013, he complained about not being able to find a full-time job. He worked in *alternance* from 2009 through 2012. In 2013, he worked five months part-time at the retail store Monoprix. His next part-time job was at a university library (20 hours/week); he also did one month of work planning an event. These last two positions were the result of the personal connections of RESF members. In 2013, I told him sarcastically that I saw in a *Le Figaro* article that it advised to get a *stage*, especially a long internship, and to study in *alternance*\(^{25}\). He said, “Internships! I’ve got hundreds. And I worked in *alternance* for several years.” He had been working 20 hours a week helping to administer the program that sent him to Abidjan.

In conversations, Souleymane struggled to balance his ideal life with his possible opportunities. “The most important things will be having my health with my wife and kids, pay my rent and everything. But to pay your rent, you need a salary, that’s for sure.” He admired the “the style of Brigitte [an RESF leader] that I would like to have. She does great work but she makes her own schedule, she is independent. And [with RESF] she does a great project for France.” He contrasts his attenuating interest in capitalism with his focus on social outcomes. “Paris is one of the best places in the world, because it’s beautiful, it has everything you need, you can have a great time... but I’d like to live in a place where people have a conscience.” “All the companies today, they’re profit, profit, profit. So I have to find a company where it’s me that manages. I can say to the guy, today we did 10,000 euros, tomorrow you can relax.”

In December 2014, he is halfway through a *license* [bachelor’s degree] in Arabic. He sees this path as bringing together a number of different influences. His religious and

\(^{25}\) *Alternance* is a postsecondary program that mixes work experience, internship, and studies, paid by the employer. It normally includes a small salary for the student.
philosophic interests, the linguistic interests that developed through them, and the idea that linguistic skills might open up a job in marketing that would provide some stability for a life.

In 2012, Souleymane explained a motivation for continuing to study: “I always went to school to learn things that might be useful later on.” His transition to the workforce “has been complicated,” however, and the utility of studying is not clear. His Master’s and work experience with an international company hadn’t led to a job offer in 2013 and he was forced to work part-time at Monoprix, a low-end department store. “I haven’t done any job searching in a long time,” he wrote me in an e-mail in December 2014. “I’m going to start again in January ... to look for a summer job.”

The lasting impression I hold is a young man that understands manhood as “someone that doesn’t run away from his responsibility” but has not quite had the opportunities to take on many adult responsibilities yet, whether at work, in family or in a romantic relationship. He also describes his integration into France as unfulfilled:

I don’t know if I feel French. Sometimes though, when I go in to a company (to work), I integrate. I enter into the game and I feel part of it. Compared to the immigrants that I taught French, these people have such a long trajectory just to get here, you are lucky to be, more [on the inside].”

In 2014, Souleymane finds himself caught in the contradictions of the French assimilation policies. He applied for naturalization but was denied because he earned too little. “I can reapply in 2015 if my situation improves but in fact, it’s gotten worse. How many chances will I have to become French?” Souleymane enjoined, saying that his salary had decreased to just over 500 euros/month. But he remains “the guy that doesn’t
let up, I don’t give up. I think that getting papers did that for me, it made me a lot more of a fighter for things.”

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Here, we’ve seen the in-depth narratives of three young adults who entered France as undocumented teenagers. Hearing their stories brings to light a few themes. First, the longitudinal data collection based on a ‘logic of practice’ (Bourdieu 1977) shows the tribulations of fighting for State recognition as teenagers grow up hoping for social inclusion. We also see how localities matter, most importantly as centers of social networks and public institutions. For each of these youths, the legal-bureaucratic system incentivized continuing their studies. Within Paris, each of these three young men inhabits different worlds and maintains different social memberships, however. As in Chapter 2, to condense these narratives of the transition to adulthood while retaining the young men’s multiple possibilities, I use a modified version of Smith’s Fuzzy Set Social Locator (2008; Ragin 2000).

Here, I adapt the social memberships to the French context: first-generation immigrant, second-generation youth, middle- and working-class natives, hometown jeune, and socially mobile transnational (see Table 6 on page 131 for type characteristics).

Without an academic lycée education, the possibilities for Tarek to become a middle-class Frenchman or a socially mobile transnational are significantly reduced. Frustrated by his irregular work opportunities and lack of government help, he seems directed toward the first- and second-generation types. To return to Tunisia is an option but would be “hopeless” according to Tarek “because there is no work.” The other
aspects of his social life—his religious identity and circle of other Tunisian immigrants—correspond with first-generation characteristics, though his family and relationship future are hard to foresee until he gets a job and evolves to more reciprocal relationships.

Bao does not look to China for his future, and his social memberships are now rooted in French life. Dropping out is more frequent amongst first-generation or the working-class, yet he has managed to use his social contacts from school to his benefit. Language skills along with his family resources (money for his regularization and the restaurant) give him a hybrid operating identity (Smith 2008) of first- and second-generation characteristics. As long as the family restaurant does well, Bao is able to uphold the immigrant bargain (Smith 2006). Without this management opportunity, work prospects would be closer to the ethnic enclavers of Chapter 5. His girlfriend and her family have socialized Bao into middle-class French life, although he does not possess the educational credentials associated with it. His adaptable and outgoing personality help to balance these different courses.

The oldest of the three informants, and the most removed from his deportation orders, Souleymane has perhaps traveled the most distance in his social trajectory from undocumented teenager to young man with a Masters degree. He grew up in a small village without a notion of French urban life and after immigrating, those around him expected of him a more first-generation immigrant life. He weakened those expectations when he entered an academic high school and remained in school to increase the chances of getting a visa. His atypical path—attributed to luck and strategy—has brought him extended contact with second-generation and middle-class French natives, and he has aspects of both memberships. Without French language skills—and perhaps in his case,
an introverted personality—the academic path would not have developed into part of his identity. The condition that strengthens his second-generation position is lack of access to work. Even with a Masters in Marketing, he cannot find a secure job. His return to study when not working puts him in daily contact with mostly second generation French youth. Friction between his skills and his lack of work opportunities then alights transnational possibilities.

The shifts in membership reflect different social positions with respect to institutional arrangements (Crul and Schneider 2012; Gleeson and Gonzales 2012). With a diversified high school system, abundant postsecondary opportunities, an efficient transportation system, and a supportive civil society, Paris is a relatively inclusionary city (Bean et al. 2013). Tarek’s shorter stint in school leaves him closer to a first-generation identity. Bao’s family-based work opportunity and fluent French give him a code-switching first- and second-generation identity. Souleymane’s longer educational career and difficulty on the labor market corresponds most closely with the second-generation type but also allows a broader range of possibilities than Tarek’s or Bao’s.

Administrative Career for Youth

An adaptation of Têtu-Delage’s ‘career’ of being undocumented, these three have entered France knowing very little about immigration law, have in a few years learned many fine points of law (often via RESF), and two of three have obtained temporary visas. The difficult teenage transition from one society to another is then followed by a despair or dejection as they fight for the right to reside in France. All show evidence of an emotional upheaval as they go through the process of regularizing. Tarek, even with a deep clan-based network, feels insecure and longs for recognition. Even with many
resources, Bao feels upset about the drawbacks of his lack of legal status. Souleymane has the most dramatic withdrawal from society as he fights against deportation.

The upshot is how they make sense of their struggles later, telling a romantic story (McAdams 1993) of overcoming obstacles and growth. Bao and Souleymane valorize having made it past the undocumented phase of life. They connect it to their stories of immigration, when they arrived without much, and now they are able to see their progress, although in different ways for each. One might imagine their legal-administrative troubles over until we hear the coda of Souleymane’s narrative. They must overcome the second-generation un- and under-employment in order to qualify for the ‘autonomy’ criteria for naturalization.

With all its potential axes of difference, super-diversity (Vertovec 2007) can seem a garbage-can theory. Representative of a growing, liminal class of immigrants, these stories do support certain aspects of the theory. Legal status obviously corresponds to different levels of integration in Paris, as we see here and in Chapter 5. Country of origin corresponds to different social networks with different characteristics in Paris. The community of Chinese from Wenzhou have an entrepreneurial reputation balanced by a reputation for exploiting unknowing co-ethnics. In this way, ethnicity can play an important role in finding work, but as Michèle Tribalat wrote (1995:168) “The existence of ethnic networks for access to work often corresponds to ethnic concentrations at the workplace that are hardly favorable to assimilation.” As in Tarek’s case, “you leave your family in the morning to find your work colleagues of the same origin.” Human capital seems to make a difference, though not as directly as one might think. Through RESF
and his human capital, Souleymane’s expanded network does not result in the work entry that he expected. His expectations for work are still high, and may pay off in the long run.

The educational system is also a factor, as expected in super-diversity. Mechanisms of stratification that exist in educational systems, such as age of entry, tracking systems, and post-secondary opportunities are less relevant for late-arriving (by definition) sans-papiers than for immigrant students that enter the school system at a young age. After one year in schools learning French, Bao was still underprepared for the academic requirements of his lycées. Souleymane, on the other hand, arrives with a certain level of French in hand. His long educational trajectory has given him time to improve his reading and writing. More typical is entry into a lycée pro where instruction centers on learning a trade. Tarek’s entry and eventual CAP (Certificat d’Aptitude Professionelle) gives him the foot in the door to get jobs but no stability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Generation Immigrant</th>
<th>Second Generation with Ethnic Penalty</th>
<th>Middle-class Native</th>
<th>Working-Class Native</th>
<th>Hometown Youth</th>
<th>Socially Mobile Transnational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
<td>work after leaving school</td>
<td>high school diploma; some post-secondary education</td>
<td>academic baccalaureate; university schooling</td>
<td>vocational baccalaureate; some post-secondary education</td>
<td>agricultural work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work</strong></td>
<td>manual and service work, maybe unemployed</td>
<td>irregular work, most often manual and service work</td>
<td>gets professional career; delayed entry to workforce</td>
<td>semi-stable work with gvt support</td>
<td>manual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Societal attitude</strong></td>
<td>sacrifices for own children or siblings</td>
<td>hopes to enter mainstream job setting</td>
<td>comfortable in mainstream settings</td>
<td>maintains childhood friendships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family &amp; Acculturation</strong></td>
<td>likely to keep parental side of imm. bargain</td>
<td>disrupted conditions for imm. bargain/consonant acculturation</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>mainstream</td>
<td>dissolvent re-culturation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Geography</strong></td>
<td>lives in working-class community; transnational possibilities</td>
<td>city denizen; visit parents' hometown</td>
<td>mobile within French cities</td>
<td>lives in a working-class community</td>
<td>lives in hometown and celebrates its culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship</strong></td>
<td>marries co-ethnic and has kids</td>
<td>marries French, often late; delays having kids until after marriage</td>
<td>partnership; delays having kids until after finishing school and starting career</td>
<td>has kids and marries hometown resident</td>
<td>marries and has kids after starting career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>speaks French and other language, religious identity</td>
<td>speaks and writes French; religious identity</td>
<td>speaks and writes French; secular identity</td>
<td>speaks and writes French; secular identity</td>
<td>speaks other language, weak French literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit for Task</strong></td>
<td>Strong and stable</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
<td>Very weak and stable</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit for Race</strong></td>
<td>Strong and increasing</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
<td>Partial and increasing</td>
<td>Weak and stable</td>
<td>Very weak and stable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fit for Soulemane</strong></td>
<td>Partial and attenuating</td>
<td>Strong and increasing</td>
<td>Partial and stable</td>
<td>Weak and stable</td>
<td>Weak and stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part Two: Within-City and Between-City Variation on Integration

Part One compared the cases of a few informants in each city. The chapters in Part Two examine the dozen informants in each city as a group. I examine each group’s internal commonalities and variation on measures of integration. To achieve commensuration within and across cities, I use a 55-indicator inventory of social life developed from youth experiences, feelings, and attitudes. Scores on this inventory then guide the selection of biographical narratives that show in richer detail what variation looks like.

For New York informants, I highlight social patterns in three groups. One group exploits its resources to continue post-secondary education. A more typical group uses regular work to support a growing family life. A more disadvantaged group overcomes a crisis in high school to achieve day-to-day stability in early childhood. Along with these differences, all groups exhibit a common uncertainty regarding legal status, which they experience in terms of stifled socio-economic mobility and economic instability. Without legal status, their expectations of seeing family in Mexico, of having the stability through access to nearly every form of social welfare, and of gaining social mobility through work remain in abeyance.

For Paris informants, we see a wider range of scores than in New York, and so I outline social patterns in four groups. The groups with the highest scores appear poised for a middle-class integration based on educational credentials, while the group with very low scores has neither postsecondary credentials nor steady work. In contrast to New York, youth anticipate eventual regularization, making the transition to adulthood a
temporary period of purgatory. This process also gives youth the opportunity to show how ‘French’ they are and the accomplishment of Frenchness for those that gain visas.

In comparing the cases of each city’s informants, we see evidence for different relationships between the social and the legal. Blurrier social and legal boundaries in New York exist in parallel with a lack of legalization opportunities. This simultaneous inclusion and exclusion creates a limbo of shelved dreams and uncertain expectations for future stability. In contrast, brighter social and legal boundaries in Paris occur alongside better chances for regularization. This adjacency of fire and freedom in the life course (i.e. fear due to lack of status followed by visa), this experience of release from purgatory, creates a sense of fulfillment for regularized youth. Fuzzy set methods support this distinction, showing the correlation of language proficiency in Paris to social integration.
Chapter 4: Transition to Adulthood for Undocumented Mexican Youth in New York: Assessing the Multiple Effects of Illegality

Abstract
Based on six years of longitudinal ethnography with twelve 1.5 generation Mexican-origin undocumented male youth and their families as well as with municipal government and civil society actors, this chapter examines the variation in their transitions to adulthood. As these youth come of age, federal restrictions in access to education and employment exclude youth from mainstream opportunities and many areas of social citizenship. New York City mitigates this restriction with municipal practices of opposition to enforcing immigration status. Given this uneven socio-legal context, youth experience both inclusion and exclusion while waiting for legal membership.

To identify variation in the shifts of social life after informants have turned 18, I use an inventory of social participation and well-being based on 55 subject-informed indicators. Those with high scores have family stability and support, positive educational experiences, and civic participation while others with more circumscribed lives tend to dedicate themselves to romantic partners and their children. Further, three contextualized biographical narratives demonstrate similar experiences of spatial restriction and uncertainty about future plans as informants come of age. With their limited local rights and responsibilities, their experiences position them as marginally included residents of New York. Rather than “learning to be illegal,” my informants “learn to be in limbo.”

Introduction
21-year-old undocumented resident Ernie takes the subway 25 minutes to his factory job making lamps. He checks his iPhone for Facebook activity during his breaks, and works out at a local gym before returning home to his two younger brothers and father. At home, he scans online for job openings for which he can now apply with a temporary work permit. So far, his applications have only been ignored or rejected. He looks forward to the weekend when his girlfriend will visit with his three-year-old son.

I meet Ernie and his toddler in a nearby park on a pleasant Sunday afternoon. His father is nearby watching his young relatives play soccer on an asphalt field. “So... I wanted to talk to you about school,” he begins. “I was thinking I could take classes at

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26 The temporary work permit is part of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. See p.12 for more information.
night or on the weekend. What do I have to do?” It was not the first time we’d talked through post-secondary possibilities. Four years had passed since he graduated from high school, and he was now hoping to become a mechanic. With no access to government financial aid, the private option was prohibitively expensive. The City University of New York offered programs that cost about $4,200 a year in tuition alone for a full-time student. After years of neither studying nor writing academic English, he would have to pass the entry exams or, more likely, take non-credit bearing remedial classes. If he possessed the ambition to return to studies, it would require financial risk-taking, mental stamina, disciplined hours of studying, and hopes that the pay-off in quality of life would be worth his efforts. While his social network might lend some friendly support, it could not help with homework or navigating the system. How does Ernie and others like him adapt to these formidable obstacles?

Ernie and other undocumented youth who have attended middle and high school in the United States are aware of the normative goal of college, career, and stability; indeed, they feel it. The obstacles that prevent my New York undocumented informants from accomplishing such goals have not shifted, even with the benefits of DACA. This sense of desiring formal inclusion to the nation-state while remaining distanced from it, without expectations of change, describes limbo. Limbo, a stratification concept from medieval Christian theology, is where those marked by original sin, but who have not been assigned to Hell, go after death. At the coming of the Messiah, those in Limbo will be let into heaven. In analogous fashion, undocumented youth have been stratified out of the mainstream without knowledge of when legalization might be granted.

*Heterogeneous Contexts of “Illegality”*
Scholarship on the children of immigrants offers some clues on the importance of the ‘context of reception’ for immigrant youth, on the one hand, and of the distinct social trajectories of those immigrants that are undocumented on the other. Portes and Rumbaut identify varying pathways to assimilation by ethnic group due to differing levels of human capital and different ‘contexts of reception,’ understood to be constituted by racial and ethnic dynamics, labor market resources, and government support. Several previous studies of children of immigrants present different patterns of integration in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, and San Diego (Kasinitz et al. 2008; Bean et al. 2006; Portes and Rumbaut 2001), highlighting the importance of the local context in integration but they do not explain Ernie’s predicament of marginalized inclusion. Of the above studies, New York presents the most optimistic case as immigrant youth use their immigrant advantages to advance past their native counterparts.

The extent to which New York provided a positive context for undocumented youth is less clear. Scholars anticipate adverse outcomes of undocumented youth compared to their documented peers (Zhou et al. 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008). Gonzales (2011) finds that “learning to be illegal” characterizes the transition to adulthood for undocumented youth. His interview-based study of a 150 Southern California Latinos sheds light on these youths’ (Goffmanian) career of exclusion, or as Clark (1960) might say, how they are cooled out from their initially high expectations when in high school. However, with great heterogeneity among the undocumented population (Donato and Armenta 2011) and different responses from local and state governments (Varsanyi 2010), more scholarship on undocumented youth is needed to explore effects of exclusion within different local contexts. Specifically, local civil
society actors (Bloemraad 2006) and local governments (De Graauw 2014) have been recognized as key actors impacting the inclusion and exclusion of noncitizen residents. Should we assume Gonzales’ tracing of the process of exclusion to work similarly in different local contexts? While methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002; Glick Schiller and Çağlar 2009) leads some scholars to assume that their findings apply to national contexts, local civil society actors (Bloemraad 2006) and local governments (see Chapter 8) have been recognized as key actors in the acquisition and practice of citizenship, so we should also look to distinct local contexts when understanding the exclusion of undocumented youth. Here, I seek to extend Gonzales’s findings by including a more explicit analysis of the local and federal governance structure that both limits and provides for social inclusion of undocumented youth as they come of age.

This chapter first describes the New York context that both limits and provides for social inclusion of undocumented youth as they come of age. It then presents the transition to adulthood for undocumented youth as a key moment of their stratification (Smith 2008). To present the breadth and depth of experiences, I use two methods to analyze social life and how it shifts at adulthood. I use an inventory to show the breadth of social practices of informants before and after 18. Biographical narratives of three informants then trace their transition to adulthood in context. The effects of illegality lie above all in fear of traveling outside of New York, lack of access to post-secondary education and high-quality jobs, and high levels of uncertainty in future plans. Some manage to attain college education; those who do not derive a sense of purpose from their families, partners, and children. Unsurprisingly, I find that youths’ social distance from
local institutions (Yoshikawa 2011) corresponds with variation in their social participation and well-being. These findings also highlight informants’ potholed experiences of inclusion, with federal mechanisms of exclusion somewhat mitigated by local rights, leaving undocumented youth “learning to be in limbo.”

New York City ’s Local Context

A multitude of actors, from federal and local governments to neighborhood institutions and private citizens, create the sense of “illegality” that Gonzales’ respondents feel (see Chapter 7). Policies and practices of federal exclusion underlie this illegality, from an expanded deportation regime (DHS 2012) to administrative procedures (e.g. E-Verify background checks) that require a social security number, including federal financial aid for post-secondary study and most job applications. New York City has taken an activist role to mitigate exclusion for undocumented residents. The most significant policy in New York’s long history of welcoming immigrants for undocumented residents is the NYPD’s ‘don’t ask, don’t act’ policy. Police (and all other city employees) do not ask about immigration status. In explicit opposition to the federal enforcement regime, including the Criminal Alien Program and Secure Communities,27 the local government has taken aggressive steps to not enforce immigration status.

If the city offers undocumented residents some protection from deportation, it also provides indirect representation. New York has the densest civil society in the United States, with hundreds of immigrant and community-based organizations influencing government policy and drawing resources to the city (Marwell 2004). These nonprofit

27 The CAP program allows Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to put detainers on foreign-born prisoners, potentially taking custody to deport them. Secure Communities, a program through which information sharing between different levels of government enables deportations of undocumented residents with minor infractions.
organizations provide educational, health care, legal services; share logistical, political, and work-related information; and reinforce positive ethnic identities (de Graauw 2008). Since 2002, the City University of New York offers in-state tuition to undocumented students. The convenience of a local, comprehensive university system, with 24 campuses across the five boroughs, with its flexible night and weekend course schedules, allows students to study while carrying on family and work responsibilities. Furthermore, initiatives, such as the Mexican-American Task Force, target recruitment of underrepresented ethnic groups (Smith 2013). The City University of New York’s (CUNY) open policy of admitting undocumented students to date has attracted an estimated 7,500 students taking credit courses (Conger and Chellman 2011).

A key mechanism of exclusion cited in other studies, barriers to legally driving, is less relevant within the bounds of New York City because of its effective public transportation system. The majority of my informants’ documented peers do not drive and have not taken steps to obtain a driver’s license. Furthermore, the symbolic solidarity and transnational resources readily available in the city’s dense ethnic neighborhoods abates the salience of immigration status.

Finally, as a global city that attracts concentrated capital (Sassen 1988), New York and its metropolitan area employ many low-wage laborers to provide services that support ‘high-skilled workers.’ Service and low-capital sectors provide jobs to not only undocumented parents but also to undocumented youth and their peers. With its constant stream of immigrants willing to work for low wages, New York maintains its ability to maintain low-cost amenities such as restaurants, care work, and cleaning. New York’s
neoliberalization (Brash 2011) embraces the arrival and protection of such a
disempowered population.

*Undocumented Youth and the Transition to Adulthood*

As Gonzales and others have pointed out, the 1982 Supreme Court decision in
*Plyler v Doe*, giving undocumented youth the right to attend school, creates an inclusive
space while they are still in secondary school. New York high schools, in their role as a
community service provider, give youth access to physical and mental health services,
means-tested free lunch and breakfast, transportation, libraries, and afterschool programs
in addition to coursework. In this inclusionary environment, these resources allow
undocumented youth to forge aspirations like those of most of their peers, who enter
college after high school. New York’s high level of inequality creates different
educational expectations in its different populations (Kozol 2012). My informants’
documented peers also face the social disadvantage of living in neighborhoods with high
concentrations of immigrant, minority, and poor residents (cf. Kasinitz et al. 2008;
Sampson 2013). For my informants, life after high school acquires a highly contingent
feel. Whether Mexican undocumented youth plan to continue to study or to enter the
labor market, their trajectories suddenly deviate from those of their peers (CUNY 2014).
In New York, access to most social services—though not all (see Chapter 7)—vanish
after leaving high school. Youth then enter an ice bath of regulation as we will see below
in the youth narratives.

This process occurs as these youth transition to adulthood. Recent scholarship
outlines how social changes have led to a shift in the life course that falls between
adolescence and adulthood (Arnett and Tanner 2006). Today’s young adults often shun
traditional markers of adulthood, from marriage and children to beginning a career. Scholars characterize this period of emerging adulthood as a “self-focused age” (Arnett 2004:12) of personal exploration, though others (Silva 2013; Osgood, Foster, and Courtney 2010) qualify this middle- and upper-class perspective. Working-class youth face growing job insecurity at a time of fewer community resources (Silva 2013). In order to maintain job security, she finds they “survive [by] ... becoming highly elastic and unencumbered by other obligations—including their own families” (2013:31). With this increased individualism, these young adults tend to tell a deeply personal story of trying to overcome early obstacles by finding personal emotional fulfillment (ibid.).

Immigrant youth may differ from these new patterns of emerging adulthood because of transnational influences and a different family context. First, immigrants navigate aspirations and meanings in reference to ideas of life in their hometowns and in their US context (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002). Second, immigrant youth often strategize around family life more than other young adults (Louie 2012; Kasinitz et al. 2008). In New York, children of immigrants tend to live with parents well into their 20s (Kasinitz et al. 2008). They also tend to have a stronger ethic of supporting their parents financially and otherwise (Louie 2004; Fuligni and Yoshikawa 2004).

While these scholars map out broad shifts in the path to adulthood in American society, other scholars have begun to show how immigrant youth often exhibit practices different from non-immigrant youth (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010; Gonzales, Terriquez, and Ruszczyk 2014). More so than in most other American families, immigrant families tend to organize their practices on the family level (Louie 2012; Kasinitz et al. 2008). As undocumented youth come of age, they tend to live at home with their parents or other
family through their early twenties, evidence for a stronger family-centered economic model than their non-immigrant peers. Further, they suggest this culturally-influenced practice begets economic advantages: living in a multiple-earner household allows children to grow up with greater resources, and allows them to generate their own economic base once they become adults. As identified in several works (Zhou 2009; Louie 2004; Fuligni and Pedersen 2002), other cultures also have a stronger ethic (than mainstream American cultures) of supporting their parents financially and otherwise throughout their lives.

Taking into account these factors, I seek informants’ own perspectives on their coming of age, often informed by a dual frame of reference (Ogbu 1991; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 2002) wherein they measure their lives by a combination of comparisons to others in New York City and the US, on the one hand, and comparisons to their ideas of life in their hometowns on the other. Youth aspirations then develop in their own rhythm depending on the nature of their experiences and context in New York but also depending on their transnational experiences and contexts.

**Methods**

The findings of this paper rely primarily on ethnographic data including an analysis of relevant legal and government documents. From 2008 through 2014, I did in-depth interviews and participant observation with twelve undocumented Mexican-origin male youth and their families in two high schools and neighborhoods in New York City. I did participant observation in extensive social settings including schools, homes, churches, parks, neighborhoods, community-based organizations, parties, and with families. Prior experience teaching in the two schools facilitated my access and selection
of informants based on strong and weaker academic profiles. Informants’ neighborhoods are predominantly working-class with a multiethnic Latino mix. I selected these undocumented male informants based on neighborhood, age, and age of arrival, all belonging to the 1.5 generation\textsuperscript{28}, with one exception. All families come from the predominant region of Mexican migration to New York, the Mixteca (Smith 2006).

I used an iterative version of the “extended place” approach (Duneier 1999; see also Charmaz 2008; see Chapter 10) in which other actors are implicated as they interact with primary informants. This method allows insight into the lived experiences of young irregular residents as they come of age, and into the actors who construct their sense of how inclusion and exclusion work. In New York, this led me to conduct interviews with members of local organizations, school personnel, the mayor’s office, and lawyers. I also gathered materials on programs that support the participation of undocumented youth, such as the City University of New York and national organizations organized around immigration reform. The implications of this approach are important, as I do not assume a top-down production of “illegality” (De Genova 2002) but rather examine how and where youth encounter exclusion and inclusion in their everyday lives, and the consequent repercussions.

\textit{A Social Participation and Well-being Inventory}

Throughout participant observation and in-depth interviews, informants talked about their social life using certain discursive categories: family, friends, girlfriends, school, work, happenings in the parents’ hometowns, gangs and criminal threats, involvement in organized activities and events, and when relevant, their own mental &

\textsuperscript{28} The 1.5 generation include those who arrived in early adolescence. Those here arrived between 10 years old and 12 years old.
physical health. In order to systematize these data, I used informant’s emphasis and frequency as well as the literature to consolidate six years of experiences into 55 dimensions of social participation and well-being. These indicators fit into eleven domains of home, family, education, employment, peers, partner, transnational practices, and civic engagement as well as health, legality, and the psychosocial area (see Table 5 below; see Appendix A for full inventory). Home includes housing stability and conditions, access to food and clothing, and ability to meet rent. Family includes emotional, financial, and other support from family members, family separation and other forms of stress, family stability, and plans (or acts, when older) to reciprocate within the family. Education assets include a high school diploma, post-secondary education, high grades, English language ability, non-peer relationships, and ability to behave in line with institutional expectations. The highest scores on the employment dimension reflect holding a safe job with possibilities for growth, decent wages, and benefits in a respectful work atmosphere. Peer assets include extant caring relationships, social orientation, and ability to form trusting relationships. Partner scores reflect the existence and nature of intimate relationships that allow personal growth. Transnational assets consist of the nature of transnational practices (social, political, financial) and the ability to speak and write in Spanish. Civic engagement scores reflect the nature of participation in religious, school, extracurricular, and community organized groups and use of public resources. Health assets include good physical and mental health condition and access to health services. The legal behavior category groups exposure to the criminal justice system, gang participation, and nature of their relationship to police. Finally, psychosocial assets
include positive help-seeking orientation, self-confidence, orientation to the future, and outlet for masculinity.

For each dimension, I scored informants’ practices, outlook, and plans on a three point scale: (-1) (0) (1).\textsuperscript{29} Standards for positive and negative outcomes seek to respond to variation within the social lives of undocumented respondents.\textsuperscript{30} For positive outcomes, such as housing stability, higher wages, or regular participation in civic activities, I gave informants (1). For negative outcomes, such as housing instability, earning below minimum wage, or lack of participation in civic activities, I gave informants (-1). If informants’ practices fell between the upper and lower threshold, showed ambivalence, or the dimension did not apply to the case, I did not consider the quality as an asset.\textsuperscript{31} The objective here is to establish a numeration of positive social participation (i.e. social assets), with the possibility of social factors that impede developing those assets. When factors do not apply, they do not contribute to nor detract from the assessment of a given domain.

For each informant, I evaluated practices, outlook, and plans before the age of 18. For informants whom I followed from the age of 13 or 14, I took a holistic score across their years prior to 18. For informants whom I followed at age 17 or 18, I took a holistic score from their practices at that age but also informed by self-reports of earlier

\textsuperscript{29} You may see the criteria by which these were operationalized in Appendix A.  
\textsuperscript{30} Consequently, the patterns of social life of most middle and upper-class citizen youth would be represented quite differently than the patterns found here. More particularly, the dimensions and their operationalization would be completely different. Thus, the scores here should not be understood as any objective measures of their social position relative to documented or mainstream youth.  
\textsuperscript{31} I employed (0) for ‘Does not apply’ when informants did not possess social participation in the domain: when the informant did not have a job or did not have a relationship with a partner, for example.
adolescent life. To evaluate informants’ lives from the age of 19 to 23, I used similar methods, dedicating significant time to establishing an idea of practices, outlook, and plans. For the youths who were able to gain legal status, I use data points prior to that shift in order to get a clearer idea of their social life as undocumented youth.

Using a 55-point inventory classified into 11 domains sheds light on aspects of social life and well-being that shift considerably over time as well as aspects that do not. These data reflect a condensed view of informants’ complicated social lives within their own social contexts. Such an inventory does not assume social exclusion or inclusion; instead, it details types of social practice, leaving open the possibility that certain areas of non-participation may be influenced by legal status. The biographical narratives, then, inform the interpretation of such quantitative trends but focus on explaining the processes involved in such changes.

The danger of losing social context arrives with such calculation, and so let me make explicit some caveats. First, they are means and thus reflect a central tendency. Second, youth of all stripes experience important shifts in social life. The quantification is the first step of a process of exploring variation across cases. Changes and conditions in one domain can make a major difference in an informant’s life. In Table 7 below, domain scores reflect the average of the indicators of that domain; this is done to guard against overweighting certain domains that have more indicators (employment, for instance, has nine indicators versus five for family). Overall social participation scores give a less contextualized number, and should be interpreted with caution. This overall score sums the indicator scores, reflecting the set of social assets the informant possesses.

**Broad brush strokes: analyzing the inventory of social life**
The summative scores show that home life becomes more of an asset for most of my informants as they turn 18, with housing becoming more stable as informants contribute to rent. Low employment scores reflect a more complex scenario in which low-paying, no-benefit work is relatively plentiful, though opportunities for advancement (e.g. towards more responsibility and greater pay) are hard to find. The low mean education scores reflect a mix of informants that drop out of high school, stopped after high school, and those in post-secondary education. Though all informants can converse in English, ease in academic language proves more of a challenge. A few of those who drop out of high school return to school or secure a GED. Only a few enjoy lasting benefits from close relationships with school personnel.

Table 7: Mean Scores of Informant Social Participation, by Social Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>&lt; 18 years old</th>
<th>&gt;18 years old</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each domain score is the average of that domain's indicators, and can vary from -1 to 1.

A more positive finding is that family assets grow as informants grow older. A major shift occurs as most informants who were separated from their parents during
childhood rejoined them and grew closer. Legal status and often precarious families complicate youth aspirations as they move into adulthood. Driving positive change in legality, gang affiliation of a few informants fades as they come of age. Informants acknowledge police discrimination but do not report a fear of deportation associated with police presence. Among my informants, the New York Police Department’s explicit policy of ignoring legal status in everyday interactions and non-compliance with the federal Secure Communities program\textsuperscript{32} has created a sense of assurance that immigration issues will not endanger them even if other issues might.

Though New York offers many opportunities for civic engagement (e.g. in school, religious, sports, and community organizations), participation in public life among my young informants begins low and drops ever lower after they leave high school. Access to adequate health care, even with free neighborhood clinics, proves difficult after informants age out of public programs for youth. This proves trying for the small number who have mental or physical health crises. Informants’ psychosocial shift is complex as some lose hope for the future but also find an outlet for their masculinity. For most, peer relationships remain a strong point though extended family members overtake the presence of classmates.

Perhaps the most positive change associated with the transition to adulthood, many informants develop stable, supportive relationships. Transnational practices wane as they become adults, not sending remittances and rarely speaking with relatives in the Mexico. That finding has a few important exceptions, as two informants took advantage of transnational contacts to return to Mexico and study. Their transnational practices have
flourished as they maintain contacts with their New York families. All informants speak their maternal language fluently, though literacy in Spanish is often non-academic.

**Descriptive Types**

Limited by barriers to financial aid, the federally-regulated workforce, and nearly all the social welfare system, informants live in a ‘social limbo.’ Though most find work in unpoliced job sectors, prospects for social mobility are low, as these jobs offer little promise of advancement or the training that leads to it. This finding plays out differently for youth with access to different resources. Three groups of informants emerge from the inventory data. As adults, the first group has overall scores of less than 10; the second between 10 and 25; and the group with highest scores of over 25. In Table 8 below, important domain differences between the groups are highlighted in bold.

Youth in the first low scoring group have less family stability and support, both in childhood and adulthood. When health issues have arisen, they have had lasting negative effects. These young men have lower self-esteem and weaker relationships with peers. Perhaps the most important aspect of their adulthood is their relationships with romantic partners and children.

Like the first group, members of the second group have regular jobs and contribute to rent. They also have romantic partners and children but also have more positive family relationships. They score higher in the psychosocial indicators or self-esteem, self-efficacy, masculinity, and help-seeking orientation. The third group, scoring highest overall, also scores high in the psychosocial domain. Importantly, they have much higher education scores (.71 compared to -0.04 for the 2nd group) and the only positive employment scores of all groups. They carry experiences in civic participation.
into adulthood. In contrast with the first two groups, their relationships are with peers, not partners. None have children.

**Table 8: Mean Scores of Informant Social Participation, by Social Domain and Type, New York**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Low Score Group (N=4)</th>
<th>Medium Score Group (N=4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 18 years old</td>
<td>&gt;18 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Table 9 below, I summarize the mechanisms that underpin the three groups’ social trajectories. The first group experienced major crises in adolescence, the aftereffects of which diminish social life and prospects; low-paying jobs help these youth to raise and stabilize their social participation. Important to their sense of being, their wages also support long-term girlfriends and for two informants, children.

A second group strives to maintain the social participation and prospects they developed in high school using their working-class resources. They had educational aspirations but the opportunity costs were too high. Similar to the first group, they find meaning in their romantic relationships and for two informants, children.

Using transnational and in-school resources, a third group has taken great risks to develop an enduring social life equal to that of their peers, and are, for the time being, overcoming the odds. In high school, these four highly motivated and civically engaged students found the necessary in-school supports to attend college. They maintain middle-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>&lt; 18 years old</th>
<th>&gt;18 years old</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
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<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
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<td><strong>0.38</strong></td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
class aspirations. Focused on gaining a career, they also have postponed romantic relationships.

**Table 9: Key Mechanisms of Social Participation for Undocumented Youth, New York**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Life Score</th>
<th>Key Mechanisms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High (25+)</td>
<td>Risk-taking to stay in post-secondary education; Access to transnational &amp; in-school resources; Family stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (10-24)</td>
<td>Tertiary labor market participation; Access to Working-Class resources only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-10)</td>
<td>Crises (Family Abuse, Gang Participation, Mental Health Crisis); Tertiary labor market participation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to develop these different paths through an undocumented transition to adulthood, I now present three biographical narratives to compare mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Like the case studies of Chapters 2 and 3, these narratives also represent how being undocumented changes—and does not change—the social meanings that informants gain from their lives. For Fred, Christian, and David, being undocumented has had pernicious effects on their ability to enjoy stability, achieve social mobility, and experience a full sense of belonging. Nonetheless, these young men continue to work and engage with their families and friends. Thus, coping with their “illegality” is not their only story. Indeed, “illegality” lies at the periphery of their daily lives while they invest energy into what they can do.

Though they worried about traveling far in car, bus and plane, within the city (especially before DACA), my New York informants did not report or show evidence of trepidation due to police enforcement of immigration status. If no informant drives
regularly,\textsuperscript{33} the few driving experiences did deliver a dart of fear. Most of their documented peers do not need to drive in order to fulfill everyday life. Though very aware of deportation from Spanish-language television, no one personally knew anyone deported from New York. Likewise, they had heard rumors of people being legalized after years of residence or paying taxes, though did not personally know of any cases. These common perceptions, with protection from removal (barring felony convictions) and intractable obstacles from full inclusion, position my informants in a liminal status (cf. Menjivar 2000).

In New York, informants and their families expected high school graduation. Over a third dropped out, though (for now) two have taken advantage of New York’s second-chance mechanisms and graduated. Three-fourths make important contributions to meager family budgets, and nearly all found part-time jobs while in high school or immediately following. Those who graduated from high school expressed a desire to continue studying but they and their families feared being able to pay for it. Two looked for solace in their transnational social fields, and returned to Mexico to study. One who did not pass the university entry exam later returned to New York.

Inclusionary projects, such as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program,\textsuperscript{34} have had an impact. DACA pushed two of my informants who had dropped out of high school to take Graduate Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes to meet one of the program’s requirements. After getting deferred action, one factory worker

\textsuperscript{33} One has obtained a driver’s license since getting DACA benefits.

\textsuperscript{34} DACA is an administrative memorandum that allows qualified youth (based on age, age of arrival, educational credential, fee, and migration & criminal record) to obtain a two-year deportation relief and a two-year work permit (see Gonzales, Terriquez and Ruszczyk 2014).
revisits his earlier idea of getting a better job and a two-year degree toward a career. The main story, however, is early twenty-somethings turning their dreams from their own progress to that of their parents and siblings or of their partner and child. Family assets prove important to coping with dead-end jobs in factories, delis, or restaurant kitchens.

*Biographical Narratives: Family and Uncertainty*

The three narratives below reflect three levels of social participation described above. The first *comeback* type, with the lowest New York scores on social participation and well-being, focuses on maintaining a sense of coherence after a personal or family crisis. The second type, *family-centric workers*, have found reliable if low-paying full-time jobs that grant them resources sufficient for family life though insufficient for social mobility. Wages allow the young men to develop future projects in concert with family members: contribute to a family fund to buy a house, support a toddler son, and develop a strong relationship with a mother-in-law. The third type, and with the most social assets, *college-bound students* prolong the onset of limbo by attending college in New York or in Mexico, anticipating a change in immigration reform.

*Comeback Cases*

Four informants faced crises before the age of 18: one had a mental health crisis; another dealt with sexual abuse in his family; the third became depressed after leaving school, losing a job and a girlfriend; and the last was involved in gang activities. These informants felt a sense of progress in stabilizing their life, and each now has a stable partner around whom he plans a future.

Fred’s story begins with the early migration of his father away from Mexico when he was five years old. Fred’s father found a job through friends at a bakery, and then a
restaurant in Brooklyn. While his father was away, his mother and grandparents took care of him, and his father developed a relationship with another woman in New York. Upset, his mother left the family definitively, leaving her two sons in their grandparents’ hands. His father sent his new partner to bring them to New York four years later, and the two boys crossed the desert on their way. The two brothers the one-bedroom apartment. Fred was almost 10 years old.

He first attended a bilingual junior high school, where he was an average student. In seventh grade he smoked marijuana for the first time. Looking back he says, “I didn’t really see it as bad but I wasn’t with the good crowd.” He was assigned to a large zone high school where he became involved with a gang, and ,after failing several classes, was transferred to a large high school where he remained associated with them. “There was nobody keeping us there so we just cut a lot and hung out in [different boroughs] with the 23rd crew,” Fred described to me. While in school, Fred never really developed college aspirations partly because he was always focused on the short term. “I was thinking, “Where are we going to go tomorrow? Will it be dangerous for us to be there?”

His conversational English was strong, his writing was developing, and he was average in Math, though he was barely passing with inconsistent attendance. His older brother saw him as a disgrace and stopped talking to him. “But I wasn’t part of the bad stuff,” he qualifies his gang involvement. The participation was more about masculine posturing and delinquency than about making money from drug sales or violent crime. “Wanting [his] own money,” Fred found a part-time job “moving boxes” after school for minimum wage. After a few months, he was offered a full-time position. He accepted and dropped out of high school a year short of graduation.
Like the predicaments of the other youth of this group, the gang crisis moved Fred’s aspirations towards recovering a normal day-to-day routine and off of college decision-making. His father and stepmother had wanted him to finish high school but saw work as a positive step away from his suspected gang involvement. “I liked it...I was an adult.” Steady work took him away from his gang friends. “When [my bosses] offered to live and work outside of New York, I said yes.” Living on the work site, Fred worked in the suburbs of New York, including two months building houses in Pennsylvania, where he worked long hours without any means to travel off the work site. “I didn’t see my friends most weeks,” he said. Now commuting by subway, he works six days a week for a Jewish religious school in New York. He is comfortable with their strict cultural practices, and his boss finds him dependable.

His relationship with his family is occasionally tense but mostly detached. His father and stepmother say “at least he is working.” He lived with his parents until February 2013 when he moved away to move into an apartment with his 17 year-old then-pregnant girlfriend. When not working, he spends most of his time online or with her. His Jewish boss helped him find a cheap apartment on the edge of a Jewish neighborhood. This move symbolizes where he sees himself, moving away from his delinquent youth and dispassionate parental relationship to form a family with his girlfriend, supported by his steady job. After we discussed his hopes to get his GED to qualify for DACA, get a work permit, and potentially broaden his job prospects, he narrowed his immediate aspirations to “just working for now and being with Rosa [his girlfriend]...getting ready for the baby.” Similar to other comeback youth, Fred says, “I’m working, I got my family, we have an apartment, I’m alright.”
When Christian’s parents first immigrated to the United States, they felt they couldn’t support him there. Instead, they left their 7 year-old son with his grandparents in their small Mexican town with dirt streets and concrete and cinder block walls. His father returned two years later, having been deported. Christian woke up in the middle of the night a few months later as his father was again leaving to New York; Christian wanted to go with his father. “And so I left in the middle of the night, and I never got to say goodbye to anyone.” He arrived to New York City on New Year’s Day—in the same apartment where his family still lives—after crossing the border on Christmas Day, 1999.

I first visited the cramped one-bedroom apartment over ten years later, in 2011. After regular work hours, men often sit on the stairwell steps to socialize and drink beer. Past the crowded entrance to the apartment, the bed he shared with his wife and their daughter’s pink crib occupy the central space of the converted living room. Things were neatly organized from the floor up to the ceiling, and he took out a metal folding chair for me. The giant speakers for his sonido [deejay business] line one wall, with a large, thin television in front; clothes hang on a rack on the facing wall.

In 1999, he was happy to be reunited with his younger sister and his mother. But his parents worked long hours. Teasing from his bilingual program middle-school peers about his clothes, his sneakers, and his English made him want to return to Mexico. With the passing of time and a few conversations between his teacher and his mother, Christian made friends with Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Dominican boys typical of the neighborhood mix at that time. After his two cousins dropped out of neighborhood high
schools, he applied to and attended a Manhattan high school where English was the only language of instruction.

He developed friendships with five undocumented Mexican young men like himself; Blacks and Dominicans in the school stayed amongst their own. Rather than discussing college, his friends traded tips about work opportunities. He had wanted to pursue a career in graphic arts—his mother opposed this unpractical notion—but his grades dropped to below average and pressure from his family’s meager budget intensified.

His mother offered him advice on whether to continue studying or find a job. When she found out he was missing school his sophomore year to earn money in a part-time job, she said to him: “you must decide what you want to do. You can go to school, or if you work, you must work,” though she added “who knows if a diploma will make any difference. You will not get a job with it.” But “we couldn’t pay the bills,” he recounted to me with a furrow in his brow, and so he used his high school friends to get a full-time job.

He applied at McDonald’s, where a friend knew a manager, and Christian thought he was in the clear. When the manager asked for his Social Security number, he bluff ed and said he had lost the card. His mother told him how to get a false one, and he paid $80 for it. Later, a new manager took over and re-examined workers’ documentation. Spooked by the firing of one worker over document fraud, he never returned. At 18, he began manufacturing water tanks at the same factory as his father. A Dominican man who had worked there 30 years—who had started when he was 18 years old—told him
not to waste his life, not to do ‘nothing,’ and to use his talent in something else. But by age 23, he was earning $10.50/hour.

Other people have pushed him to change course. A second-generation Mexican-American whom he met on social media at age 16, April has been very important in pushing him to do more with his time. At 22, Christian obtained his GED. His teacher pushed him to write about his immigrant experiences and told him, “don’t let your status get in your way, you can do anything with this [equivalency diploma]. You can go to college.” With his wife in graduate school for teaching, he hopes for a better paying job without worker abuses, such as working unpaid overtime. He has occasionally talked to me about enrolling in a certificate program in medical billing but as of 2015, has only applied to jobs that do not require training beyond high school.

Christian applied for DACA in 2012, and received it. His eyes filled with tears when he used it to get a New York State driver’s license. “With DACA, I felt parte del grupo [part of the group] for the first time, ” Christian says with significance. With his new license and work permit, he began looking for new jobs for which he would qualify. In one year with his license, only Federal Express has hired him as a seasonal worker during the heavy Christmas period. In early 2015, with a second baby on the way, he continues to look for better work. Despite these challenges of using DACA as leverage towards social mobility, DACA has given him a new feeling of spatial mobility. With April, he flew for the first time since entering the US, traveling to Chicago to visit relatives there. He felt comfortable traveling in New Jersey now, he said.

His sense of self-worth is not only manifest in the school-work question and his position in the workforce; Christian has used outside engagements to keep his self-pride,
interests, and sense of masculinity buoyant. With a small group of friends, he customizes and chromes bicycles and tricycles, adding colorful Mexican tricolor flashes and stickers of the Virgin of Guadalupe. In warmer months, the group bicycles to different parts of New York City, showing off their shiny creations. A second, more professional hobby is his *sonido* deejaying. Started in 2005 with a birthday present and speakers he rescued from the trash, his *Sonido Galaxy* has earned some name recognition. With a big *quinceañera* party, he can earn up to a thousand dollars in one evening, though gigs are inconsistent. Finally, he attends church every other week where his daughter was baptized. Several dozens of his friends and family attended the party that followed. His belief also “makes [him] think that there is a purpose behind everything. It keeps [him] moving forward.”

Like Fred, Christian has used his earnings to make investments in relationships and family life. April and his daughter are his central responsibility and preoccupation. His marriage gave him a solid reason to plan for a future in New York, and the arrival of a daughter in 2012 further rooted his future to the city.\(^{35}\) He has helped support the family as April studied in college and graduate school, and is beyond declaring their importance in his life. Rather, they are intricately woven into his daily and weekly routines. All of his earnings go towards his family’s rent (his parents live with them), phones, and food; anything beyond his regular earnings (overtime or *sonido* gigs) can be used for clothes, gifts, and child expenses.

\(^{35}\) US law penalizes marriages between border-crossing undocumented immigrants and parenthood does not bestow the right to naturalize. Those who overstayed visas, however, may change their status through marriage.
Unlike Fred, he has maintained an engagement with his parents, his new family, and his peers. His civic participation is regular. DACA gave him new expectations of inclusion, and to the question of where he’d be if he had papers, Christian answered without hesitation, “I’d be in school.” School is a means to an end, and above all he awaits a job that treats him with “the respect that other people get.”

College-bound Students

While David was in elementary school, both of his parents, who worked in Tijuana maquiladores, brought him to New York, where some people from their hometown had started to settle. His father quickly got a job in a flower shop, and his mother has worked on and off in nearby factories. His parents were religious, and he grew up attending mass and religious instruction. David’s two younger sisters were born after he arrived to New York.

New York public schools offer wildly different paths depending on which school you attend, and likewise, David’s path differs from Fred’s and Christian’s. David’s schooling In elementary school, he began in ESL classes but within three years, he was in a gifted program in junior high school. His school used tracked classes, and he stayed in the strongest track for his grade until high school. His teachers pushed him into a selective, majority African-American high school where he flourished. Above all, its AP and science offerings and special programs oriented students towards a competitive college. With other like-minded friends, he loved to stay after school in the library or for school activities like the Intel Science Competition team. He participated in a summer program for engineering prospects at an elite university. He still attended Sunday church with his family and flirted with girls his age at family parties.
The process of applying for college filled David with excitement of becoming the first in his family to attend college and fear of not finding the means to do so. He was ready to strategize when applying the selective colleges—where his favorite teachers said he would be a good fit—because he needed not only be accepted but also receive an enormous scholarship. His backup plan was a CUNY four-year college that would be a financial hardship on his family. Without legal residence, he sometimes applied as an international student and sometimes as an unnamed ‘other’ category. The college search elicited assistance: he met similar students in the summer program, a teacher helped him with applications, and interestingly, a sympathetic lawyer who interviewed him for one of the colleges offered to help bridge any legal gaps. He had begun to despair following several rejections when he was offered a nearly full scholarship to an elite university.

At ease in New York, stories of Immigration & Customs Enforcement checks just off his campus create a sense of spatial limitations. Travel concerns notwithstanding, David appeared to be much like his fellow students, though without a campus job. He joined a photography club and developed diverse friendships. During the summer, he found seasonal restaurant work in New York. His parents have been rightly proud of his academic accomplishments, and his sisters looked to him for advice. In June 2012, when Obama announced the DACA program, through which undocumented youth could obtain legal work permits, David knew he was a perfect candidate. A helpful staff member in the financial aid office did his paperwork; no one else needed to be informed about his DACA status. He found work at a laboratory on campus to help pay for school expenses. He awaits immigration reform: “I’m just not sure what I’ll do [after college]; so much depends on what happens [in Congress].”
David graduated with a degree in biomedical engineering from an elite university in 2014. With DACA in hand, he told me his plan to get a job in a laboratory. Nearly a year later, his many job applications have largely gone unanswered. “I guess other people have more internship experience than me,” he said. He lives with his parents and works at Radio Shack repairing cell phones for $10/hour. As the best educated of my informants, David still struggles to have his education translate into the white-collar job for which he was trained.

David’s education-to-work path is distinct, but so are his romantic relationships. “I’m waiting to have a career before a serious girlfriend,” he calculated. “For now, I’m happy being home with my family... I can help out. Some of my friends have places in Brooklyn, and we hang out on the weekends.... but a real relationship, that can wait.”

Discussion and Conclusion

If the lives of the more than two million undocumented residents who have grown up in the US (Batalova et al. 2013) remain largely a black box, here we can find insight into what it is like coming of age as a Mexican undocumented young man in New York. Given New York’s uneven socio-legal context, with some protection from deportation but also few equal opportunities, what does it mean to be an undocumented Mexican youth coming of age in New York? This study does not show evidence of complete exclusion nor of the levels of social participation normally associated with formal citizenship. Even when they undertake the traditional responsibilities that underlie citizenship such as bearing children and paying taxes (Turner 1997) or finishing high school, access to essential federal citizenship rights remains locked. Instead, in the period between my informants’ high school days and today, their dreams for the future lie in a
state of suspension, protected against deportation but restricted in social mobility as well as spatially. Some have postponed their dreams of returning to see the land, family, and friends in Mexico, some of them now sadly passed away. Some repeatedly remake plans to study for a blue-collar career. For those attending college, the dreams of the day after graduation are left denied. If many dreams are deferred, their lives in New York are not completely deprived. How do these processes work for different youth, and what makes their New York experiences different from other places in the US?

Even under the shade of ‘illegality,’ some places are darker than others. We see evidence of different processes as undocumented youth transition to adulthood. *Comback* youth faced some crisis in high school and without additional family and schooling supports, are only finding working-class stability in their early 20s. The availability of jobs steadies the growth of family and romantic relationships. The lopsided college-work decision for undocumented youth, where the tuition costs are higher and the rewards lower compared to their documented peers, leaves *family-centric* youth in the same workforce position as their parents. Like their *comeback* counterparts, these young men have used their full-time work to support family and romantic relationships. *College-bound* students use supplementary in-school and transnational resources to enter two- and four-year colleges. This last group of students seem best-positioned to benefit from DACA work provisions (Gonzales et al. 2014).

In general, my informants experience life in the same way other disadvantaged immigrant youth (who may be socially distant from institutions) do prior to age 18. The parents of my undocumented informants arrived before them with very limited formal education, and after a period of family separation, their children arrived to their New
York extended families and resource-meager communities. Schools are the central institution for student-age youth, providing basic health needs, food programs, and access to transportation, and where they meet their New York peers. Parents encouraged their children to work hard in school, and with a few notable exceptions, children did work hard to fulfill their parents’ sacrifices in immigrating, the *immigrant bargain* (Smith 2006). Though it sometimes took my informants longer than four years, most obtained high school diplomas.

Despite this success, youth encounter difficulties in the educational system and find it tough to resolve these. For reasons too many to list here, their high schools don’t do an effective job encouraging undocumented youth to continue their studies. For many, language instruction and supports are insufficient for academic integration; those without difficulties often had a head start on speaking the language. Though all youth speak conversational English, their academic reading and writing tended to be weak. This weakness doesn’t explain their lack of college; this academic weakness is true as well for some of their documented friends, who went on to gain some post-secondary experience. For most informants, barriers to financial aid have a more enduring effect on trajectories. Without parents to assist their strategizing, youth complained of a lack of well-informed guidance. Beginning in high school, nearly all wanted to work at least part-time to bolster family budgets and otherwise support family obligations (Fuligni and Pedersen 2002). These work opportunities quickly became full-time commitments, showing how family needs factor into stratification of undocumented youth.

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36 New York State also provides means-tested health insurance to children under 19.
Youths’ educational paths after high school became the principal mechanism of varied social participation. If many immigrant youth in their position receive inadequate guidance in applying for colleges, most of my informants also avoided guidance, knowing college attendance was out of reach. CUNY does charge an in-state tuition rate for undocumented youth. Without family history of college attendance and denied sources of federal and state financial aid, many undocumented students hesitate to spend thousands of dollars for post-secondary study. Their high school credentials, then, bring some family satisfaction but do not lead to different job sectors than those of their parents.

Less critical family needs, better academic preparation, and in-school guidance push college-bound students towards academic and career goals. Those few who applied to CUNY two-year colleges describe a mixed experience. With inadequate academic preparation, college-going informants had to begin by taking remedial coursework. Luis (after one CUNY semester) and Temo decided it would be easier to complete college—and see grandparents that had helped raise them—by returning to Mexico. Exceptional cases exist. Rene dropped out of community college before a former teacher jumped in and paid for his tuition in full. David received a full scholarship to an elite four-year university, minimizing the impact of the lack of state financial aid.

One common theme across all three types concerns responses to uncertainty. Tacit in the above paragraphs is the large amount (and few sources) of information needed to make informed decisions about high school and college. College-bound students leverage significant teacher, guidance counselor, and peer support to make the leap to post-secondary education. Even with this support, they feel unsure asking about career work
opportunities, mentioning their legal status to friends, and going out for drinks without identification. The uncertainty about entering post-secondary education persists for family-centric workers after high school, without the informational support college-bound students receive. Comeback cases feel insecurity regarding several aspects of their daily life: living without their parents, overcoming abuse. All feel uncertainty regarding if, when, and how immigration reform will happen. Each one has a dream of returning to their hometown and seeing their relatives.

In contrast to the difficulty of information about education is information about low-paying jobs. These social networks allow the comeback and family-centric young men to gain and maintain full-time jobs. What other adult responsibilities do these young men take on in their transition to adulthood? When aspirations in areas of educational growth are blocked, youth respond by further developing other domains involving relationships to family and significant others. This response to frustrated needs supports a hypothesis of Alderfer (1972), a psychologist who developed a “existence, relatedness, and growth” hierarchy of human needs out of Maslow’s renowned theory of human motivation. Alderfer argues that those whose personal growth is stifled invest more in relationships.

If the detrimental impact of exclusion from post-secondary education becomes clear as informants turn 18, the analysis of a subjectively-based social participation inventory showed us how other social domains transform and bolster inclusion. After age 18, youth transition into some adult roles. Two domains driving other shifts, employment and education, set the context for this coming of age. Youth grow to depend on low-paying but readily-available, low-stress jobs. Most importantly, they use wages from their
jobs as key resources in their families and relationships. Families in each city came together after extended periods of separation, and with the exchange of household responsibilities, including paying rent and taking care of younger siblings. Work also re-organized use of time, and participation in organized activities, already low, dropped further. Relationships with significant others became more entrenched while transnational practices waned. Participation in other social domains also decreased or stayed low. If few have a strong sense of self and overall we see a decrease in self-efficacy, overall psychosocial domain scores are stable.

In strong contrast to working-class emerging adults (Silva 2013), undocumented youth increasingly look to their natal families for love and emotional support, financial support, guidance, and information as they come of age. They also look to contribute those resources to their family. These experiences have led to maturity in these New York undocumented youth. More often than not, youth understand the sacrifice their parents have made in leaving their country of origin, and want to reciprocate (Smith 2006). Moreover, they want to extend that center of meaning to their girlfriends and wives, offering to financially support their college education. The future plans of their partners and children are more tangible than their own, and my informants find meaning from supporting the hopes of loved ones while doing their mundane work.

**Looking Ahead**

DACA seems to act as an inclusionary gateway to work and education in two ways. One, youth revisited the possibility of working in other sectors for the first time since starting work. Second, the process of applying for DACA brought youths in contact with neighborhood and city organizations. Narrowing the distance between
undocumented youth and available resources allowed one youth to speak to a lawyer, who realized he qualified for a U-visa. This is a significant if uncommon consequence of the DACA policy.

‘Learning to be in limbo’ best describes my informants’ position as second-class citizens. That said, they also do not expect a deportation to Mexico. New York’s system leaves the social mobility of undocumented youth in limbo awaiting reform, and they cling to the limited benefits of off-the-books work and family outlets of progress such as supplementing parents’ earnings, significant others’ educations, and their children. In Langston Hughes’ poem “A Dream Deferred,” he asks whether dreams “dry up”, “fester like a sore,” “crust and sugar over,” “sag” or “explode” when they are deferred. Here in the experiences of my informants, we see some educational dreams drying up, employment dreams festering and some family dreams sugaring over.
Chapter 5:
Serving Time in Bureaucratic Purgatory: The Social Trajectories of Undocumented Youth in Paris

Abstract
This chapter examines the transition to adulthood among male 1.5 generation undocumented youth in Paris. At 18 years of age, access to education, employment, and other domains shifts in both cities as youth become deportable and excluded from the labor market in Paris. Based on longitudinal ethnography over three years with a dozen undocumented youth and families as well as with municipal government and civil society actors, I examine informants’ social trajectories of youth as they come of age. I triangulate data analysis methods, employing a statistical analysis of an inventory and biographical-narrative analysis.

Using an inventory of social participation and well-being based on 55 subject-formulated indicators, I identify shifts in domains of social participation after informants have turned 18. Four contextualized biographical profiles of youth as they come of age in each city demonstrate degrees of social exclusion informants undergo and how they adapt.

Introduction
Chen arrived in Paris at the age of 13 years and one month, smuggled into the country from China, after his parents, already living in Paris for five years, paid 20,000 euros. His parents did not realize the crucial difference that month would make, with French law allowing those with 5 years of residence at the age of 18 to regularize. According to French law, he would not need a residence visa until he reached the age of 18, when he would join his parents as sans-papiers. How will the lack of residence status affect Chen and others like him as they come of age? Do all youth without legal residence status undergo a similar trajectory as they become adults, and therefore, deportable?

As we saw the stratified limbo that undocumented youth in New York experience in the last chapter, here we will see how Paris undocumented youth experience the purgatory of waiting for papers. Building on the analogy that admission to a developed country amounts to being let in heaven (see George Borjas’s Heaven’s Door), purgatory, in Catholic theology, is the period in which one’s soul is purified before moving to
heaven; this suffering does not last forever. In this context, it refers to the period of waiting before obtaining a visa; the expectation is that the legal shift will occur, and one will obtain regularization: the ticket to the door of ‘heaven.’ In Paris, bureaucratic incorporation varies based on the resources that youth bring to the table, or in this case, the guichet (clerk window) of the Préfecture. For undocumented youth, access to school and work opportunities are the overt fruits of this struggle with the Préfecture; family and romantic life are more covert ones. Undocumented youths often anticipate a cross-over to legal status that drives their expectations. As in the last chapter, I use a social participation inventory to show variation in social trajectories. Before describing biographical profiles for each of the four groups, I identify some mechanisms that lead to my informants’ different social outcomes. Across all groups, we see one commonality: teenagers, waiting for the chance to feel whole, struggle to navigate the maze-like administrative procedures. Purgatory, the Christian theological place of suffering for expurgating sins before being allowed to heaven, seems an apposite analogy.

Civil society actors have published accounts of the lived experiences of undocumented youth in France (see RESF 2011; PICUM 2009) but, to my knowledge, no scholarship has examined the coming of age of undocumented youth in France. For a reference point, we can compare the trajectories of undocumented youth to those of documented children of immigrants. Three benchmark studies analyze the coming of age of the children of immigrants to France, with a particular focus on educational and labor market outcomes. Tribalat (1995) developed the first large survey of immigrants and their children in France, showing highly varied educational and labor market outcomes by age
of arrival, ethnic origin, and language acquisition. Using a dataset that began with 1992 and 1998 second generation cohorts tracked over ten years, Silberman and Fournier (2008; see also Alba and Silberman 2009) look for evidence of segmented assimilation of the second generation. Like in Tribalat’s survey, North African and sub-Saharan youth report high levels of discrimination, though they exhibit different patterns with respect to those born to French parents. Educational attainment correlates closely with access to employment. The Southeast Asian and sub-Saharan second generation obtain more tertiary degrees than those with French parentage. However, with North African second generation as the most extreme case, the second generation as a whole faces a persistent ethnic penalty in the labor market. Simon (2010) reports on the most recent survey data with some similar if broader results. First and second generation North Africans, sub-Saharan Africans, and to a lesser extent, southeast Asians live in neighborhoods with high concentrations of immigrants and high levels of unemployment, even when controlling for their social class and other characteristics. About 10% more second generation students are oriented towards professional and technical high school tracks compared to those with French parentage. Unemployment rates increase from the first to second generation and remain above 20% for North African and sub-Saharan African men, and above 15% for southeast Asian men (see also Lutz, Brinbaum, and Abdelhady 2014).

While these studies aggregate survey responses to create a picture of the discrimination that children of immigrants face, other reports from national and local

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37 With European Union nested citizenship, the Spanish and Portuguese respondents in these surveys have the right to reside and work in France, in contrast to “third-party nationals” who arrive without such rights.
organizations more clearly provide the contextual elements. Following a change in 1981 that allowed the formation of associations on an ethnic basis, ethnic organization has been slow to develop roots and form effective coalitions. Maxwell (2010) argues a lack of economic integration by immigrant groups has made mobilization difficult, limiting their political and social integration. While ethnic representation, assumed to bring greater resources to immigrant communities, does vary by city in France (Garbaye 2005), the republican model makes legitimacy difficult for such organizing (Noiriel 2007).

This brief review of the situation of immigrants in France provides a useful reminder that undocumented youth are part of larger immigrant communities with limited resources and constraints to mobilization. Laacher (2009) challenges the notion that sans-papiers are commensurate to their ‘without’ label (see also GISTI 2004). If off-the-books work makes positive integration difficult, legal status is not relevant in many situations and there are spaces wherein sans-papiers can build a life and eventually regularize (ibid.; Baldwin-Edwards and Kraler 2009; Brick 2011).

If mobilization by ethnic groups has proved less than fruitful in France, the cause of sans-papiers has proved to be more effective (Siméant 1998; Nicholls 2013a; Monforte and Dufour 2011). As I show in Chapter 8, a broad coalition of teachers, parent associations, human rights organizations, unions, and local politicians have made undocumented residents into a national issue of importance. This coalition, called RESF (Education Without Borders Network in English), has used the rights of children to leverage greater inclusion (Nicholls 2013a) for undocumented youth. This organizational context underlies a theoretically important exception to the experiences of children of
immigrants. This movement has made the issue visible,\textsuperscript{38} even if the residents often are invisible. Further, Paris has been the center of this national movement, concurrently creating local and national spaces of inclusion (Nicholls and Vermeulen 2012).

\textit{The Local Context of Paris}

With great heterogeneity in the undocumented population and different responses from governments (Donato and Armenta 2011), more scholarship on undocumented youth is needed to explore effects of exclusion and within different local contexts. In particular, does the ‘career of illegality’ described by Gonzales (2011) apply to other socio-legal contexts in which undocumented youth come of age? If local civil society actors (Bloemraad 2006) and local governments (Cette France-là 2009) have been recognized as key actors in the acquisition of citizenship, then we should also look to distinct local contexts when understanding the social exclusion of undocumented youth.

For undocumented youth, entry into French life has a musty, bureaucratic flavor. This bureaucratic incorporation begins with school entry and culminates with visa application. For students who do not speak French, schooling begins with a classe \textit{d’accueil} that welcomes new students with language classes. Students are then assigned to a collège (middle school) or lycée (high school). Students finishing collège are recommended by teachers to technical, vocational or academic high schools. They can accept or appeal these. When students have difficulties in their assigned lycée, in Paris they can be transferred to schools with additional supports. The French system now disposes of more opportunities to re-enter the academic route towards university from technical or vocational schools (Alba and Silberman 2009). While vocational high school

\footnote{From 2008 to 2010, for example, undocumented workers went on strike, camping out publicly at several sites in Paris and occupying the Bastille Opéra steps.}
prepares students for a trade, postsecondary education such as a BTS (bac +2) can increase work opportunities (Silberman and Fournier 2010).

The labor market, however, is how schooling gets translated into salaries and status. Scholars have found that finding a job as an immigrant or child of immigrants is more difficult than for native French, part of which is due to their family characteristics and partly due to their schooling trajectory (Simon 2003). West and North African immigrants often end up engaged in precarious part-time work (Simon and Steichen 2014), though youth who attend French schools may better match economic need areas than adult immigrants that entered under family criteria. Importantly, the global city advantage exists for children of immigrants in Paris, who have higher employment than in other areas of France and often higher rates of full-time work (Lutz et al. 2014).

Finally, the different types of temporary visas offered by the Préfecture to undocumented youth relate to the social circumstances of the applicant (with exceptions, see Chapter 8). Because they also structure the distribution of rights, here I offer a brief summary of the four main types (Secrétariat général à l’immigration et à l’intégration 2011). When offered to undocumented residents, regularization refers to changing an irregular status (rejected asylum-seeker, temporary student, tourist, or other visa overstayer, residents without an entry visa) to a temporary one; these processes take place in a local département Préfecture and can be contested in administrative courts.39 In the hierarchy of visas, the family-based visa is the most esteemed. It offers a right to work and its primary supporting proof is documentation of at least one “legitimate” parent

39 For youth who arrive before 13 years of age and spend five years in France, they have the right to a family-based visa. They are not considered sans-papiers.
living in France. The next rung is the student visa, which can be renewed with proof of studies. While aimed at university students, in my field experiences, it was sometimes applied to sans-papiers still in high school. Third, with a work contract in a shortage area and a fee paid by employers, sans-papiers can obtain work visas. Lastly, sick sans-papiers can apply for health visas to stay during their treatment. Further, the temporary nature of these visas means they can also be lost (Laacher 2009). Indeed, French law has moved to restrict these categories since the 1990s (Cette France-là 2010).

Because of the uncertainty of bureaucratic decision-making, with rules that shift regularly, this incorporation often proceeds in a maze-like fashion. Applicants apply for one category and if rejected, another category. For each appointment, applicants undergo a pre-screening at a different location. Satellite offices exist for specific visa categories (e.g. Algerian, student, visa renewal). Prefects, the head of the département-level State bureaucracy, have discretion about their processing (Spire 2008; Association Cette-France-là 2009; Association Cette-France-là 2012). This system produces an episode that teaches the individual applicant that the State’s power, if bestowed, is contingent. Both formally (in the Prefectural criteria) and informally (inside the Préfecture and in corresponding with it), sans-papiers are asked to wait for their papers. This waiting, accompanied by constraining circumstances, disciplines the would-be citizen (Auyero 2012). When accorded, the applicant experiences a weary relief; new paperwork will have to be submitted for visa renewal.

40 Residents with proof of ten years of residence in France normally may regularize to a family-based visa, with the importance of speaking French at the discretion of the Prefecture.
41 Asylum claims are handled by a different agency, the French Office of Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (OFPRA).
Undocumented Youth and the Transition to Adulthood

In Paris, minors are not required to have residence cards, and school is open to all youth regardless of immigration status. In addition, they have the right to national health insurance (with which one can apply for free public transportation), to attend athletic and cultural afterschool programs, participate in school government, free lunch (means-tested), and libraries. Students can apply for small scholarships depending on need.

All the while, for sans-papiers, life after school is a question mark. Whether youth plan to continue to study or to enter the labor market, trajectories suddenly deviate from those of their peers. In Paris, on their 18th birthday, youth face the possibility of deportation should they try to shift their status as required, be caught in a raid or routine inspection at work or on the subway. Presentation of school identification (which does not have date of birth) can satisfy most police and protect youth from such consequences. Meanwhile on the legal front, most youth comply with the law requires those in an administratively irregular situation to regularize their situation after they turn 18. The inevitable rejection for those who arrived after age 13 can be a simple refusal or more likely, accompanied by a deportation order (OQTF, Obligation de Quitter le Territoire Français). Chapter 7 describes the socio-legal context for undocumented youth, in which the Ministry of the Interior has sharply increased the number of deportation orders issued.

Methods

42 This right is based in 1958 Constitution’s clause on the equal access to education, professional training, and culture, and supported by France’s signing of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the European Convention on Human Rights, and a Ministerial ‘circulaire’ on March 20, 2002.
43 In practice, parents’ tax forms are required to qualify. Many undocumented workers pay and declare their taxes.
The findings of this chapter rely on longitudinal ethnographic data and analysis of relevant legal and government documents. To allow comparability across informants, I used the emergent categories from informants’ own words and experiences. Over more than three years from June 2010 to 2013, I did in-depth interviews and longitudinal ethnographic work with twelve undocumented youth and their families in two Paris neighborhoods. Over fifteen months from 2010 to 2012, I conducted in-depth interviews and ethnographic work with twelve undocumented youth and their families in two neighborhoods of Paris. A year later, I did revisit interviews (Burawoy 1998) and ethnographic work with all primary informants. Four families are of Chinese origin; four from sub-Saharan Africa (Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Cameroon, Comoros); two from Tunisia, one from Brazil, and one from Armenia. This selection criteria reflects the local distribution of undocumented youth that I encountered. Both neighborhoods are predominantly working-class with a multiethnic mix of immigrants and their children. I selected these undocumented male informants based on neighborhood, age, and age of arrival, all belonging to the 1.5 generation.44

I used an “extended place” approach (Duneier 1999) in which other actors are implicated as they interact with primary informants. This method allows insight into the lived experiences of young irregular residents as they come of age, and into the actors that construct their sense of what being undocumented is. In Paris, I conducted interviews with associations, school personnel, and lawyers as well as ethnographic work with a network that supports undocumented youth and their families. Additional sites include national courts and several branches of the Préfecture of Paris. This analysis of different

44 Here, the 1.5 generation refers to those who migrated at 15 years of age or less.
paths seeks to demonstrate the range and nature of the variable, undocumentedness. By using an ethnographic approach, we can see the impact of both policies and practices, seeing how and where exclusion functions.

One advantage of ethnographic work is access to the family kitchen table: an all-important theater of decision-making. The decision to immigrate takes place on the family level (Massey 1999; Dreby 2009; Parreñas 2011) and immigrant families continue to organize their practices on the family level. Thus, spending time with informant families clarifies the networks and resources that support social trajectories. Like in New York, as undocumented youth come of age, they tend to live at home with their parents or other family through their early twenties, evidence for a stronger family-centered economic model than their non-immigrant peers. With other cultures having a stronger ethic of supporting their parents financially and otherwise throughout their lives, family obligations strongly inform immigrant youth aspirations and trajectories (Laacher 1994). In contrast to the New York situation, parent regularization can be a key factor in their children’s regularization efforts.

* A Social Participation and Well-being Inventory

As described in Chapter 4 (p. 6-8), I used subject data to develop a set of social indicators with which to assess informants. For each indicator, I scored informants’ practices, outlook, and plans on a three point scale: (-1) (0) (1).\(^{45}\) The objective here is to establish a measure of positive social participation (i.e. social assets), with the possibility of social factors that impede developing those assets. When factors do not apply, they do not contribute to nor detract from the assessment of a given domain. As in the analysis of

\(^{45}\) You may see the criteria by which these were operationalized in Appendix A.
New York informants, here I evaluate separately each informant’s practices, outlook, and plans before and after the age of 18.

The benefits to this approach are two-fold. First, we can begin to identify axes of variation between informants’ lives. Second, it allows for commensuration (Espeland and Sevens 1998), illuminating certain comparative aspects of the study.

Obligated to go through a series of stressful bureaucratic hurdles after they turn 18, most informants describe a purgatory of waiting for legal status. As minors, the impact of their lack of legal status impacted school trips and mobility in general. As adults, most apply for status adjustment (see Chapter 8). Before they gain status, most have difficulty staying in school or finding work. For those that do obtain temporary visas, many continue to have difficulty finding work.

The mean Paris scores show that home life becomes slightly more of an asset for most of my informants as they turn 18. Employment scores are low, with many without work or with poor working conditions, Education scores are low in Paris; half of Paris informants drop out of high school. Language barriers play an important role here, especially for Chinese-born informants, as they do not fare well in classes and drop out to work. A small proportion, however, goes on to postsecondary studies. Family assets grow in both cities as informants grow older. Most informants that were separated from their parents during childhood rejoined them and grew closer, but a few remain separated from family. Paris informants reported fear of contact with the police at high rates and had strategies to avoid contact. Legality scores increase, however, as many youth are regularized (see Chapter 8).
Public life begins and remains low in Paris. Many *sans-papiers* do have irregular participation in organizational life and make occasional use of public parks and libraries. With no significant change in health coverage as they become adults, Paris informants benefit from public health insurance. This proves important for the small number who have mental or physical health crises. Informants’ psychosocial shift is also complex as some lose hope for the future and others feel some confidence about their ability to navigate French society. Peer relationships begin and remain strong for most in Paris.

A minority of Paris informants develop stable relationships with romantic partners. Transnational practices remain stable amongst Paris informants as they become adults, who do not send remittances but sometimes phone relatives in the home country. All informants speak their maternal language fluently and most informants report high literacy as well.

**Table 10: Mean Scores of Informant Social Participation, by Social Domain, Paris**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>All Informants</th>
<th>&lt; 18 years old</th>
<th>&gt;18 years old</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Descriptive Types*
In Paris, we see a broader range of social trajectories than in New York (see Table 11 below). On the very low end of the social participation and well-being spectrum, we see the effects of ‘harsh exclusion’ in those who have limited family and ethnic resources, who speak French with difficulty, and with significant barriers to labor market entry are unable to find work. On the other end of the spectrum lie informants who are educated with a job, who speak French fluently, and most of whom eventually managed to ‘negotiate inclusion’ with a temporary legal status. In between are those who are eking out a future with great determination. Four groups of informants emerge from the inventory scores. As adults, the first group had negative scores; the second had scores between 10 and 0. The medium group had scores between 16 and 25, and the highest group had scores between 35 and 45.

The very low scoring group includes the most excluded undocumented youth. Two have housing instability. One aged out of State-sponsored housing for minors and lost housing rights after becoming sans-papiers at age 18. All express a strong desire to work—families hoped for help paying expenses—though they experienced great obstacles due to their lack of legal status. Two of three speak French with a heavy accent; writing is also a formidable barrier to mainstream inclusion. All studied in vocational high schools though two dropped out. As of 2014, two were still studying in the hope that this will lead to getting a visa; in 2014, one continues to participate in a language program at a local association. “You must have proof of social life [to later claim a visa],” he was told. Because they have not obtained this visa, they fear police identity checks. They have few caring relationships with friends and no romantic histories. With
their prospects dimmed and few social or financial resources, outlets for masculinity and self-satisfaction are particularly low.

The low group shows a more stable if unfulfilled life. Living with family after years of separation, their housing was assured. But all dropped out of high school, two with language difficulties and one with a health crisis. The latter returned to get a vocational certificate. Jobs were difficult to come by. Before obtaining temporary visas with the right to work, they searched for jobs in vain. After being regularized, two found low-wage jobs with fluctuating schedules in ethnic restaurants. Despite having good support from friends, this group had low scores on self-esteem and felt they would be stuck in the same situation in the future. They all enjoyed talking about possible romantic relationships but only one had had a short-lived relationship.

The medium group had similar stories as the low group but also had access to middle-class resources. They lived with their families and housing conditions were closer to those of the French lower-middle class. They spoke fluent French, though academic writing was more of a challenge. Two of the three dropped out of high school; one continued in a vocational high school. While most of their friends had similar ethnic backgrounds, they also had good friend relationships with youth of other backgrounds. Despite these resources, the transition to legality was equally as problematic as for other youth. Two had their asylum claims rejected. But with family and ethnic connections, they were able to find some work, similar to the Portuguese second generation in France (Simon 2003). With greater family support and better work possibilities than the two previous groups, they expressed satisfaction with their lives and hoped that they would improve.
The group that scored very high on the inventory leads a different type of life, closer to other French children of immigrants. All live with family or extended family, and stable housing has not been an issue. Two of the three are West Africans who spoke French before immigrating; all speak some French in the home. All three graduated from an academic lycée (though one had to protest not to be put in a vocational high school) and had mastered academic writing. Importantly, two of three were able to enter into post-secondary programs housed in their high school. This in-house transition made their legal status less relevant. All participated in high school groups and later, in professional or religious groups. One held a part-time job at a company translating for co-ethnics, but the others only found work after obtaining a temporary visa. A new comfort with police presence accompanied this shift to legal status. Like many French children of immigrants and some native French, permanent work remained elusive. A French system of work-study (alternance) and temporary contract work enables only part-time and provisional work. Nonetheless, this group saw their struggle to gain a visa as an obstacle that they had overcome; they felt equipped to move forward with their plans. As the two West Africans realized obstacles to good work opportunities, they began strategizing about potentially using their educational credentials and experience back in West Africa, where members of their nuclear families still live. Interestingly, all four groups exhibit similar levels of transnational behavior but those with more education consider acting on those resources. The Brazilian, however, has married a Brazilian-origin French citizen, and plans to stay in France with his mother, stepmother, and brother.
**Table 11: Mean Scores of Informant Social Participation, by Social Domain and Type, Paris**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Paris-Very Low Score Group</th>
<th>N=3</th>
<th>Paris-Low Score Group</th>
<th>N=3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;18 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>old</td>
<td>old</td>
<td>old</td>
<td>old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>-0.42</td>
<td>-0.50</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
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<td>-0.39</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Paris-Very Low Score Group</th>
<th>N=3</th>
<th>Paris-Low Score Group</th>
<th>N=3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 18 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;18 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>old</td>
<td>old</td>
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<td>old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
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<td>0.67</td>
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<td>Legality</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.83</td>
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<td>Psychosocial</td>
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<td>0.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Biographical Narrative Analysis

The above analysis, based on a common inventory of broad social participation, establishes a means by which we can compare youth in Paris. In the above four groups, we see considerable variation in the exclusion and inclusion experienced by (sometimes formerly) undocumented youth as they transition to adulthood. This second method of analysis, a tracing of biographical narratives, adds to our sense of the processes involved in those trajectories of exclusion and inclusion. Like the narratives in Chapter 4, these
represent how being *sans-papiers* changes—and *does not change*—the social meanings that informants gain from their lives. The four individual cases presented here of Guoliang, Chen, Bao, and Armand show the risks of being undocumented, the struggle of obtaining (or not) a legal status, and the underwhelming job prospects even with a legal status.

The central determination of most of these young men is to find work. “Illegality” equates to lack of work, and by gaining status, these young men gain access to the labor market. Work is central because having money allows these young men to make financial contributions to the family budget, afford cellular phones, and attend paying social events. Partly for these reasons, many informants’ dreams of a romantic relationship begin in earnest with the accordance of a visa. This is one way that meaning making sharply increases with a legal visa. For most former *sans-papiers* who find work, opportunities disappoint. While a few appreciate their jobs, most desire more hours, long-term prospects, and a location closer to home. Important to their economic stability, they also gain access to social welfare. These young men thus move through a *purgatory* with limited respect and resources to a legal exclusion more typical of young immigrants in the job market.

In brief, this biographical narrative analysis gets us closer to the situations as understood by youth themselves. While other analytical approaches may minimize the agency of undocumented youth, this approach shows how institutions create and support agency in the face of nationally-based exclusion. In order to develop these different paths through an undocumented coming of age, I will present cases to compare mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion across cases. Below in Table 12, I highlight the specific
mechanisms that correspond with the social participation scores. In the narratives of
Guoliang, Chen, Bao, and Armand, we will hear how these mechanisms fit into the lives
of adolescent-turned-emerging adults.

**Table 12: Key Mechanisms of Social Participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory Score</th>
<th>Paris</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High (35+)</td>
<td>Academic &amp; social inclusion at school; Postsecondary education; Civically involved; Mainstream but insecure work opportunities; More diverse social network than Medium Group (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (25-34)</td>
<td>Some inclusion at school; Strong spoken French; Some middle-class resources; More diverse social network than Low Group (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (15-24)</td>
<td>Academic but not social exclusion at school; Language difficulties; Limited ethnic work opportunities; Parents work long hours (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-10)</td>
<td>Academic &amp; social exclusion in school; Language difficulties; Limited ethnic work opportunities; Parents work long hours (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low (&lt;0)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Selection Process in Paris**

Informants in Paris face a threat from police identity checks on the street or more
often, in transportation hubs. This practice occurs at train stations more than subway
stations (unless traveling without a ticket), making the city transportation system an
advantage over suburban counterparts. National ID cards are a key technology that
becomes important at 18, delayed by the holding of a high school ID. Work sites are also
at risk for inspections. Families and friends discuss ways to avoid getting caught in a
police check, and say African and Asian young men are more likely to be stopped.
Informants’ awareness of risk of contact with the police is contrasted with some youths’ habit of jumping the subway turnstiles, where several have been released with only a fine.

School experiences are mixed. Many spent their first year, or part of it, in a newcomers school. If many report junior high school as a blur, high school experiences were either a time of inclusion or exclusion. Those who felt excluded had a lack of co-ethnic friends and language difficulties. Many ‘professional high school’ students felt a comradery with peers and teachers with whom they spent long hours in extended-time classes. Those in ‘academic high schools’ often began uncertain, gained trust in a few friends and teachers over time, and felt they left stronger. With guidance from teachers, a quarter of my Paris informants continued to a nonacademic post-secondary school. Would-be dropouts were encouraged to persevere in high school with the offer of temporary student visas that allow part-time work.

Without a visa, finding work was often difficult. This was an important factor impacting social trajectories. For many of those that negotiated inclusion, a steady job, in a less-enforced domain such as translation or unpaid internships that led to a job offer, facilitated stable relationships with significant others. The ethnic enclavers and those faced with harsh exclusion have less stable households, with families that expected them to contribute, but with enforcement regimes hindering their ability to do so.

Harsh Exclusion

Guoliang’s parents left home when he was eight years old in 2003. His grandparents cared for him as his parents paid off their 37,000 € debt by doing piecework sewing from their small apartment. His mother had a baby girl, and the parents paid a smuggler 20,000 € to have their son brought over. Guoliang took a plane to Russia, a
train to the border in Poland and reunited with his parents in Paris on a gray afternoon in 2008. With the help of Chinese friends, they had moved into a medium-sized one-bedroom apartment, on the top floor of a refined building on the edge of a chic neighborhood, but that was largely unfinished on the inside.

With no language preparation, Guoliang was placed in an introductory school to learn French. Six months later, he was assigned to a junior high school where he struggled to pass non-Mathematics classes, and then a year later shuffled to a high school. Only two or three other Chinese students attended the high school, none in his classes. Majoring in accounting, he could not find the assistance he needed nor follow the material. Discouraged, he stopped going to class. “I had no friends.” He stayed home, playing online video games or watching Chinese television programs online, as they found work sewing at a nearby factory, earning very low wages. After school and on Saturdays in 2011, I stopped by as he cared for his younger sister, Susan. He rarely left his apartment save to do much more than the family shopping or the infrequent invitation from a few Chinese friends to meet.

Guoliang, still somewhat interested in learning, set working as his priority to contribute to stressful family costs (his parents have recently paid off the fee to smuggle him). His mother’s friends suggested a Chinese online forum for off-the-books jobs but all seem to require at least a temporary visa. “I could rent a Chinese man’s national ID card for about 200 euros a month,” Guoliang explained, though he hesitated to engage in something criminal. He mentioned that sewing jobs were available in the southern suburbs but were mostly for women, and it was difficult to travel freely out of the city. With little cash and a thin social network, Guoliang was spending most of his days inside.
Tall and very thin, he moves slowly and his words come out fairly clearly but very slowly and discouragingly.

One afternoon in summer 2012, I asked him what his dreams were. His first dream, he said simply, is just getting his papers. Once he gets his papers, everything else becomes possible. He told me he couldn’t really think beyond that. How could he get his papers? Now that his parents had lived in France for over ten years, they were going to apply for a visa. He would try after they got theirs. “Being in school is important,” he advised, “I’m going to start again in September.” The worst, he said, would be to wait ten years, too.

Revisiting Guoliang in May 2013, he had indeed obtained a family-based visa. His parents obtained their cards with proof of ten years of presence, and he obtained a family-based visa as the son of two parents with temporary visas and one French-born sister. He immediately dropped out of school and found a job in a Chinese-owned restaurant in the suburbs over an hour from his family’s apartment. “It’s impossible to get a restaurant job [in Paris] without a lot of experience,” he explained. Working there six days a week, he sleeps in a room upstairs from the restaurant, and comes to see his family in Paris once a week. I asked what he would look forward to next. He said, a job in the city. And his family and he had agreed to save money for a trip back to China in 2014. When I asked him how he would describe his life to his grandparents, he replied, “Life is hard.”

*Ethnic Enclave Inclusion But*...

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46 Other youth have claimed this has not been true for them.
Like many Chinese residents in Paris, Chen grew up in Wenzhou in southeastern coast of China. His parents moved to Paris when he was six years old; he stayed with his grandparents. After his parents paid 20,000 euros to a smuggler, he traveled through Russia to Ukraine and then through the European Union. At the age of 13 and one week, he arrived to Paris to reunite with his parents and newborn sister with a French first name. He entered a newcomers school and learned some French. His initial grades were barely passing. School has never been easy for him, he told me, and after a few years of struggling in middle school, he was transferred to a special school for learning French. By 2011, he had largely stopped attending. With both parents gone at work, he skipped school and chats, smoked, and played computer games with a teasing gang of four or five Chinese-born boys, documented and undocumented. They usually chat about girls, and Chen reminisces about his Wenzhou girlfriend before he left. The computer was another important pillar of his social life. At home, he spends hours playing a team online game with mostly Chinese players. Online, he chatted with old friends in several boxes at once while watching Chinese television in a separate window. Chen dreams of visiting Wenzhou, and returning to his family in Paris to help support his family by working in a restaurant or a barber shop.

Just before his 18th birthday, his French teacher gave him the address of a social center that gives advice to immigrants and where I was volunteering. His father and I accompanied Chen to the Préfecture, where the bureaucracy distributing resident cards is located. In the ‘Asian room,’ we filled out a one-page form and a form for accompaniers, and met an initial clerk. An informal interview followed; Chen’s French was weak, hesitant, and whispered. I, with my RESF button, intervened to clarify the basis of his
application, that he attended school here, that his parents were here along with his
French-born sister. A manager called me and Chen over and explained that he was unable
to get a family visa because his parents were sans-papiers but he had two options: his
parents could regularize with 10 years of presence, or he could get a student visa as part
of RESF. She added his parents must speak French (they don’t). At a second appointment
in January 2012, we were shifted to a special RESF clerk who approved his student
visa47, even without his recent report card. This visa allows him to work part-time while
studying. “I do not want to go to school,” Chen told me with an honest look in the eye, “I
just want to work.”

Chen immediately got a part-time job only a few blocks from his home, with a
Chinese buffet restaurant that calls him when they need help prepping food for
receptions. Work often goes past midnight, and his prior disinclination to study is
compounded. At the same time, he understands that he must have proof of his attendance
to have his visa renewed. “I really go to school,” he professed earnestly in 2014. His visa
renewal was approved as a student, but as of 2014, he continues to work part-time at the
restaurant. “I just want to graduate because when I went to the Prefecture [for renewal],
they said I can change it for a ‘real’ titre de sejour once I get a diploma.”

His monthly earnings, 1,200 €, go mostly for his own consumption. In June 2013,
Chen’s dark green suede jacket and fresh fauxhawk were a change from his pseudo black
leather jacket and plain haircut he had when I last seen him in August 2012. Chen’s
grandfather had died in the spring; he and his family pooled together 1,000 € so he could

47 A student visa is assumed to be for someone not attending secondary school in France.
The student must show that his/her family has sufficient resources to support the stay.
Renewal thus requires academic transcripts and bank records.
attend the funeral. He was happy to go for his family but wanted to return to his Paris
life: “It isn’t as good as here... I stayed inside for the whole time. The food is better here.”
All the food or the Chinese food, I asked with a smile. “The Chinese food,” he smirked
back.

*Ethnic Plus*

Like Chen, Bao grew up in Wenzhou. His father, who owned a circuit breaker
factory, worked with his mother; he was also an alcoholic, which led to his parents’
divorce. His mother, Bin, planned a new life in France (where a neighbor had moved) and
left him with his aunt in 2003 until she could pay for him to join her. Bao articulated to
me: “My family in China are rich, they don’t have to come here. My mother didn’t need
to go to France, she was escaping my father!” These extra resources have helped to shift
his experiences somewhat and shortened his purgatory.

Since 2007, Bao has experienced Chinese-only settings, diverse French settings,
and the occasional racist comment. He entered his first school in Paris, a welcome class
focusing on French. His mother emphasized that he must learn French, and he tried to
avoid some of his classmates’ cliques. An outgoing young man, Bao made friends with
other immigrant and second generation students and less than two years later began a
four-year relationship with a French collègienne [middle schooler]. By the time I met him
in 2011, he spoke fluent French.

“I wanted to go into cooking [as a major in vocational school],” Bao explained,
“but I couldn’t because of papers. It’s an apprentice school and you need to have papers
to enroll, people have to report their taxes.” He ended up in accounting, yet continuing to

48 Bao’s full narrative is described in Chapter 3.
struggle with French literature and history (“I hate to read”), he sometimes stays at home. His mother has said, “you have to go to school so you can get your papers. For her, it’s not the studies that are important, it whether I can make money, you see?” he narrated to me in 2012.

This pragmatism also framed the path to get papers. The first time I met Bao, he declared, “I will get my papers,” based on his mother’s and older sister’s experiences. Before eventually winning an appeal of the Préfecture’s decision, he had gone five times to Prefectural offices and twice to court, without a clear timetable of resolution. He described his first visit to the Prefecture, where he asked how long it would take to get a response. “I don’t know,” came the curt reply from the functionary. Bao later described it as a drawn-out administrative procedure: “like if you had your bac, [that’s how] you get your papers. If I get refused, it’s like a redoublement [when you re-take your baccalauréat exam].” This long-view confidence, supported by a €10,000 euro lawyer bill, does not detract from his sense of incomplete belonging: “It is heavy, heavy on my heart and my mind, it’s like I am not complete. If I don’t get it, I’ll be depressed, yeah.”

Less than a year after getting a temporary family visa, Bao dropped out of school, frustrated by poor grades. He worked as a manager/server at his mother’s restaurant. In 2013 he maintained, “to have my own restaurant, that’s my dream! A French restaurant, though, not a Chinese one. French food is more chic than Chinese food.” His Chinese girlfriend expected to give birth to their son in December 2014.

_Negotiated but Marginalized Inclusion_

Armand, the youngest of seven siblings, was born in a small city in the east of Cameroon. He was close to his police officer father and especially to his homemaker
mother. Before he moved to France at the age of 13, his older sister had lived in France for two years and his uncle had studied in the United States; they were a middle-class family. Armand had serious back problems that couldn’t be treated effectively in Cameroon, and so his parents obtained a short-term tourist visa and arranged for him to stay with an aunt in Paris and do the treatment. Now Armand sees his mother’s urging to come to Paris as more than the treatment, suspecting she wanted him to gain better educational opportunities there as well.

In contrast to Guoliang and Chen, Armand’s immigration in 2002 begins (not ends) the separation from his parents. Nonetheless, his aunt lived in Paris, working as a secretary. He began treatments on his back, and eventually enrolled in the first year of lycée. Armand imagined returning to Cameroon after the school year was finished, and that thought kept him company when he felt lonely, especially after school. Studying was a solace, and his average was above average, usually 13 or 14 out of 20. His fluency in French and strong literacy skills meant that he never felt behind his fellow students. When he began the second year at Lycée Edouard Balladur in Montreuil, a suburb just east of Paris, the medical treatments became much less frequent and he “realized that I was here to stay.” Passing the baccalauréat exam in Economics & Social Science a month before his 18th birthday in 2007, the impact of not having legal status had been, to that point, minimal. With some guidance from his aunt, he applied for regularization the summer after his bac.

Based on his grades, he was accepted into a post-secondary program in business. The BTS (brevet de technicien supérieur) coursework included doing an ongoing paid internship with a company. “That is when everything was turned upside down.” Without
a legal visa, he could not find an internship, despite being able to say “my paperwork is processing.” He left the program, fell into a short depression, and stopped seeing friends. He was dependent on his aunt and a cousin for everyday resources. His aunt insisted that he apply for a new program that wouldn’t require a paid internship. He was admitted to a second BTS program, in transportation, in a Paris school the following year. Like Souleymane’s case in Chapter 3, the post-secondary program was housed in a high school. Still with the idea of returning to Cameroon after graduation, this was a practical degree that he could use to secure a job there, he thought. However, one month before the classes began—and just after he had enrolled—he received a deportation order (OQTF).

The coursework proceeded well until a class trip to Belgium. “I was scared to leave the country even with supposedly open borders. There could be a police check!” He felt ashamed as he was forced to tell his teachers about his status for the first time. They told his fellow students about it, and he felt worse. An RESF teacher in the school met with him about his situation, and convinced Armand to do a petition to contest the deportation order and gain support for regularization. “All the teachers” in the school signed it along with many students; the head of the school wrote a letter of support. An RESF-affiliated lawyer supported his case. In the summer of 2010, he received a student visa.

With the elation of this student visa, Armand lamented that, “I had lost a year of my life to have this piece of paper, just a piece of paper.” He experienced an interruption of life, a public shaming due to legal status, and pressure of the bureaucratic and legal processes. “All of this suffering ... just to be able to work,” Armand summed up this period of his life.
With a student visa in hand, he hoped to find a job in France using his degree, but now regrets wasting a year of his life. Three obstacles dissuaded would-be employers from hiring him. Any employer would need to: 1) pay the tax of 2,000 euros for changing his status, 2) fill paperwork to show that he is more competent than a French person, and 3) pay the 1.5 times the SMIC.\textsuperscript{49} He did a dozen interviews, which sometimes went alright until the companies realized the additional steps and cost to hire him. “Why would they hire someone like me?” he complained. In addition to these employer-based requirements to change status from a student visa, the lack of internships during the two BTS programs left him at a disadvantage compared to other students. The possibility of unauthorized work didn’t appeal: “I didn’t want to work off the books because if I was caught it would send me back,” he said. “I had lost two years of my life,” the first year BTS in business and this second year looking for a job.

His mother, with whom he speaks a few times a week, urged him to stay in France and study in order to find a job. Armand applied for a one-year Masters in Environmental Studies, outside of Paris, which would allow him to work in \textit{alternance} with Bouygues Telecom. Working as a telephone customer service agent, Bouygues would count as good experience, he thought, because it’s a well-known company in Europe, and he would be paid. But Bouygues refused to pay his tuition, so half of his salary went towards tuition. “I could make that arrangement work only because I lived with my aunt and didn’t pay rent,” Armand explained.

Culturally, Armand did not feel out of step in France. Friendships from his extended family, family friends, and classmates made him feel part of a (marginalized)

\textsuperscript{49} The SMIC is the Adjusted Minimum Interprofessional Salary. In 2012, this minimum wage for private-sector workers was 9.40\,€/hour or 1,425\,€/month (Insee 2015).
community: “it gives me a real sense of security to know they are here.” His family had practicing Muslim and Protestant members, and so he doesn’t “feel especially religious, one way or the other.” But four years after obtaining a student visa, Armand continued to struggle with finding a long-term job. His mother still wants him to stay in France. In 2012, “I keep an eye out for jobs in Africa,” he said, even outside of Cameroon.

In 2014, he continued with a student visa that allowed only 16 hours a week, working as a parking lot attendant on weekends. He had moved in with a friend in a neat two-bedroom apartment outside of Paris, though he did not see that as an enduring arrangement. “I meet these temp workers from other places who are like me and they have these little jobs, they are marginalized. Maybe they have nationality, I’m not sure. They have to deal with ignorant French people. It’s not a good place [to live],” he deemed. The dream of ‘return’ to one of the large cities of West Africa had grown:

I am here to get experience, just for a time, and I intend to go back. There are opportunities there. With my [Ivoirian] friend, I am thinking of going to Côte d’Ivoire to work there. There aren’t many people with experience. I know people who have gone to Yaounde, Douala, Abidjan, Dakar. Businesses there want people with international experience.

His most recent studies, an MBA in Sustainability that end in 2015, would put him in demand when he returned. With this vision of a future in West Africa, he feels “more like an African in France than a French person from Africa.” This affects the social investments he makes: “I’m not looking for a real relationship because I know I’m going to leave one day,” he says, “I’m not going to do a distance relationship.”

**Summary and Discussion**
Two methods contributed to this analysis of how my undocumented informants come of age in Paris. Here, I highlight takeaways from each in an effort to triangulate my methods. The use of the longitudinal, subject-based social participation inventory showed us the shifts in eleven domains of social life shift after informants come of age. In the overall picture, several domains begin and end with low scores: employment, education, civic involvement, and love partners. In the subsequent grouping of informants by their overall social participation score, we saw a more complex picture. Those in the Very Low Group have much more precarious lives than the others, with low housing stability, low sense of legality, fewer strong friend relationships, no partner relationships, poor language ability, and low psychosocial score. With problems to contributing to their families, they face considerable social and legal exclusion.

The two moderate groups have not experienced educational success nor stable jobs, by and large. They maintain good relationships with friends but don’t have romantic partners, with one exception. The biggest difference between the Low and Medium Groups is the existence of more family resources, especially money, that facilitate sense of legality and self-esteem in the transition to adulthood. Most surprising, the Very High Group have mainstream employment and education opportunities. They enjoy strong family relationships, are much more civically involved than others, have a higher sense of legality, and have had long-term partner relationships.

The narrative analysis gives us more context. In these four narratives, classified on the basis on score on the social participation and well-being inventory, we see mechanisms that bring about inclusionary and exclusionary outcomes. Guoliang has experienced a harsh exclusion, beginning with his experiences in the school system.
Without legal status, he hesitates to work off-the-books, though. His only meaningful role becomes babysitter to his younger sister. After obtaining a visa through his parents’ ten-year visas, whether his situation has improved is difficult to say. Working at a live-in restaurant in the suburbs, he continues to be very alone.

*Ethnic enclavers* like Chen have similar academic difficulties in the educational system but are able to befriend co-ethnics. With a link to teachers, they obtain assistance from RESF to get a temporary visa. With their ethnic networks and the right to work, they manage to find precarious, low-wage jobs. This money, in turn, gives them a modicum of status amongst their friends.

Bao, who has access to *ethnic plus* other resources, speaks French. Due to this fluency, his friend networks expanded and he felt a degree of social inclusion. Bao’s family ability to pay has helped his regularization and later, his work at the family restaurant. In contrast, those who *negotiated inclusion* like Armand have strong literacy in French. These skills have allowed him to make friends and form relationships with teachers. Armand needed support from both as he went through a grueling regularization process. He regularly attends mosque, Arabic language classes, and human rights groups meetings. His civic involvement has not only enabled his temporary visa, it has given him different perspectives and skills that may prove important later on the job market. In 2014, though, he continues to study new areas to add to his *Bac + 5* (5 years of post-secondary education). His work expectations have fallen: he does not foresee an easy path to a summer job.

*Age of possibilities*
The theory of emerging adulthood articulated by Arnett and Tanner centers on the themes of a self-focused time, an optimistic age of possibilities, a time of unstable identity exploration “with frequent changes in education, jobs, love partners, and living situations” (2006: 114). He and others argue this applies to European emerging adults as well. The case of undocumented youth in Paris shows the extent to which their limiting socio-legal context limits this phase. Nearly all remain closely attached—socially and economically—to their family. Neither prior to nor following obtaining a visa do my informants have facility in changing education, jobs, love patterns or living situations. Language facility is a sine qua non of ‘in-between’ identity friction, meaning that only after obtaining access to multiple contexts can my informants begin to have identity worries. Only for those who negotiated inclusion, do transnational resources allow an exploration of this type.

Stratified Sans-papiers

In the literature of the integration of immigrants and their children into French society, tracking systems and residential segregation are key mechanisms of stratification (Alba, Sloan, and Sperling 2011). Country of origin is a key factor. Here, students, especially French-language learners, struggle with balancing in-group and out-group contact, with social and academic repercussions. When students attend school with many students of the same non-francophone background, they may lack opportunities to expand their social network and practice speaking French. When students attend school without other students of the same background, they may feel socially excluded. Academic integration is also problematic for many, with insufficient language instruction and supports for developing literacy skills needed for secondary and postsecondary education.
Those without difficulties often had a head start on speaking the language. The parents or guardians of my informants lacked the background to provide well-informed guidance. Youth with postsecondary education benefitted from strong relationships with key teachers and/or outside organizations.

Like other youth, the transition from school to work is a key stratification process for undocumented youth. In their case, it is structured by the distribution of temporary visas by the Préfecture. This temporary visa structure, potentially accessed through studies leading to a visa, incentivizes sans-papiers youth to stay studying. This practice led to academically weak students staying enrolled and academically stronger students gaining a post-secondary degree. Nearly all wanted to work at least part-time to bolster family budgets, though opportunities were often not available in Paris. Eight of the 12 youth that I followed had regularized their status by 2014. Three (of four) sub-Saharan Africans received family visas more than two years after initially applying; two of them continued to study in efforts to land a job (one Brazilian also follows this pattern). Their difficulty in moving beyond alternance positions and part-time jobs for which they are overqualified places them in a similar position to other children of immigrants (Lutz et al. 2014; Silberman and Fournier 2010).

Of the four Chinese, two received student visas, which obliged them to stay in school in order to renew. The other two dropped out of school in order to work. This desire to “just work” fits a pattern identified amongst Chinese children of immigrants in Spain (Portes et al. 2013). All four have, after long searches (with the exception of Bao

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50 *Alternance* programs exist in a few different formats in France. The student is normally paid for apprenticeship with the company, who also often pay tuition costs of the student. Time commitment varies by position and program.
whose mother owns a restaurant), found jobs in the ethnic-owned businesses (including both with student visas). The four remaining young adults have not yet obtained visas; they work “small jobs” when offered but are highly restricted by their irregular status. Their position matches stereotypes about *sans-papiers* and irregular work (Laacher 2009). Their long-term future is not yet settled, as three of the four study in vocational high schools. In spite of their applications’ rejections from the Préfecture, they expect to re-apply for status with additional years of study and residence. These young men that don’t fit the criteria have a back-up plan to regularize with the common practice of ten years of residence leading to a temporary visa. If France’s bureaucratization of undocumented life has created much confusion amongst *sans-papiers*, it also provides a light at the end of the tunnel. For informants that see intermittent, ethnic enclave work as their best scenario, they should be able to regularize by age 24, and gain the right to work.

*Period of Purgatory*

The pattern of a drawn-out adulthood with greater personal experimentation does not find support from those delaying partner relationships for lack of economic stability. It isn’t just that they are not marrying—the average French age of marriage is 30—but that most find it difficult to invest in relationships with precarious work, closer to patterns of working-class young adults in the US (Silva 2013). For *sans-papiers* youth, however, legal stability is partly the cause for this sense of insecurity. This sense that they must undergo a period where they show they are deserving of a visa—sometimes met by deportation orders that tell youth they are not deserving—I term *purgatory*. The mental and external senses of purgatory vary with the type of bureaucratic maze traveled.
The powers that be deem these youth trespassers who do not merit many rights. As youth near their 18th birthday, many have shown clear signs of distress and depression. While the deportation order is the clearest sign of exclusion from French society, the anxiety of Prefectural interactions and the disappointment of a rejection are evidence of an emotional component to the ontological lack of rights. Those that *negotiate inclusion* see legal status as one more struggle they have overcome, like high school. The multi-year process of application, rejection, and re-application humbles one before the State but may be overcome with social support of groups like RESF. Even after obtaining a temporary visa, youths must renew their visas annually for a minimum of three years until they can apply for a long-term *carte de résident*. “I am not French,” Souleymane bitterly joked as we waited in line for his renewal. For *ethnic plus* youth like Bao, the administrative process is also facilitated by access to a private lawyer. *Ethnic enclavers*, and their families, wait for the primary criteria to become adults: family members who contribute to the budget. Those with student visas are obliged to study for this right.

I noted the anxiety in his face and his taut sentences the first time I met Mamadou, a *harsh exclusion* youth. “The police make me nervous,” he said. A French teacher of Mamadou’s told me, “he was resistant to take people’s advice and that he would need to be nicer to people and be open to others.” “You can smile more,” she urged. She suggested he meet a psychiatrist, even finding a Soninke translator, but he replied “I don’t need that” with resistance. But he remained socially isolated and without the job he mentally obsessed about, told me “you need to have a job, to have some money, to get a girlfriend.”
Effects beyond regularization

Beyond the change in legal status, most informants experienced new transnational life and all had work experiences as they gained a visa. As seen in Chapter 3, these new work experiences are not those imagined or sought. But they are needed. They, with their families’ support, want to be able to have steady work. In the transition to adulthood, informants find it tough to take on adult responsibilities—paying rent, buying one’s own clothes, and not asking for money for the movies—without having a job. Like other children of immigrants, those with negotiated inclusion feel frustrated by the part-time and precarious work answering phones for national companies, putting away books in a library, and translating work. “I couldn’t do it [earn so little] if I wasn’t living for free with family,” Armand articulated. That constraint goes as well for other youth with ethnic-owner jobs in restaurants and barbershops. While ethnicity is the key factor in getting these jobs, it does not preclude employee exploitation, as we see clearly in Guoliang’s live-in work and Chen’s accommodating schedule.

Getting a temporary visa may not carry a guarantee of decent work opportunities, but one positive result is the re-activation of transnational connections. When Souleymane returned to Côte d’Ivoire to see his mother for the first time in ten years, she hugged a younger sister Souleymane had never seen. He returned soon after to Abidjan, the capital, to test out a business project he had prepared, much like Armand’s project in Senegal. They each strategized using their blend of French education and transnational connections. But even without reaping professional benefits, other youth gain meaning from their newfound transnational experiences. Guoliang’s parents began saving for a trip
back to China as soon as they paid off his smuggler fee. That Chen traveled back for his grandfather’s funeral also gave him an honorable position within his family.

These trips to see family also reinforce that they feel some belonging in Paris. Chen judged Paris as more attractive than Wenzhou: “It isn’t as good as here... I stayed inside for the whole time.” For all the tribulations in his Paris life, Guoliang said, “It’s not nice there...but it was good to see my family.” After talking to me for several months about opening a café in Abidjan in late 2012, Souleymane decided to return to France to later study Islam.
Chapter 6:
Comparing the Undocumented Youth in New York and Paris

Abstract
Here, I leverage the previous chapters to build a comparison of undocumented youth experiences in Paris and New York. I use three analytical methods to accomplish commensuration: a comparison of the social inventory scores from Chapters 4 and 5; fuzzy set methods; and a boundary analysis based on case studies from Chapters 2 and 3. The inventory shows the social result of steady work in New York: more stable housing and romantic relationships. Fuzzy set methods show the role of linguistic and social resources in explaining trajectories. These factors, along with the advantage of New York’s labor market, allows youth to gain higher wages than their counterparts without such resources.

Boundary theory enables a comparison of mechanisms of social life. In New York, social and legal boundaries are blurrier, and we see evidence of a mature if restricted social life with very little legal shifting. In Paris, legal and social boundaries between sans-papiers social life and that of their documented peers are brighter, as seen in national identification, tighter enforcement of work, the high salience of language proficiency, and vocational school tracking. Legal and social systems are more tightly imbricated, with administrative discretion responding to individuals’ social distance from institutions and organizational leverage.

Such locally-contingent systems of “illegality” call into question the assumed direct relationship between the social and the legal. The governance of citizenship practices emerge as key contextual factors that structure the integration of undocumented youth. This chapter thus acts as a fulcrum for the remaining chapters’ focus on citizenship issues.

December 2011. Scores of human rights organizations, unions, sans-papiers collectives, student groups, and left-leaning political groups wound through the right bank of Paris to celebrate the International Day of the Migrant. Many signs denounced Minister of the Interior Brice Hortefeux and his moves to further restrict immigration. In contrast, local arrondissement representatives participated, wearing their symbolic sashes over their coats as they chatted with the organizational leaders.

October 2013. An estimated hundred or so organizations and a few thousand participants in the March for Immigrant Dignity and Respect moved slowly across the narrow Brooklyn Bridge walkway carrying organizational banners and asking “What do we want?” “Reform!” came the repeated reply. Mixing with immigrant rights leaders from diverse ethnic backgrounds, unions, and religious representatives, politicians representing the city at the district, city, state, and national levels made speeches in support of national immigration reform.
Many similar social forces affect the lives of immigrants in these global cities, and these two anecdotes showcase the continued importance of immigration to local stakeholders. What role do they play in shaping the lives of undocumented youth in Paris and New York? This chapter seeks to compare the experiences of undocumented youth between cities and begin to investigate the relationship between undocumented youth and those that govern their social lives.

I prime readers for different contexts with the analogies to purgatory for undocumented youth in Paris and to limbo in New York. Purgatory is a finite, temporary phase of discipline after which ‘sinners’ gain access to full (i.e. formal) citizenship. In limbo, discipline in the form of segregation is ongoing with no clear end until inclusionary immigration reform arrives. Youth in these two systems then undergo a qualitatively different disciplining process. In short, unauthorized entry to the US has been easier than unauthorized entry to France but in contrast, exit from irregular status has more paths in France than in the US. This leads to major differences in strategizing by informants. In recognition of the administrative career of purgatory (see Chapter 3), those in Paris usually have a strategy to regularize or maintain eligibility for a temporary visa. In New York, the limbo adds uncertainty to outcomes, raising the social cost of risk-taking.

In this chapter, I bring the separate New York and Paris chapters of the first two sections (see Parts One and Two) into dialogue. The growing numbers of undocumented youth in each country and the efforts of many in Paris and New York to include them serve as primary warrants for comparing these two cases (Katz 2012; Katz 1997). Indeed, scholars have argued that Paris and New York are best cases for second-generation youth
(Crul and Mollenkopf 2012; Kasinitz et al. 2008). To what extent does that hold true for the case of undocumented youth?

**How to Capture Shifts**

Challenges also lie in forming appropriate and adequate comparisons across the different populations and places (Bloemraad 2013). If the implementation of immigration-related matters is not uniform within a country (see Chapters 7 and 8), great variation exists in countries’ histories and social and political cultures on immigration matters.

National laws and policies determine those who enter into the ‘undocumented’ category (Ngai 2004; Düvell 2011b). Because of this, the undocumented youth have differing paths of entry and possible exit from their irregular status. In the US, an estimated half of the undocumented crosses the Mexico-US border while the other half overstays visas (Alba et al. 2013). The few pathways out of undocumented status include visas for ‘abandoned’ youth (a category expanded under George W. Bush) and U-visas for those who are victims of a violent crime. Marriage is theoretically another means to a visa, though this incurs a penalty for border-crossers. In August 2012, Obama implemented the Deferred Action program (DACA) that allows qualified undocumented youth a temporary two-year reprieve from deportation and work permits.

France’s visa administration is more flexible, allowing more ‘regularization’ for those that enter without status. In November 2012, Minister of the Interior Manuel Valls put forth a *circulaire* [administrative order] reducing the number of years *sans-papiers*

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51 The penalty on those who entered unlawfully and have lived unlawfully in the US for more than one year is a ten-year bar from re-entering the US. Under this protocol, unlawful residence begins at 18 years of age. Applicants can ask for a waiver in cases of extreme hardship.
youth would need to reside in France before age 18 to only two years (from five years). This order lists many discretionary criteria as well, such as “serious studies” and “the intensity and stability of connections developed in France” (Gisti 2013).

With such shifts in the definition of what it means to be undocumented—in tandem with record numbers of deportations in each country—a more positivist methodological approach is doomed. Instead, the importance of relational sociology emerges. How can we describe the relationship between undocumented youth and the broader structures that govern their socio-legal condition?

This study’s relational approach (Tilly and Tarrow 2006) benefits from the comparison between the two localities. I see four main benefits to the comparison. First, we note empirical differences. Second, these differences force us to explain them, reminding us that the categories we use are not ‘natural’ (Bloemraad 2013). Instead, we center our analysis on causal mechanisms that explain differences (Alba and Holdaway 2013; Marwell 2007; Smith 2003). By broadening the scope of the phenomenon, we develop measures and concepts that apply to both cases. The development of these measures ensures comparability (Smelser 2002). For example, we see the distinct contextual elements of integration and the different practices of citizenship in each city. Finally, the relational approach shifts our analytical approach to the power relations that structure undocumented life (Desmond 2014). The international comparison also contributes to examination of undocumented youth as a global, rather than national, issue (Smelser 2002).

Given the influence of the nation-state on our lens for understanding and analyzing social life, immigration literature often focuses on the national level. This can
lead to a warped view that the nation-state is central to all questions on immigration (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2002). A growing body of literature examines how the local level is crucial to both immigration and integration (Foner 2000; Varsanyi 2010; Garbaye 2005; Penninx et al. 2001). Essential to studying the growing importance of global cities (Sassen 2001) and of increasing migration (Castles and Miller 2009) is comparing cities in different countries (Glick-Schiller and Çaglar 2009).

The influence of the nation-state on undocumented youth is at once constant and hidden. Due to their exclusion by the State, their local conditions become more salient. The comparison of the socio-legal context (see Chapters 7 and 8) extends the comparative integration theory established by Crul and Schneider (2012). The case of undocumented children is an important exception to this theory’s assumption of greater social welfare support of second-generation Europeans in contrast to their American counterparts. The local economic conditions become paramount.

Here we can point to differences in how some of the institutional arrangements steer youth similarly and differently in ways that affect their assimilation; we can compare outcomes and processes of social life, in particular how citizenship policies and practices affect youth social life; and in a more general way, we can analyze the relationship between the social and the legal in this case. We can begin to make the transition from assimilation and integration literature to the citizenship literature. A significant explanatory factor of undocumented youth’s social trajectories is their access to rights. The local organizational fields that fight for rights in each city are more important for them compared to other children of immigrants.
In data analysis, I have used three strategies to achieve commensuration between the cases. First, as in Chapters 4 and 5, I make use of a social life inventory to compare informants’ lives on a set of common indicators. Second, I use fuzzy set methods (fsQCA) to compare the importance of city (New York or Paris) on process variables, which highlights the relevance of language ability and access to social capital and civil society to undocumented social trajectories. Third, I engage boundary theory (Alba 2005; Lamont and Molnar 2002) in understanding the relation between undocumented youths’ social position and governance structures. This analytical triangulation increases the validity of findings. By showing how contextual characteristics make mechanisms of socio-legal inclusion work, these comparative cases make the conditional approach developed by Small (2004) more precise.

Making Initial Comparisons

To begin to compare the shift in informants’ social lives before and after the age of 18, as well as between New York and Paris, below I present the results of a social participation and well-being inventory (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Table 13: Scores of Informant Social Participation as Adults, by Social Domain and City

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>New York</th>
<th>Paris</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legality</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Life</td>
<td>-0.10</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transnational</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 13 above shows the social inventory scores of informants in Paris and New York after the age of 18 (see Appendix A for the full list of indicators). With such a small number of informants and the simple assessment of indicators, I caution against interpreting these in a decontextualized manner. The scores can aid, however, in discerning broader patterns of similarities and differences between informant experiences in each city.

As seen in other immigration scholarship (cf. Foner 1997), family resources—love and emotional support, financial support, guidance, and information—seem to be important, even more important than for other kinds of immigrant families. With mainstream resources often blocked, a family-based entry to ethnic resources often gets youth jobs in New York and sometimes in Paris. More often than not, youth in each city understand the sacrifice their parents have made in leaving their country of origin, and want to reciprocate (Smith 2006). Family and ethnic resources in each city are often insufficient to negotiate the educational system, though weaker in Paris than New York. Even when Prefectural practices privilege school enrollment as means to a temporary legal status, youth often do not desire to re-enter a zone imbued for (some of) them with boredom and failure. They, with their families’ support, want to be able to have steady work.

The strongest similarity between these cities lies in the experience of family separation. Family life begins low when youth are minors, as they renew lives with parents that they hadn’t seen in years, and grows to become a major asset for most informants in each city. Psychosocial scores are also even, with a few outliers in each city.
living with depression or other mental illness. Scores on relationships with friends are similar across cities, though scores drop slightly in Paris from childhood, when most informants did not have work obligations.

Having money supports social life in New York. The largest gap between the cities is in romantic partners. Nearly all New York informants have had long-term relationships. Some of this may be due to cultural factors—informants report that people marry young in their Mexican hometowns—but informants in Paris explain it differently. They point to not having jobs, money or time to date. Only two of twelve informants in Paris have long-term relationships, and both have regular jobs. Though rents have increased sharply for my New York informants, regular jobs have helped them to cover the difference. Housing scores in Paris are lower partly due to the fact that many informants cannot be depended on to contribute to rent.

The school system also underlies similarities and differences. As Alba and colleagues (2013) would predict, in each city, on average the educational achievement of the undocumented youths, on average, is low. Learning to speak and understand a second language is a goal that informants achieve; reading and writing it well is another matter. The minority of informants that has strong literacy skills continue to study after high school. Many of informants’ documented friends—also without strong literacy skills—do continue their schooling. Some of the difference in the education scores is due to the difficulty of the Chinese students in mastering French enough to complete their education, with the bureaucratic implementation of ‘immigration choisie’ [selective immigration] pushing them to stay in school. Without the visa incentive for staying in school, the Paris education scores would be even lower. The impact of undocumented
status on secondary and post-secondary studies in New York is the opposite, with little perceived value to educational credentials.

Also complex is interpreting employment scores. We might expect those in France to have a more difficult entry to the labor market (Alba et al. 2013; Lutz et al. 2014; Alba et al. 2010), and indeed that is the case. Yet scores are also low in New York because the jobs that informants do have tend to offer few benefits or workplace rights; abuse is the norm. Scores are slightly higher in Paris because a small number have secured mainstream jobs (often on a contract basis)—after regularizing—that carry benefits.

We see evidence of the divergence in the system of “illegality” in Paris. Fear of police remains much higher than in New York, based on a widespread fear of identity checks in train stations or in the street. On the other hand, transnational scores end up higher in adulthood in Paris, thanks to those with temporary visas that can now travel and reunite with family in their country of origin. Paris provides health care to undocumented residents at low cost, and thus its higher scores of health care are not a surprise.

**Comparing Work, Education, and Legal Status**

The inventory gives a detailed portrait of multiple facets of undocumented youths’ social lives and a sense of their multiple social assets. Contextualizing those assets in case study narratives (Chapters 2-5), we gain a sense of the central meaning making of my informants. Those in Paris have a **decelerated** transition to adulthood in which informants possess insufficient resources for a rich social life until they regularize, and even then face obstacles to gaining employment. Those in New York, in contrast, exhibit an **accelerated** transition to adulthood. They gain paying work and use its resources to
take on adult responsibilities, from paying rent, entering romantic relationships, and beginning a family.

We can also compare their trajectories more directly to those of other immigrant youth. Major studies (Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Suárez-Orozco et al. 2008) use educational attainment and work outcomes to situate the social mobility of immigrant youth. By these traditional metrics, the undocumented youth in my sample are not doing as well as their documented counterparts. Below, I compare particular outcomes amongst informants: wages, educational attainment, and legalization. These traditional outcome data show that there is no singular experience for (sometimes formerly) undocumented youth.

As seen in Table 14 below, we see some divergence in educational attainment between cities. Five New York informants have some college experience (albeit one studied in Mexico). That said, educational attainment is low in both cities. Most informants—7 of 12 in New York and 9 of 12 in Paris—have a high school diploma or less. For reference, informants in Paris average 22 years old and those in New York average 23 years old in 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Dropped out of HS</th>
<th>High School Equivalency (GED)</th>
<th>High School diploma</th>
<th>Some college</th>
<th>Associate's Degree or Bac+2</th>
<th>Bachelor's Degree or higher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 15 below, work outcomes in New York are better. All New York informants searching for work found it. Moreover, most received wages above $10/hour. In contrast, a few Paris informants who wanted work did not succeed in their search;
several others obtained only inconsistent part-time work. Most of those Paris informants who found work were paid at or below the minimum wage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>No work</th>
<th>Below minimum wage or SMIC</th>
<th>Minimum wage or SMIC</th>
<th>Above $10/hour or above SMIC</th>
<th>Above $12/hour or 1.25x SMIC</th>
<th>Above $15/hour or 1.5x SMIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each informant’s highest wage earned is used; need not be a full-time job.

In Table 16 below, we also see outcomes in legal status that counter the assumed binary of legal/illegal. These liminal statuses differ according to the policies and practices of each country. DACA offers fewer benefits than the French visas. Family-based visas offer greater rights and easier renewals, in line with special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS). (For a direct comparison of the rights offered in different legal statuses, see Appendix D.)

Table 16. Comparison of Informant Legal Status through 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>No legal status</th>
<th>DACA</th>
<th>Student- or employer-based visa</th>
<th>Family-based visa or SIJS</th>
<th>Full citizenship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The one case of full citizenship in New York is that of the informant who returned to Mexico.

These legal statuses build on other forms of disadvantage (e.g. poor and poorly educated parents, lack of academic language proficiency, and limited knowledge of educational system) to exclude youth. These factors intersect to limit educational attainment. Variation, nonetheless, exists in these outcomes as well as the inventory scores. What processes account for this variation?

Comparing Mechanisms
As identified in Chapters 4 and 5, the mechanisms below in Table 17 highlight the impact of youth access to sets of resources (educational, transnational, family and ethnic resources, labor market resources, and language resources). The range of scores varies by

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inventory Score</th>
<th>Characteristics (Number)</th>
<th>Characteristics (Number)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very High (35+)</td>
<td>Academic &amp; social inclusion at school; Postsecondary education; Civically involved; Mainstream but insecure work opportunities; More diverse social network than Medium Group (3)</td>
<td>Risk-taking to stay in post-secondary education; Access to transnational &amp; in-school resources; Family stability (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (25-34)</td>
<td>Some inclusion at school; Strong spoken French; Some middle-class resources; More diverse social network than Low Group (3)</td>
<td>Tertiary labor sector participation; Access to Working-Class resources only (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (15-24)</td>
<td>Academic but not social exclusion at school; Language difficulties; Limited ethnic work opportunities; Parents work long hours (3)</td>
<td>Crises (Family Abuse, Gang Participation, Mental Health Crisis); Tertiary labor sector participation (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (0-10)</td>
<td>Academic &amp; social exclusion in school; Language difficulties; Limited ethnic work opportunities; Parents work long hours (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Low (&lt;0)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
city, with New York scores clustered in a middle road limbo, while Paris scores are very low and very high. In addition to the social factors listed below, regularization of course plays an important role. The high-enforcement system plays an important role for those in the lowest group.

The highest group in Paris is able to use language proficiency to make connections with teachers and other mainstream actors, and they benefit from both ethnic and mainstream opportunities. At the other end of the spectrum in Paris are those with language and schooling difficulties who are limited to ethnic work opportunities. Due to these factors, the discretionary regularization is more of a challenge for these lower groups. In New York, nearly all—with the exception of college graduate Luis in Mexico and another four-year college graduate in New York—have the blessing and the curse of low-wage work. Ethnic social networks facilitate these work opportunities (Waldinger and Lichter 2003; Alba et al. 2013).

Taking both cities together, they also underscore the common experience of undergoing a transition to a difficult early adulthood as most youth face obstacles to continuing education and/or cannot earn money to facilitate social relationships within and outside of the family. Especially because of the educational limitations, most New York youth only find work opportunities similar to their parents. In contrast to the experiences of New York youth, however, Parisian sans-papiers find means to regularize to a temporary status over time. This allows youth many civil and social rights but filters most into the lower working-class.

QCA Comparison
Here, I extend the comparison of the last two chapters, making use of a relatively new methodology, qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), developed by Charles Ragin (1987; 2008a). Social scientists are increasingly using QCA in small- and medium-N studies (Marx, Rihoux, and Ragin 2014). The case-oriented approach of QCA, based in an epistemology of cumulative causation, applies well to my 24 cases.

In order to better systematize the analysis of how access to these resources [the process variables] impacts outcomes in social participation and well-being, I use fuzzy set techniques [fsQCA] (Rihoux and Ragin 2009; Ragin 2008b) to test the relationships between configurations of conditions and adult outcomes. For this low-N study, fuzzy set methods have the advantage of being nonparametric with case analysis, rather than variable-centered analysis of inferential statistics.

A second strength of fuzzy set is its ability to distinguish various thresholds of a variable rather than the full or empty set membership implied in inferential statistics. Exploiting an ethnographer’s advantage (Smith 2009), researcher understanding of cases strongly informs the analysis by setting those thresholds between full membership (1), ‘partly in, partly out’ membership’ (0.5), and lack of membership (0). For example, in setting the thresholds for (English/French) language ability, the linguistic distinction between intercommunicative language ability (BICS) and academic language ability (CALP) drove the thresholds (Cummins 1979).\(^{52}\) A youth with strong BICS and CALP scores a 1; developing literacy skills with solid conversational skills receives a 0.75; a

\(^{52}\) In addition to the everyday speaking and listening I did with informant, we also did reading & writing work. My assessment of skills, supported by ten years of experience in secondary schools, was compounded with school grades to classify informants’ language proficiency.
youth with strong BICS and only emerging CALP receives a 0.5; conversation skills only receives a 0.35.

In addition to this language proficiency condition and the binary city condition, social network (Stanton-Salazar 2001), social capital (Kao 2004; Zhou and Bankston 1994), and civic engagement (Terriquez and Kwon 2014) comprise the remaining conditions. Criteria for social network thresholds included (in order) family, ethnic, and mixed networks (Kasinitz et al. 2008); social capital thresholds included (in order) access to working-class, middle-class, and mixed working- and middle-class resources; and civic engagement included participation in ethnic organizations, non-ethnic organizations, and both type of organizations. Criteria for all QCA thresholds are listed in Appendix E.

I then followed the two-step fsQCA analysis (see Stockemer 2013). First, in an inductive step, one creates truth tables that show whether which conditions correspond logically with outcomes. I set city, language ability, social network, social capital, and civic engagement as conditions and experimented with two different outcome scores based on the social life inventory (see Chapter 4 and 5). I eliminate all configurations in the truth table that do not have observations and used the recommended consistency threshold of 0.8 (Ragin 2008b).

The underlying assumption for the inclusion and ordering of these criteria is that social networks with different characteristics can lend complementary resources to the young men. Kasinitz and colleagues (2008; and in a more limited way, Portes and colleagues (2001)) have argued that children of immigrants benefit from a mix of mainstream and ethnic resources. Scholarship on social networks (Hagan 1998) reinforces the idea that informal networks reinforced by formal organizations leads to stronger incorporation outcomes. One’s social class position affects the resources available in one’s network (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993) with mixed class networks (Stanton-Salazar 2001) allowing for greater individual agency.
Fuzzy set outputs represent two different relationships between the set of conditions and the outcome, termed **consistency** and **coverage**. “Consistency measures the degree to which solution terms and the solution as a whole are subsets of the outcome. Coverage measures how much of the outcome is covered (or explained) by each solution term and by the solution as a whole” (Ragin 2008b:85). ‘Solution coverage’ thus gives the proportion of membership in the outcome that is explained by the full solution (i.e. all configurations in the solution). ‘Solution consistency’ gives us to what extent membership in the solution is a subset of memberships in the outcome. We can do those same measurements for each configuration within the solution (“raw coverage,” “unique coverage,” and “consistency”).

Each model provides three possible solutions: parsimonious, intermediate, and complex solutions. “Intermediate solutions are usually the most interpretable, but the parsimonious solutions show which conditions are essential to distinguishing between positive and negative cases” (Ragin 2008b:70).

I will show a series of QCA outputs below that lend support to the following relationships between certain configurations of conditions and outcomes: First, those with social and linguistic resources have been able to gain higher wages than those without them (fsQCA Model and Output 1). Second, those with social and linguistic resources have higher scores on the social participation inventory than those without them (fsQCA Model and Output 2). Third, wage is more connected to high inventory scores than educational attainment or surprisingly, legalization (fsQCA Model and Outputs 3,4). Fourth, New York, with its liberal job market, is more closely connected to high social participation scores than Paris (fsQCA Model and Outputs 1,2,5).
With city, language, social network, social capital, and civic participation as conditions, I ran QCA models with educational attainment, wage, and legalization as outcomes. Two of these models, legalization and education, show low coverage scores (the range for the three solutions to the model is 0.38-0.43 for education and 0.30-.54 for legalization) as well as solution consistency scores below the 0.8 threshold (the range for the three solutions to the model is 0.75-0.77 for education and 0.63-0.72 for legalization). For those reasons, the models are not shown here.

As you can see in fsQCA Model and Output 1 below, the model with wage as outcome shows greater solution coverage (0.85) and consistency (.78). The most consistent pathway to better wage outcomes reflects those in New York City who have academic language proficiency, mixed social networks, and access to working- and middle-class resources. The second solution term covers those, regardless of city, who are able to find a job with a resource-rich profile (language proficiency, dense social network, working- and middle-class resources, and civic engagement). The third solution term reflects those in New York without a resource-rich profile who are still able to obtain better-paying jobs.

**fsQCA Model and Output 1**

Model: work/income = f(city, lang, sn, sc, civic)
Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
--- COMPLEX SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.746667

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~city<em>lang</em>sn*sc</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang<em>sn</em>sc*civic</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.79</td>
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<td><del>city</del>lang<del>sn</del>sc~civic</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Models with the social participation inventory score as outcome showed high coverage and consistency (not shown here). To minimize overlap between conditions and indicators from the inventory, in Model 2 I removed civic participation scores from the inventory scores, which I converted to QCA thresholds (see Appendix E). With this output, parsimonious and complex models provide useful support to our understanding of the social mechanisms that lead to higher social participation scores. In the parsimonious model in fsQCA Model and Output 2 (solution coverage = 0.98; solution consistency = 0.67), we see the strong influence of being in New York (~city) and of having academic language proficiency (lang) to high scores on the social participation inventory (see fsQCA Model and Output 2 below). In this model, unique coverage scores are low due to explanatory overlap between different configurations (Legewie 2013). This indicates that several of the explanatory conditions cluster together in the cases.

**fsQCA Model and Output 2 (parsimonious solution)**

Model: w/ocivic = f(city, lang, sn, sc, civic)
Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
--- PARSIMONIOUS SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.858974

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<th>Consistency</th>
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<tr>
<td>~city</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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</table>
The complex solution to this model tells us more about how the conditions work in concert (see fsQCA Model and Output 3 below). The model has high coverage and consistency scores, at 0.72 and 0.89, respectively. The first solution term reflects those in New York with academic language proficiency, mixed social networks, and access to working- and middle-class resources, a configuration that explains some high inventory scores. The second solution highlights the co-existence of language proficiency, dense social networks, working- and middle-class resources, and civic participation, which together explain much of the high inventory scores. The third solution term reflects the alternative of those in New York who do not possess multiple resources (academic language proficiency, dense social networks, middle-class resources or civic engagement).

**fsQCA Model and Output 2 (complex solution)**

Model: w/ocivic = f(city, lang, sn, sc, civic)
Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
--- COMPLEX SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.858974

<table>
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<th>Configuration</th>
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<th>Unique coverage</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang<em>sn</em>sc*civic</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>~city<em>~lang</em>~sn<em>~sc</em>~civic</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
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</table>
This complex model shows a similar pattern to that with wage as outcome (fsQCA Model and Output 1). In fact, the overlap of these solution terms with those of wage alone supports the view that wage strongly overlaps with overall social participation (see also fsQCA Outputs 3 and 4). Wages facilitate the social life of undocumented youth by supporting household and family stability, paying for the costs of young adult social life, especially for gifts and events with romantic partners, and strengthening one’s self-presentation to a potential mate. Possessing a dense social network, having middle-class resources, and academic language proficiency is less relevant for New York undocumented youth compared to their Paris counterparts.

In both Model 1 and Model 2, the ‘missing’ configuration of those in Paris without academic language proficiency and dense social networks supports the hypothesis of divergent social outcomes in Paris. Those youth face a harsher exclusion, with inconsistent work, lower wages, and lower scores on the social participation inventory.

One advantage Paris youth had over their New York counterparts was more frequent legalization (see Table 16). How much does legalization contribute to higher social participation scores? For the last three models (fsQCA Model and Output 3-5), the output is the total score on the social participation inventory, minus the work domain.
Work scores on the inventory include criteria for wage, which is used in the conditions in these models; subtracting them from the score minimizes circularity. The parsimonious model of fsQCA Model and Output 3 gives us evidence of a stronger relationship between the outcome and both work/income and education than with legalization. The intermediate solution of Output 3 below shows that work/income is the primary condition (see raw coverage and unique coverage) and that education is an alternative condition that raises the inventory scores. Legalization impacts social participation scores less than one would predict.

**fsQCA Model and Output 3**

Model: totalwoemploy = f(work/income, education, legalization)
Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey
--- PARSIMONIOUS SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.841463

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<th>Configuration</th>
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<th>Unique coverage</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work/income</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

solution coverage: 0.822394
solution consistency: 0.828794

--- INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION ---
frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.841463
Assumptions: legalization (present); education (present); work/income (present)

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<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
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<th>Unique coverage</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>work/income</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

solution coverage: 0.764479
solution consistency: 0.853448
Above, we see that education can be an important condition leading to high inventory scores. Below we add language to the conditions in lieu of education, with slightly different results.

**Weighing Legalization, Work, and Language as Conditions**

Below in the parsimonious solution in fsQCA Model and Output 4, we see support that legalization is only one of three conditions that contribute strongly to high inventory scores. Wage and language have higher raw coverage and consistency scores compared to legalization.

In the intermediate model of Output 4, we see the combination of language and income with high raw coverage and unique coverage and very high consistency (.90). Legalization is a second route to social participation but with less unique coverage. One interpretation of these findings is that those who have higher paying jobs may benefit from their strong language skills.

**fsQCA Model and Output 4**

Model: totalwoemploy = f(work/income, legalization, lang)

Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey

--- PARSIMONIOUS SOLUTION ---

frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.818182

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Configuration</th>
<th>Raw coverage</th>
<th>Unique coverage</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>legalization</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>work/income</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lang</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

solution coverage: 0.92
solution consistency: 0.75

--- INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION ---

frequency cutoff: 1.000000
consistency cutoff: 0.818182
Assumptions: legalization (present); education (present); work/income (present)
As we saw above, legalization by itself does not necessarily leave my informants in a stronger position vis-à-vis the social participation scores. When we add city to the configuration of conditions, we see support that city impacts the inventory score outcome as much as obtaining legalization and having academic language proficiency. These two solutions correspond to two trends: in New York, many are able to have high inventory scores while in Paris, legalization and strong language skills are needed.

### fsQCA Model and Output 5

Model: totalwoemploy = f(work/income, legalization, lang, city)

Algorithm: Quine-McCluskey

--- INTERMEDIATE SOLUTION ---

frequency cutoff: 1.000000

consistency cutoff: 0.821918

Assumptions: legalization (present); education (present); work/income (present)

<table>
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<th>Raw coverage</th>
<th>Unique coverage</th>
<th>Consistency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>~city</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>legalization*lang</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

solution coverage: 0.83
solution consistency: 0.66

These five fsQCA models are not conclusive evidence of sufficient and necessary conditions for high social participation inventory scores. Least surprisingly, linguistic and social resources are conducive to higher social participation scores. They do, however,
underline the centrality of paid work to social life, as well as the effect of better wages of New York informants. Legalization also contributes to higher social life scores. Educational attainment and language skills are closely related conditions, and each has a positive impact on scores.

**Social and Legal Boundaries**

One means of achieving comparability is developing concepts that can fit the empirical cases of New York and Paris. Boundary theory has been used to represent individual action and (simultaneously) contextual shifts. I make use of three boundary processes as sketched out by Zolberg and Loon (1999) and Alba and Nee (2003). *Boundary crossing* occurs as an individual moves across a boundary; *boundary shifts* reflect macro changes that affect inclusion; and *boundary blurring* occurs as a criteria of inclusion attenuates. Alba (2005) distinguishes between *bright* and *blurred* boundaries that reflect differences in the salience of a boundary.

Intersectionality (Collins 1991) theorizes certain populations face multiple social boundaries within society, and that the overlap of those boundaries has an independent effect on populations. Comparing the cases of undocumented youth in New York and Paris calls for an explicit separation of social and legal boundaries, as each is strongly felt by youth as they transition to adulthood. My boundary model below (see Figure 3) articulates this possibility graphically, and further asks what relationship the social boundary has with the legal boundary that separates undocumented youth from their documented peers.

This synthetic representation of micro and macro phenomenon links with the broader theoretical framework of governance, citizenship, and identity sketched out in the Introduction. In this model below, governance actors manage the legal and social
boundaries (see Chapters 7 and 8), the movement of individuals corresponds to citizenship practices, and the way the individual feels about his social position reflects identity (see Chapters 2 and 3).

Figure 3: Conceptual Model of Boundary Work for Undocumented Youth

We can compare the relationship between social position and governance between different informants in one city, or look more broadly at the experiences of informants between cities. Here, I focus on the latter.

In Chapter 2, we saw evidence of a brightening legal boundary in Paris as youth become adults (see 1 in Figure 4 below). Though legal status becomes an issue for international travel (a normal activity for many schools), the legal boundary is for the most part blurry. When youths like Tarek, Bao, and Souleymane reach age 18 and must enter and apply for regularization—for which they were each rejected—the legal boundary becomes brighter.
Social boundaries are also quite bright in Paris (see 2 in Figure 4). Most salient in my informants’ stories is the importance of language proficiency and accent. Further, many ended up in vocational tracks with other immigrant young men; academic lycées had more diverse classes. At adulthood, lack of stable work opportunities then became a mechanism that held youth from the mainstream. Without such incomes and expanded networks, they mostly remain on the marginalized outskirts.

We can see these processes in the case studies of Chapter 3. As shown in Figure 4, Souleymane easily makes process 3, moving towards social inclusion as he loses his accent. For Bao, this process takes longer as he learns French, facilitated by his girlfriend’s help. After becoming adults, however, few options exist in the Venn Diagram overlap of being undocumented and integrated.

Souleymane’s and Bao’s developed social life enables their regularization (process 4 in Figure 4 below), though in different ways. The social inclusion in high school is extended beyond the age of 18 for Souleymane, as his teachers and the network they introduce him to continue to play a major role in his regularization attempts. They also enabled his continued schooling. For Bao, financial resources work in tandem with social resources enabled his regularization. His mother’s regularization and his subsequent adoption required large amounts of money, and the judge’s and the Préfecture’s discretionary application of the law were partly based on his facility in French and his proofs of integration.

Tarek’s case also illuminates features of the boundaries. His extended family provided some modicum of social integration when he arrived, though without Bao’s
financial resources, he cannot hire a lawyer to contest Prefectural discretion. His lack of work opportunities inhibits a developed social life, and he remains stuck in the middle
position of Figure 4. We also see the continued relevance of financial resources for full administrative inclusion in the rejection of Souleymane’s naturalization application for lack of sufficient revenue.

In contrast, we saw evidence of a blurry legal boundary in New York (see 1 in Figure 5 above). With available jobs, available cultural and family life, and strong ethnic communities, the social boundary can also be understood as fairly blurry if brightening over time (see 2 in Figure 5). The growing families and continued work of Ernie and Fred support this characterization. Before the age of 18, the social boundary is particularly blurry; with the obstacles to continuing education, the subsequent broadening of social networks and work possibilities, it becomes less permeable. This process is a more extreme version of what happens to working-class youth as they come of age. Most New York informants are stuck in the central overlap portion of Figure 5 (integrated & undocumented). Recognizing this thickening social boundary, Luis returned to Mexico to study and superar [overcome]. As he looks to improve his self-presentation for a new girlfriend in 2014, Ernie has only begun to appreciate how stuck he is without some continuing education.

With very few legalization possibilities, it also shows a weak relationship between the social and legal boundaries. Social life does not help one legalize. We see evidence for this in David’s trajectory (see Chapter 5). Despite overcoming the obstacles of legal and socio-economic status to graduate from an elite four-year college, David works in a New York restaurant. In fact, the DACA program continues this weak social-legal relationship by extending work possibilities without affecting possibilities for legalization. And for my New York informants, who already benefit from the city’s
deportation protection and don’t need to drive, DACA has not created much of a shift in social life, and only a quarter has new jobs.

Marshall (1950) argued that social rights associated with citizenship maintain a societal floor, a minimum standard of living associated with being a citizen of a country. In his pioneering model, legal status was tied up with social membership. And here we see evidence to call into question the assumption that those without legal status are socially excluded; we also see evidence that questions if those \textit{with} legal status are socially \textit{included}. These are not mutually exclusive; rather, they point to looking more closely at the contours of governance of populations such as undocumented youth. In short, access to formal citizenship does not overlap with access to substantive citizenship. Chapters 7 and 8 respond to this call to examine how government, civil society, and business actors interact to supply urban citizenship to undocumented youth.

\textbf{Discussion}

The comparison of Paris and New York as best cases for undocumented youth is beginning to bear fruit. Though undocumented youth in Paris and New York, slightly older in the former than the latter, both face difficult legal and social transitions, we see differences in their experiences.

The use of a subjectively-based social participation inventory showed us how eleven domains shift differently in Paris and New York after informants come of age. Families in each city came together after extended periods of separation, but work possibilities affected household responsibilities, including helping out with rent. In Paris, underemployment interfered with this part of the transition to adulthood. Relationships with significant others became more entrenched for New York youth while most Paris counterparts lacked the stability for long-term relationships. Not all informants see
studies as instrumental in securing a ‘quality’ job. Some New York informants do not see a payoff from additional studies while many who could leave school in Paris, did: for these youth, their goal was a job. Those few in each city who attended post-secondary schools benefitted from stronger literacy skills in French or English.

We see social and legal mechanisms that explain those different experiences. The administrative purgatory that youth experiences in Paris (see Chapters 3, 5, and 8) adds to more extreme social exclusion for those not yet regularized and, in contrast, more social inclusion for some of those already regularized. New York mitigates the federal exclusion of undocumented people but cannot replace the rights of federal citizenship (see Chapters 2, 4, and 7).

Family support, educational opportunities, labor market access, and possibilities for legalization strongly structure social trajectories for those in this vulnerable socio-legal category. How can we trace the impact of these four factors on trajectories? As we saw in the fuzzy set analysis, the distance between informants and such resources can be interpreted through language ability, social networks, and social capital. Fuzzy set methods allow us to analyze the effect of a set of conditions on social participation. The clearest finding showed that involvement in public life (i.e. any organizational involvement) followed French or English language ability closely. Language is a necessary if insufficient condition. Academic language proficiency then corresponds with higher scores of social participation. Social capital and social networks seem to work slightly differently in each city, tied more closely to language proficiency. Acceptance of communitarianism in New York (see Chapter 7) facilitates social life for those who do not speak native English. French language learning retains a central mechanism in the
republican immigration ideal of immigrants acculturating within one generation (Zanten 1997). We see the hierarchy set up by this, as the Chinese are negatively represented in the courts and in the Préfecture (see Chapter 8). Such a system favors undocumented youth coming from former French colonies who enter with some knowledge of French.

Youth encounter difficulties in the educational system and find it tough to negotiate. For many, language instruction and supports are insufficient for academic integration (i.e. CALP); those without difficulties often had a head start on speaking the language. Without parents to assist their strategizing, youth in both cities complained of a lack of well-informed guidance in navigating educational institutions. Those with better language skills, however, were better able to build relationships with teachers and members of other organizations. These contacts gave them access to middle-class resources such as information and strategies.

Nearly all wanted to work at least part-time to bolster family budgets, though opportunities were often not available in Paris and often full-time in New York. Family connections helped secure jobs, though more easily in New York (Alba et al. 2013). The availability of low-end jobs in New York helped to stabilize the social lives of those who appeared most vulnerable in their teenage years. In Paris, young men, and their families, appreciated even meager part-time ethnic economy work.

The influence of government practices on the aspirations and social trajectories of these youth is understandably stronger in Paris than New York. In Paris, we see how the temporary visa structure, most readily accessed through studies leading to a student visa, incentivizes sans-papiers youth to stay studying, sometimes in the same building. This practice led to academically weak students staying enrolled and academically stronger
students gaining a post-secondary degree. Even those with low levels of social participation have a backup plan to regularize, with the common practice of ten years of residence leading to a temporary visa. If France’s bureaucratization of undocumented life has created much confusion amongst *sans-papiers*, it also is a light at the end of the tunnel. For informants who see intermittent, ethnic enclave work as their best scenario, they should be able to regularize by age 28, and gain the right to work. When they obtain visas, they re-activate transnational family connections.

Seven of twelve New York youth applied and received DACA benefits. It is too early to assess the impact of the program. Of these seven, three have new jobs (two are better paying). A few have hesitated to pay $465 to re-apply when they haven’t seen a return on their initial investment.\(^5^4\)

Developing commensuration in the comparison led to some concept-building. One methodological technique was creating a cross-case dialogue by broaching features of the ‘other’ city with informants (see Chapter 10 and Appendix B). I also elicited analytical input from informants, which lent insights into the relationship with governance actors. From this broad base of collected data, I developed the inventory as a comparative tool. Representing the breadth of social life in the transition to adulthood, the inventory then allows patterns to emerge. This broad, longitudinal view of social life keeps the analysis more adaptable to new considerations (e.g. effect of status on romantic relationships). Other scholarship has used naturalization policies to understand the incorporation of immigrants (Howard 2009; Weil 2001). Here, examining the empirical relationship between the social and the legal structures re-frames the usual lens of

\(^{54}\) Applicants must reapply for DACA benefits every two years.
understanding integration. In Paris, the tighter enforcement of status (i.e. deportations) and the more flexible system of regularization limits the stock of sans-papiers. In New York, the city’s liberal approach to legal status with no exit valve results in a system with a growing number of socio-legally stratified undocumented residents.

The comparative evidence presented in this chapter adds to the literature that finds good reason to analyze both formal and substantive citizenship (Kivisto and Faist 2007). We see differences between those who do not have access to formal citizenship (those in New York) and those that do (many in Paris). We also note differences in substantive citizenship between those who have formal citizenship in Paris and those who do not. Some have “more” substantive citizenship in New York than some in Paris, even though the former do not have formal and the latter do. Finally, we see a relationship between formal citizenship and the opportunity for greater social life.

Finally, the boundary analysis reflects a relational approach to understanding the socio-legal predicament of undocumented youth. This approach offers the best potential for comparing these findings to other contexts. The following two chapters will deepen this approach. In its delineation of state actors and their divergent missions, I move the discussion of immigration from a broad cross-national approach to a more nuanced local one (Smith and McQuarrie 2012). That is, we see more clearly how actors at the local scale support substantive citizenship.

Returning to our overarching analogy from Catholic theology, limbo is a place for just non-Christians to wait before the second coming of the messiah, where one’s fate is uncertain, and purgatory is a place for sinners to endure as their sins are expurgated and they are allowed into heaven. In Paris, time of residence, language proficiency, and social
ties (financial resources also) help purge the sin of arriving without a visa. New York’s system leaves the social mobility of undocumented youth in limbo awaiting reform, and they cling to the limited benefits of off-the-books work and family outlets of progress such as supplementing parents’ earnings, significant others’ educations, and their children.
Part Three: Local Contexts and Governance of Citizenship

This third section describes the local socio-legal context in which undocumented youth transition to adulthood. Cities themselves are dynamic actors responding to the presence of undocumented youth. Each city has developed policies and practices that improve life for undocumented youth, compared to other cities. Paris incorporates its undocumented youth politically, while New York incorporates its undocumented socially.

With organizations that fight for human rights in Paris viewed as highly legitimate and the socialist government looking for social pacts with civil society actors, many youth are funneled through a civil society network (RESF) to a legal status. This civil society network then builds local leverage to contest the Prefecture and obtain temporary visas. This crossover to legality is the main structural feature in undocumented youth coming of age in Paris. In New York, consensus between local government, civil society, and employers position youth as an asset in a neoliberalizing context. Thus, policies recognize undocumented residents as legitimate but do not legalize them. The exclusion from full membership, especially from federal restrictions on undocumented youth, clashes with simultaneous buffering of such restriction by governance actors in New York City.

In contrast to the first two parts of this dissertation, this section responds to how local citizenships position undocumented youth. In contrast to other literature on the integration of children of immigrants, undocumented youth’s incorporation largely depends on these local citizenship practices. These different approaches do lead to one similar outcome. While regularization does not lead to socioeconomic equality in Paris, it
does eliminate the threat of deportation. Likewise, the threat of deportation is mitigated by New York’s policies but youth mostly are stuck in the lower-working class.
Chapter 7: Marginalized Inclusion: Governance of Work, Family Life, and Housing of Young Undocumented Mexicans in New York

Abstract
Engaging literature on neoliberalism, governance, and undocumented youth, this chapter examines local measures that affect degrees of social membership of undocumented youth. New York City actors strongly affect the conditions under which social life of undocumented youth residents develops. Neoliberal policies have turned undocumented residents into a structural advantage for cities, as accommodating workers and residents. Government actors mitigate the possibility of deportation and seek to provide for the symbolic inclusion of immigrant groups writ large. Businesses provide secondary and tertiary market work opportunities for undocumented youth as they enter the workforce. Civil society organizations seek members and sometimes frame undocumented youth rights as a legitimate cause for which to fight. New York’s consensus model of civil society, the federal division of powers, and organizational resources limit the extent of this contestation.

In this chapter, I analyze the shift of three domains of social life—work, family & romantic relationships, and housing—amongst undocumented New York youth as they transition to adulthood. Emphasizing the link between meso level processes and micro level outcomes, we see that the circumscribed spaces of inclusion created by New York actors for undocumented youth strongly influence the range of social life in these domains. With this zone buffering federal restrictions, political and socio-economic conditions interact to produce a distinct experience of marginalized inclusion for undocumented youth. This outcome, even in a city that does much to mitigate the negative effects of status, highlights the multidimensionality of social exclusion.

Chapter 6 compared undocumented social life in the different local systems of “illegality” in Paris and New York. Sans-papiers youth undergo an administrative career of purgatory as they transition to adulthood and the dreams of most undocumented youth in New York are flattened into a family-centric limbo with low-wage, no-growth jobs. We saw evidence of a more tightly imbricated social and legal system for undocumented youth in Paris compared to New York. The socio-legal and socio-economic conditions of New York create a particular and dull sense of “illegality.” This chapter then argues that New York actors create important spaces of inclusion for undocumented youth but that federal restrictions keep them marginalized in work and housing.
Introduction

Tuesday, March 24, 2014. I sat typing notes as former NYC Immigrant Affairs Commissioner Fatima Shama—nicknamed the Godmother of Immigration by advocates—talked 150 municipal representatives, nonprofits, academics, and others who had signed on to learn from her innovative practices in a webinar. The title was “Big Ideas: New York City’s Blueprints for Immigrant Integration Success.” She highlighted the need to integrate immigrants and some of the leading practices her department—and New York City in general—has taken to better integrate immigrants.

One slide titled ‘Recognizing the need for immigrant-friendly cities’ outlined how the greatest impacts of globalization fell to cities. On one end, “In order to remain competitive, cities must attract, welcome and retain newcomers.” On the other, “Immigrants, regardless of legal status, are residents of cities, and all city residents must have equal access to services and resources in order to promote general public welfare.” This is an interesting starting point for this chapter, which examines how local actors influence the social lives of undocumented youth as they come of age. We can see how New York City governs the social membership of undocumented residents on one hand, and if their social lives meet her standard of “equal access to services and resources.”

While some towns and states have created anti-immigrant policies (Varsanyi 2010; 2008), New York City has been among the most pro-immigrant cities, along with San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Even in such cities, undocumented residents, who lack a formal relationship with the state, have rarely participated in active politics (Voss and Bloemraad 2011).

This chapter argues that a governance model, based on a contested federal-local division of powers, shapes the political and socio-economic conditions associated with marginalized inclusion. This governance model represents the relevant socio-political context for undocumented youth. Traditional immigrant social and political incorporation models tend to understate the extent to which undocumented residents participate in city life as well as the ways that politicians and others use them to various ends. Social incorporation models find that for undocumented youth, legal status structures “virtually every aspect of [their] incorporation” (Rumbaut and Komaie 2010:63), stagnating them in the lower-class (Zhou et al. 2008). The role of the political economy in this process, in which youth learn the consequences of their illegality as they come of age (Gonzales 2011), is often overlooked.

How can these local actors shape life for undocumented youth? We must explore how these actors in government, market, and civil society affect access to social membership—here, the three key areas of work, family life, and housing. Specifically, this paper seeks to connect this local context with certain aspects of the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth. Much of the literature on undocumented youth examines their paths in the context of political and educational limitations (e.g. Gonzales 2011; Abrego 2006, 2008; Cook 2013). Some spaces of inclusion do exist for undocumented youth, as the provision of rights through policies and practices varies by domain (Bosniak 2006). Here, stressing that undocumented youth also experience a precarious socioeconomic inclusion tied to their legal status, I further develop this context by adding in elements of the political economy. Political and socio-economic
conditions interact to produce a distinct experience of marginalized inclusion for undocumented youth.

A second aspect of my argument is that the constellation of actors at the local level plays a strong role in shaping those political and socio-economic conditions that create a marginalized inclusion of undocumented youth. With the complexity of multi-level governance of immigration and immigrants (Maas 2013) and the importance of localities in defining the outlines of social life of immigrants (Penninx et al. 2004), I focus my analysis on the local level. We see the clear impact of neoliberal policies on the access to resources for many populations, including undocumented residents. I use governance as an analytical concept to orient my analysis because it better represents the range of actors influencing public life. It is particularly apt with undocumented residents who exhibit limited formal political participation but whose lives are highly managed by laws and bureaucratic policies and practices.

The model I propose here (see Figure 6 below), based on constellations of governance,\textsuperscript{56} represents relevant political, economic, and social conditions that situate undocumented social life. Federal bureaucracies restrict access to legal status, regulated work opportunities, and federal financial aid for college for undocumented youth (see the red restrictive actors and the orange-bounded areas they regulate in Figure 6 below). At the same time, a local array of government, market, and civil society actors do afford youth spaces and axes of inclusion (see the actors in green in Figure 6). Undocumented families follow other poor and working class immigrant families by living in poorly maintained apartments in the more disadvantaged areas of New York’s tight housing

\textsuperscript{56} I thank Nicole Marwell for introducing this term to me.
market. Much as they occupy some of the worst off housing, they also work in many of the least attractive occupations, those in which legal resident status is least enforced. Ethnic social networks allow youth to find jobs in sectors of the labor market in which regulations are weakly enforced. If working these jobs and living in large households allows undocumented residents to garner relatively few resources, they use
them to develop reciprocal relationships with family members and significant others, giving meaning to their lives.

Methods

Methodologically speaking, scholars have predominantly analyzed the effects of government policies on individual undocumented youth (e.g. Gonzales 2011; Abrego 2008). Here, I take a more ecological approach that represents the civil society and market actions that influence their social life, clarifying some of the contradictions scholars have described with regards to unauthorized life in western liberal democracies (see e.g. Bosniak 2006).

The analysis of this chapter comes from six years of ethnographic research that began with the recruitment of a dozen male undocumented Mexican youth and their families.⁵⁷ In two different neighborhoods with important Mexican communities, I recruited youth from two high schools (where I used to teach), selected to follow students that were under- and upperclassmen and students who were academically weak and strong. I have worked with youth throughout their school days as well as outside of the school context. Described in detail in Chapter 10 and Appendix B, my ethnographic approach has elements of grounded theory (Charmaz 2006),⁵⁸ the extended place method

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⁵⁷ I have also worked with several documented Mexican families, though those data are not used in this analysis. This New York case was developed in the context of a broader comparison with undocumented youth in Paris.

⁵⁸ As in grounded theory, this analysis of the case of Mexican undocumented youth in New York City began from firsthand experiences of their social position. Though youth from different backgrounds may not be affected in precisely the same way, we can analytically generalize certain aspects of the analysis to other cases. This epistemological approach resonates with Smalls’ (2004; 2009) conditional approach, in which the social forces most relevant to a process—in this case, the inclusion and exclusion of undocumented youth as they transition to adulthood—can be compared to those of similar cases. The model I explore here, using an expanded concept of local ecological
(Duneier 1999), and extended case method (Burawoy 1998; 2000), following informants in their daily lives to sites of power in order to investigate asymmetrical power dimensions of interaction and how they are built into the social context. To better represent the context in which youth are transitioning to adulthood, I have conducted interviews and participant observation with several organizations located in the neighborhoods of my informants. In so doing, I have data on seven community-based organizations, four churches, and two schools. In addition, I have analyzed government, agency, and organizational documents that attest to policies and practices.

In this analysis, I seek to show how the practices and policies of public actors in New York City affect the social membership of my undocumented informants. These processes are complex, and here I will focus on three institutional domains, housing, work, and families. The nature of the production of “illegality,” the social and legal construction attached to unauthorized immigrants, varies according to the policies and practices of these various public institutions.

Before we identify local policies that shape their lives, first I present some statistics to characterize my undocumented informants as occupying a low rung in New York’s inequality hierarchy. Over a third of New Yorkers are immigrants, and about 16% of those immigrants are undocumented (Lobo and Salvo 2013). About 16% of those context, can be profitably applied to other cases. For example, the social position of Mexican undocumented youth depends most on relationships with community organizations, the Catholic Church, the Mexican Consulate, their ethnic work connections, and recognition of their work ethic by employers. The Mexican community has historically had weak ties to New York politicians. The first Mexican-origin City Council Member, Carlos Menchaca, was elected in 2013 though with limited experience with the Mexican community of New York. Some aspects may apply to other groups, though the specificity of this analysis should not be applied wholesale to all other undocumented youth.
undocumented, about 80,000 people, have spent at least five years of their childhood in New York and have come of age there (Batalova 2013). Here, I focus on the Mexican undocumented population. Mexicans and Central Americans make up more than a quarter of all undocumented New Yorkers (Kallick 2013:85). Most likely undercounted due to the large proportion of undocumented residents, Mexicans make up 319,000 residents of New York according to the 2010 Census. Bergad and Klein (2010) estimate half of Mexican New Yorkers are noncitizens, and Smith estimates at least half are undocumented (Smith 2013:250). Furthermore, undocumented Mexican youth are likely to live in poor families that depend on multiple earners in order to make ends meet. Mexicans live in larger households than any other ethnic group, though median household incomes remain lower than for other groups (Mollenkopf et al. 2014). Per capita income averages $13,000, less than half the New York City average.

Local Context: Governance & Neoliberalization

With a strong emphasis on coalition forming (Mollenkopf 2013), classic political incorporation models such as the Browning, Marshall, and Tabb framework for understanding urban politics often overemphasize electoral politics (Minnite 2009:59) and cannot easily explain policies related to undocumented residents. New York City electoral politics, a contested nexus of social justice claims, and neoliberal assumptions, does of course affect undocumented residents. I argue, however, that governance models better represent how local, national, and global economic interests also may affect residents, as well as how the seeds of representation and solidarity with the undocumented work on a local level.
As governments today continue to pay much attention to the delivery of public services across public and private actors, governance here refers to the way structures of authority are used in collaboration with other groups to coordinate or control activity in society (Bell 2002; McQuarrie 2007). With the scaling back of spending on government services beginning in the 1980s (Smith and Lipsky 1993), particularly strong at the federal level, local governments turned to service reduction, targeted investments, and public-private partnerships. Some local, national, and transnational organizations such as Make the Road New York, the Hispanic Federation, and the Roman Catholic Church do act to influence Congressional representatives to reform immigration law. More frequently, less traditional political action, outside of electoral politics (Morawska 2013; Jones-Correa 1998), is more pertinent. Scholars have shown how nongovernmental actors can create spaces of inclusion (de Graauw 2008; Wong 2006) and produce social control (in particular, the access to or restriction of rights, or change of legal status) through interactions within and across state and non-state actors, and thus it makes sense to use a framework that includes less formal social and political participation (Jones-Correa 1998) including trade union politics, voluntary associations, and community organizations (Martinello 2009:36). In this analysis, allowing for cross-category interactions, I classify relevant institutional actors into categories of market, governmental, and civil society actors that lie at the heart of social membership (Somers 2008).

For this reason, in this chapter, I use inclusion and exclusion (rather than assimilation or incorporation) from social membership as a framework (Cook 2013) through which to analyze the effects of diverse governance actors on the provision of de facto rights to undocumented residents in New York. In the first part of the analysis, I
identify the most relevant actors and their policies and practices that affect the social life of Mexican undocumented youth in New York.

In addition to the types of actors, I seek to describe, if briefly, the outlook of various actors. By setting this context for the analysis, I shift the relevant contextual factors. Though the argument of this paper is that local actors play a key role in the social lives of undocumented youth, New York lies in a dense field of capital (and labor) flows involving global, national, transnational, and local actors. Businesses, civil society (Marwell 2007), and government actors (Sassen 1999; Hackworth 2007) respond to a mix of local, state, national, transnational, and international factors. Academics recognize this simultaneous increase of globalization and shift towards federal devolution as the "glocalization of governance" (Hackworth 2007). Through federal devolution and a dependence on transnational finance, cities have become entrenched in neoliberalization, embracing a set of economic policies that advocate free trade, free market, and strong property rights (Brash 2011). New York has maintained one of the nation's highest degrees of social inequality since the end of the 1980s (Mollenkopf and Castells 1991; Fainstein, Gordon, and Harloe 1992). As more of the city’s income comes from the top percentiles of earners, the city’s Gini index of inequality has risen from .44 in 1990 to .50 in 2010, an increase of 14% (Bergad 2013). Government spending reflects a new focus on development, with fewer expenditures on social services, affordable housing, and hospitals and more on finance, insurance, and real estate (Fitch 1993). While New York

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59 One example of the influence of neoliberal international policy that has impacted New York’s undocumented residents is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Mexican immigration to the Untied States increased as American agribusiness re-shaped the Mexican agricultural industry, pushing Mexicans to migrate (Massey et al. 2002; Portes 2006). The rapid growth of the Mexican community in New York began partly as a result of this destabilization.
City spends more on social welfare than other large cities, most forms are unavailable to undocumented residents.

New York’s Mayor and City Council have altered zoning rules to generate real estate development and gentrification. One particularly relevant example is the increase in tuition for the City University of New York, which was free for matriculated students until 1976 (CUNY 2011). Since, New York State and City have significantly raised tuition for the City University of New York, from $3,200 in 2002 to over $5,000 per year in 2013.\footnote{For most students, federal and state financial aid covers these increases. For undocumented students, who don’t receive such support, remain particularly vulnerable.} The rate of union membership, which although dropping to 22% in the city, remains double the US rate (Milkman and Luce 2013). Most unionized workers are in the public sector, and union protection is increasingly spare for immigrants and young workers in the private sector \textit{(ibid.)}.\footnote{11\% of immigrants who arrived between 2000 and 2010 were unionized in 2011 compared to 33\% of those who arrived between 1980. Likewise, only 10\% of workers aged 16 to 24 were unionized in 2011 compared to 33\% of those aged 55 or older (Massey 2011).} City investments, including tax shelters and use of public domain to reclaim land for development, have been increasingly directed at high-end real estate and tourist sites. These efforts support high employment, seek to increase tourism, and favor high-end sectors such as banking, development, and real estate that generate tax revenues in a globally competitive environment. These efforts also contribute strongly to the increase in service workers and to shifts in the housing market. From 1980 to 2009, greater New York employment in management, professional, and service jobs has increased nearly 50\% (Ruszczyk 2012:3). Mexican-born residents, and especially young and noncitizen ones, work in service jobs at double the overall New York rate (ibid: 11; 15). At the same time, 39\% fewer apartments are affordable to New
York’s low-income households in 2011 compared to 2002 (Waters and Bach 2014). We see evidence for views that New York’s economic elite is increasing its share of household income while incomes of the lowest quintile have stagnated over the past two decades (Bergad 2013).

While undocumented residents have lived in New York for many decades, their growing numbers play a different role in the socially unequal context of New York qua global city. High-end industries in finance, insurance, and real estate require service workers in many sectors, including restaurants, child care, cleaning, and construction. In its effort to lure and retain these businesses, New York has adopted neoliberal policies\(^62\) to make New York competitive in the global economy (Harvey 2007). Such an approach assumes an abundance of low-cost workers, and particularly workers that will make minimal claims on the state.\(^63\) The conditions of inequality that support contemporary New York require a high degree of social control with highly accommodating residents.

How can it maintain neoliberal policies and political progressivism at the same time? The tension between the ideals of equality espoused by a democratic and progressive city and the neoliberal basis of undocumented migration create interesting bedfellows. Unions and businessmen, progressive politicians, churches and Wall Street libertarian free marketeers all support fighting against the federal deportation system that makes for an unstable workforce and separated families. The resulting ‘buffer zone’, in which few undocumented residents are deported unless they commit a felony, gives New

\(^62\) Corporate subsidies, re-zoning, public-private partnerships, and anti-union policies are a few examples.

\(^63\) Following the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Reform and Responsibility Act, undocumented residents do not benefit from social welfare, with the exceptions of emergency hospitalization and the WIC program. This lack of economic security encourages undocumented residents to maintain full-time work, often regardless of the work abuses.
York City a class of workers and residents that are coerced to be docile. If foreign investment contributes to bringing them to the city (Sassen 1988), their obliging role to work and reside without complaint or access to tools needed for change make them an asset to New York business community.

**New York City as Context for Marginalized Inclusion**

Here, I describe how the government, market, and civil society of New York mitigate federal exclusionary policies in important ways. In opposition to federal restrictions, market actors provide jobs and transportation; governmental actors protect the undocumented from deportation and offer ethnic-based symbolic inclusion; and civil society actors provide resources for cultural events, function as interlocutors with local power holders, and allow youth to make some claims. With their (inter)actions constrained by resources, these actors are engaged in reciprocal relationships with other actors. From those local policies and practices, a platform emerges of public positions affecting undocumented youth as they come of age. These positions create the contours of residence, work, and family life for undocumented youth.

**Governmental actors**

Local control of police policy and local influence of federal deportation enforcement and workplace inspection create important spaces of inclusion. Continuing New York’s long history of welcoming immigrants (Foner 2013) and contributing to more trusting community relations, the most significant policy for undocumented residents is what I call the NYPD’s ‘don’t ask, don’t act’ policy. Police (and other municipal employees) do not ask about immigration status. In explicit opposition to the

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64 New York City Executive Order 41.
federal enforcement regime, including CAP and S-Comm, the local government has taken aggressive steps to local policy to not enforce immigration status. In 2011-12, in practice, this translates into deportation protection for all but those convicted of a felony (DHS 2013). While certainly not without any fear, my informants report general confidence in not being deported for minor infractions, like jumping a turnstile. These policies have strong support from both the mayor and the City Council. Former Mayor Bloomberg has testified in Congress that restricting undocumented residents limits economic dynamism (in Rodriguez 2008:577). City Council monies have also sought to recruit more undocumented youth into the DACA program and offer paid sick days to all workers, largely seen as targeting low-wage workers, including undocumented ones. In addition, by offering contracts for immigrant and youth services, the city partly funds several CBOs that represent immigrants and immigrant issues. To implement DACA, New York State granted a few organizations funds for outreach and to help youth apply. In 2015, New York began offering municipal identification cards to all residents, though government officials see them as a way to empower undocumented residents (see de Graauw 2014).

Through its contracts, structures, and discourse, New York’s local government cultivates a communitarian model of civil society in which social cohesion is achieved within community areas as organizations work for public benefit of their residents (Wollebaek and Selle 2008).65 Established to support “the well-being of immigrant

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65 One assumption often made in urban politics is that ethnic claims are seen as more legitimate than class-based ones. Many factors, from language issues, residential concentrations, and continued national identification of immigrants and their children, underlie this. Some work sectors are also highly divided by ethnicity, diminishing the possibility of organizing immigrants based on other criteria than ethnicity.
communities” and immigrant integration, the Office of Immigrant Affairs links government with CBOs and governmental agencies. This coordination legitimizes the organization of residents by ethnic or pan-ethnic group, symbolically includes immigrants as deserving, though provides limited resources to undocumented youth.

\textit{Market actors}

As a global city that attracts much capital, New York and its metropolitan area make use of low-wage and docile laborers to provide services that support high-skilled workers (Sassen 1990). Service and low-capital sectors offer jobs not only to undocumented parents but also to undocumented youth and their peers. While the workforce at such jobs may include adult documented immigrants, youth with documents do not often stay working at these jobs for long. With its continuous stream of immigrants willing to work for low wages and with limited ability to contest employer abuse, New York maintains its ability to maintain low-cost amenities for affluent residents and tourists such as restaurants, hotels, childcare, and cleaning (Kallick 2013). These occupations have become entrenched in ethnic social networks (Waldinger and Lichter 2003), and New Yorkers expect to see Mexican kitchen workers, Dominican home health aides, and Ecuadorean construction workers. Ethnicity and legal status facilitate social control and efficiency for employers (Harrsion and Lloyd 2013; Ruhs and Anderson 2012). Exploitation of these workers, takes many forms, including no pay, late pay, no vacation, no sick days, and interpersonal abuse. Many of New York’s market and governmental actors embrace the arrival and protection of such a disempowered population, ineligible for social welfare, which must work for low wages and show low levels of criminal activity. We should not ignore that access to low-quality jobs does provide financial
resources that undocumented youth gainfully employ in personal relationships. Mexican male youth are employed at extremely high rates; unemployment is very rare (CSS 2013).

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), a public benefit corporation, which runs the subways, most commuter trains, and most buses in and around New York, allows undocumented youth to travel to jobs. A key mechanism of exclusion cited in other studies, barriers to legally driving, is less relevant within the bounds of New York City because of its effective public transportation system. The cost of a monthly unlimited MetroCard has risen to $112, though remains less expensive than the cost of driving. The majority of my informants’ documented peers does not drive and has not taken steps to obtain a driver’s license. One “DACAmente” youth obtained a license after getting a social security number “so that I could have an ID...sometimes a bar will only take state ID.”

Civil society actors

Civil society refers to actors outside the state and market, including nonprofit organizations, religious organizations, labor unions, philanthropy, and colleges. Their action and interplay with state and market actors are the foundation of urban citizenship. Scholars debate how civil society action can be used to reinforce elites or activate democratic social justice. In New York City, actors’ positions vis-à-vis undocumented youth may align, if for different rationales. Actors may want to counteract the negative (and expensive) effects of social exclusion; to make use of youth human and cultural capital; to increase their membership base; to reinforce co-ethnic unity; provide ethnic jobs; and to encourage a democratic legitimacy. Community foundations may fund
immigrant organizations to reinforce symbolic capital as a “community partner,” while politicians may exchange resources for political capital: votes (Marwell 2007).

New York has the densest civil society in the United States, with over 42,000 registered nonprofits and hundreds of CBOs influencing government policy and drawing international, national, and local resources to the city (Marwell 2007). Partly funded with city grants, these nonprofit organizations provide educational, health care, legal services; share logistical, political, and work-related information; and reinforce positive ethnic identities (de Graauw 2008). These organizations often reflect informally, if not formally, ethnic lines of residential concentration (Marwell 2004). CBOs frame their claims as bringing justice to underprivileged ethnic and immigrant communities, and to some degree, they are responsible for sustaining social cohesion. Surveys have identified hundreds of immigrant organizations in New York (Cordero-Guzman 2005), and hundreds more serve immigrant residents alongside native-born residents. More than exerting significant political or economic power, the symbolic inclusion that such organizations effect may mitigate feelings of fear stemming from lack of legal status. With informants, I have attended a dozen social events at a human services nonprofit connected to a neighborhood church (itself part of the supranational Catholic Church). Both the church and the nonprofit have incorporated Latin American, and Mexican in particular, symbols and cultural events into their spaces.

The symbolic solidarity and transnational resources readily available in such dense ethnic neighborhoods abates the salience of immigration status. For example, neighborhood churches organize Sunday mass by language, with devotion to the preeminent symbol of Mexico, the Virgin of Guadalupe, a constant across parishioners
and across space. Some of my informants run the “Guadalupan Marathon,” a symbolic 5-mile run across the city dedicated to the Virgin. 18 year-old Ernie told me with pride in his voice before my first race, “You’ll see. It’s all Mexicans.... You can raise the [symbolic] torch!”

With access to federal and state financial aid blocked by legal status, the City University of New York’s (CUNY) open policy of admitting undocumented students to date has attracted an estimate of 7,500 students taking credit courses (Conger and Chellman 2011). Since 2002, the CUNY offers in-state tuition to undocumented students. In 2013, resident tuition at a two-year CUNY school is $2,100 a semester or $180/credit. At a four-year college, resident tuition rises to $2,865 or $245/credit. The convenience of a local, comprehensive university system, with 24 campuses across the five boroughs, with its flexible night and weekend course schedules, allows students to study while carrying on family and work responsibilities. Furthermore, CUNY initiatives, such as the Mexican-American Task Force, target recruitment of underrepresented ethnic groups. This institutional encouragement cannot easily overcome the working-poor social position of my informants, who embrace the masculine role of breadwinner, especially pertinent in poor families. Equally important, without college graduate role models within their social networks and without status, many do not see a definite long-term gain from attending college, especially prior to the DACA program.

The educational aspirations of undocumented immigrant children who come of age in New York are “cooled out” (Clark 1960), as they slowly understand the limitations on their social opportunity structure. Jonathan, who dropped out of school at age 16, reasoned, “My brother said I had to pay for rent or I couldn’t stay there. So I found a
job.” Miguel, who as a 16 year old worked after school until midnight, and then had an hour subway ride home, recounted, “I was sleeping in class... a diploma is nice but you don’t know if later [if it will benefit you].”

Many of these same obstacles, lack of mentors within their social network and resource constraints, also apply to political organization. Though informants only spoke about it when explicitly asked, the fear of “coming out” undocumented and the fear of legal repercussions play a role. After I told David about one organized group of young undocumented students in New York, he joined their Facebook group but has not participated in any events. “I thought about going to the [small demonstration] but I don’t know... I don’t want to have any problems.” The buffer zone of limited inclusion, in the sense of belonging to the ethnic community that derives from availability of local cultural spaces and symbolic municipal inclusion, may indirectly impede many from actively participating in political action as undocumented. Beginning in 2010, CUNY campuses have facilitated some small-scale political organizing by undocumented students, called ‘Dream Teams’ in reference to the Dream Act. These groups have formed informal alliances with other more established civil society.

Unions should not be ignored as potential power brokers between undocumented youth and other actors. Most literature on the relationship between unions and undocumented immigrants focuses on adults, however, leaving out the growing population of 1.5 generation immigrants in the workforce. Milkman (2011) notes that unions seek to recruit immigrants working in janitorial, retail, hospitality, construction, and manufacturing. As I note later, these are the same sectors in which most undocumented youth work. New York City has seen notable but limited work to bring in
undocumented workers into the union fold. Union positions on immigrants have shifted as immigrants, often undocumented, typically occupy the bottom jobs that reflect a lack of regulation and threaten worker rights more broadly. In this way, unions seek to raise the lowest conditions faced by workers, recognizing undocumented workers as legitimate residents, which accords them some modicum of claims making even if they should not be formally part of a union. SEIU-1199 and SEIU-32BJ have been particularly active in both supporting immigrant reform and in helping elect city politicians. Union claims making is directed towards work conditions rather than educational access. The scope of their actions does not directly impact many undocumented youth.

To what extent does New York allow for these youth to hold these jobs? A federal program verifying social security numbers of applicants, called e-verify, somewhat limits job searches. On the other hand, Obama has limited federal work inspections since taking office. New York City government has not established further work enforcement guidelines. Reporting of labor violations are the responsibility of the worker, and some local immigrant rights organizations outreach and organize on immigrant labor issues. Unions have understandably thrown their support behind these efforts to support worker rights. The efficiency of these efforts is limited by the limited resources of such organizations to surveil employer abuses and by undocumented workers’ recalcitrance to report abuse for fear of deportation (Martin 2012).

Created by a presidential executive order in 2012, the DACA program gives temporary protection against deportation, a work permit, and an assigned Social Security number to youth who arrived before age 15, lived five years in the US, and had an educational credential. Local civil society actors, including CUNY and CBOs, did
outreach and assisted applying for DACA. One year into its implementation in New York State, 30,160 applied and 23,265 received temporary status, less than half the estimated eligible population. One study (Wong et al. 2013) found that for every immigrant-serving organization, 70 more applications were filed. Others who dropped out of school or were caught by Border Patrol are not eligible. Israel, an undocumented youth who had dropped out of school to work, asked me about eligibility for DACA and started selecting a nearby GED course when we realized he didn’t qualify because he had been deported as he a child. “Oh. Well, I’ll just keep doing what I do then,” he responded, and his burst of energy quickly faded.

For those who have received DACA, the symbolic inclusion has catalyzed educational planning in some informants. This leads me to think that were New York informants to be regularized, they would follow their documented immigrant peers to study at CUNY. At the same time, youth who were academically-challenged students and have been out of school for several years face a difficult challenge. In other words, the time waiting for reform is already a penalty. After he received his DACA card, 22 year old Ernie wanted to discuss his educational future with me:

Ernie: I need to fit [college] into my schedule. I was thinking weekend classes. What do I need to do?
Me: ...And you will have to take the college readiness tests in Math and English. I can help you prepare for those. When is the last time you wrote an essay? (smiles)
Ernie: He he, with you! [in high school in 2009]

In this overview, we can see how and why actors in New York City have done much to contest federally-based exclusion. The government has created a geographically-
bounded sanctuary within which youth do not express daily fear of deportation. Its labor market offers undocumented youth low-wage jobs, especially in the service sector. The access to public transportation eliminates “gateway” driving infractions that lead to contact with immigration authorities. Civil society brings symbolic, cultural, and resources to the poor communities where many undocumented youth reside. Nonetheless, despite the city’s legal, economic, and social support, political leverage to pass reform is not strong enough in most Congressional districts, and youth trajectories will remain restricted because of the policies of national government.

**Social Participation**

We see in the discussion of relevant actors above that many policies and practices produce potholed spaces of inclusion and exclusion for undocumented youth. The boundaries of the overlap of political factors and socio-economic factors position undocumented youth distinctly from their documented peers, and with different implications. Opportunity structures encourage youth to take low-quality full-time jobs and low-quality crowded housing, which in turn enable them to dedicate resources to their families and develop their own relationships.

**Work**

More than anything else, the prospect of work draws undocumented adults here to the US. As Gleeson and Gonzales (2012) have argued, adult workers tend not to participate in mainstream institutions and their work is highly stratified based on their lack of legal status. Undocumented youth that have grown up attending American schools experience a different socialization, and develop many expectations in line with their documented classmates. “Undocumented students come to expect a future rooted in the United States
that will afford them the same opportunities as their peers” (ibid:7). At the same time, parents of undocumented children often expect their children to work when they finish high school. Parents often have a clearer picture of the costs and risks of college attendance than of its benefits, which are undoubtedly murkier for undocumented students than their documented peers. Youth entry into the workforce is often part of the process of learning ‘illegality’ that occurs as undocumented youth transition into adulthood.

Youth entry into the workplace, then, is a complicated weighing of expectations. They are able to fulfill some familial obligations (Fuligni and Yoshikawa 2004) and respond to the immigrant bargain (Smith 2006; 2008), the idea that children of immigrants should redeem their parents’ sacrifice in immigrating. Parents of undocumented youth see work as an important contribution to the household resources, as opposed to paying out of pocket for college costs. This short-term (albeit high) opportunity cost of college attendance shifts the negotiation with parents, raising expectations and risk. For those that work immediately after schooling is complete—or frequently before—the contribution is felt strongly. Data from Mollenkopf and colleagues (2013) shows that for Mexicans more than any other national group in New York City, average household incomes depend on income from many household members.

As is the case nationally (Schain 2008:230), undocumented youth have no problem finding work. For undocumented youth in New York, the social opportunity structure tends to highlight work opportunities over educational ones. Family members, neighbors, and friends can all be sources of job information and offers (Waldinger and
Lichter 2003). In addition, youth scour commercial avenues in Brooklyn and Manhattan inquiring about jobs. With such pressure to work and networks well-connected with low-end jobs, all of my informants work, and tend to stay at their jobs for a few years at a time.\textsuperscript{66} They found jobs in factory work, retail, construction, restaurants, fast food restaurants, and cleaning. These correspond with occupations for Mexicans at large, and suggest that undocumented youth tend to work at similar occupations as their parents. Without the increased human and social capital from college, they seek out jobs available to those without credentials.

Confronted with limited opportunities, undocumented youth find themselves with few options: work with indignities or leave the job. Christian said, “I feel violated because I worked every night for an hour between shifts ... I never got paid for that.” The dormant fear that their bosses will have them deported intensifies when there are incidents. Describing the end of his stint at Burger King at age 18, Christian said, “I never went back. After [a female co-worker] was fired [for false papers], I was done. The boss said she was going to be deported. I never felt fear like that before.” Delayed payments, non-payment, lack of overtime pay, lack of holiday and sick days are regular complaints of my informants. While youth inform me of these conditions, they choose not to speak with community organizations with worker resources. Given the different work expectations of youth socialized in the United States (Gleeson and Gonzales 2012), one might expect youth to better contest their employers directly, or with the aid of

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\textsuperscript{66} Two informants returned to Mexico to study; one has stayed and graduated. He did not work until after graduation.
immigrant organizations. One means of contestation has been to leave a job, though youth tend to do this after a new job has been secured.

The reliable resources that steady, if low-paying, work provides are crucial. 23-year-old Christian explains, “My parents were having problems with the bills, and so I left school and found a job without telling them.” Six years later, he supports his wife’s studies and his baby daughter. 19-year-old Miguel described a dream of his: “We are going to buy—as a family—a house. We almost have $50,000 saved up already.” That a family dreams of this in the most expensive real estate market says something about their ability to accrue resources. One afternoon, when I was walking with 22-year-old Ernie, we conversed with a former documented student of mine about his life. “It’s tough to get a job,” said Hector, “I’ve sent out my resume to so many places but I haven’t gotten a call back. I’m selling drugs until I find something.” Ernie, in contrast, has held a steady full-time job since graduating high school, though in a wearisome factory job that holds him in the lower working class. The takeaway is that the tertiary market niche, for all its negatives, supports family life. Ernie spends most of his check on his family’s rent and his 3-year-old son’s essentials.

Beginning in August 2012, President Obama implemented a policy called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in which youth may qualify for temporary reprieve from deportation and obtain two-year work permits. One informant has used his temporary Social Security number to obtain a driver’s license, and he applied to be a driver at a shipping company. This job pays more than minimum wage, which is what most of the other undocumented youth earn, and its workers are unionized.

These organizations are oftentimes within 10 minutes walking from their homes.
One college-attending student is able to work in a college laboratory with DACA. If these young men have greatly benefited from DACA, others are excluded because they have not obtained a GED or high school diploma or have been previously deported by Border Patrol. Several others have applied for jobs online—well-known fast food and clothing retail jobs—but have not found success.

**Families & Relationships**

With a mixture of relief and uncomfortability, my informants arrived in New York at 10, 11 or 12 years old and reunited with their parents after a period of separation. They slowly adjusted to bilingual life\(^{68}\) and the standards for school and most gradually became closer to their families. Family needs—money for daily needs—are a constant consideration. With the path to college—both in paying for and in using it on the job market—less clear than it is for others, and with other job opportunities accessible, family resources comprise an important part of the opportunity structure for undocumented youth.

The entry to the workforce is framed by family dynamics. Some parents emphasize certain aspects of their life narrative to communicate the sacrifices they have made in immigrating, often in an explicit comparison to the American advantage their children possess. This immigrant bargain, with the objective of raising the family’s social status through the children’s occupational or educational success, can be negotiated by parents and children in several ways. One family strategizes to buy a house together, with the parents paying expenses and the children’s earnings going towards savings. Three informants had dreams of becoming a professional, two of whom returned to

\(^{68}\) Nearly all attended middle school bilingual programs after arrival to New York and eventually transferred out after a few years.
Mexico to study. Most, however, contribute most of their wages to family expenses, including the three who have children of their own. While youth may struggle with their social position, their wages allow them to claim a meaningful role within their families.

Christian had initially dropped out of high school to help supplement his parents’ meager income. Now he lives with his parents, his wife, and his one-year-old daughter, and works in a factory making heating equipment. Christian told me, “Now I make $10.50 an hour. That gives me enough to buy what we need, rent, phone, food. I work overtime to get money for extras, for the baptism of Rosa [his daughter], for new clothes, for my bicycle.” His American-born wife was studying to be a teacher, and he explained how they negotiated work: “I’m working more now so she can be in school and not worry about time for her work. It’s hard but she says she’ll be working in two years, and I can get a certificate for a better job [now that I have DACA]. For now, I’m proud of her [studying].” Two fundamental roles, as husband and as father, are supported by the wages his job provides, and allow him to extend the immigrant bargain to his wife, whose educational success will fulfill family expectations for the American Dream.

Ernie also sees his work as a sacrifice that allows his girlfriend to graduate from college. In 2011 he repeated earlier claims that he “will pay so Leticia can go to college [after high school].” Though they separated in 2013, providing for his son gives him a sense of purpose at work. “I’m sure of one thing. Fred [son] is the most important thing in my life. All I do is for him.” Ernie regularly buys clothes and toys for his son, one of the main ways Ernie shows he is taking his fatherly responsibilities seriously. “When I spend time with him, when I get him stuff, when we go do stuff together ... like to

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69 He also mentioned his boss hadn’t paid him overtime in two months.
McDonalds, that is when I know I’m doing things good.” He also contributes to the rent of the one-bedroom apartment he shares with his family.

Israel met his girlfriend at a bar, and they went on dates more so than other informants. “I paid for the food and drinks,” he said smiling. “Now she wants me to move in with her and her mother so I can help pay the rent.” Earnings from work, most often used to pay for rent, food, special occasions, clothes, facilitate the development of reciprocity in relationships. Being able to work means these young men can contribute to their families and significant others, and are respected.

Housing

Lack of legal residence status directly and indirectly affects housing. Without legal residence, undocumented residents are ineligible for public housing support, including homeless shelters, formally excluded by the 1996 welfare reform and IIRIRA. (These acts also limit access to housing rights of legal permanent residents.) Undocumented residents may sign leases to rent apartments. As important as formal exclusion, however, is the vulnerability and fear undocumented residents may feel negotiating with or pursuing claims against landlords.

Undocumented immigrants move to dangerous and decaying neighborhoods because of their affordability (Castañeda 2012). Undocumented immigrants are much more likely than their documented peers to live in substandard housing conditions (Oliveri 2009). The national group with the largest share of recent arrivals to New York (DCP:96), Mexicans report the largest household size of any major group, with 4.5 people per household with over 40% of households overcrowded (DCP:99; Bergad 2013:29).
My informants all live in substandard, overcrowded housing. Despite regular cleaning, cockroaches have infested kitchens and other spaces. Kitchens double as living rooms and occasionally as bedrooms. Bathrooms are often jerry-rigged, with wrenches holding faucets open and buckets used to flush toilets. Five to six people, on average, share a one-bedroom apartment; a few have two bedroom apartments. Parents, brothers and sisters, and girlfriends often share bunk beds or a queen-size mattress with my informants. In a few buildings, showers are shared between apartments, with family members walking through building hallways and others’ apartments in towels.

As they have become adults, they have remained living with their parents and often, extended family. (This is not unusual for immigrant youth in New York (Kasinitz et al. 2008)). With New York City’s housing stock in poor neighborhoods often in poor conditions, undocumented residents are unlikely to complain about conditions. If tight family-based social and information networks assist in the reception of immigrant family, they also keep family close for years. From a functionalist perspective, the acceptance of undocumented residents allows for the city to maximize differentiation in housing conditions. As poor residents often focused on life in Mexico, they tolerate poor conditions in order to minimize rental costs and stay near family. While they often occupy parts of the city that are seen as less desirable, the speed of gentrification can leave entire clans vulnerable.70

The city has also taken steps to raise the minimum standards in its housing. In 2007, the City Council passed the Safe Housing Act, in part to force absentee landlords to

70 This vulnerability can be seen in poor legal resident and citizen residents as well, though fear of deportation resulting from public contact changes the nature and frequency of claims.
maintain minimal conditions in their units. The city pays for initial renovations. Rafael E. Cestero, commissioner of the city’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development, said the program was a success because it improved living conditions for some of the city’s most vulnerable residents (Buckley 2010a). Make the Road New York, and other organizations have offered support for this program. Most buildings renovated to date have been located in Brooklyn, with many in Bushwick, Bedford-Stuyvesant, Ocean Hill, and East New York. (http://www.ibo.nyc.ny.us/iboreports/hpdmaps122010.pdf)

The neighborhood-oriented development in New York has moved from Manhattan neighborhoods such as Greenwich Village and Soho to Brooklyn neighborhoods such as Park Slope (4th and 5th avenues), Sunset Park, Williamsburg, and increasingly, Bushwick. Over the course of one year in 2011, eight new trendy restaurants opened within three blocks of two informants’ apartments, and the sudden regular appearance of white residents was startling. One informant’s apartment building was listed as one of the 200 annual selected to be renovated in the Safe Housing Act program. One year following the renovations, the landlord renovated and combined the bottom two units, and more than doubled the rent. Two college-educated men in their 20s replaced the two intergenerational Mexican households that had previously lived there.

The rent had increased from $400 per month to $750. When the landlord tried to move one family out of their apartment, the legal aid of the local parish of the Catholic Church assisted them in preparing an appeal (which they won). When I was there in November 2013, the landlord had replaced the dirty hallway linoleum with new flooring, and a new set of transparent glass doors replaced the old thick nondescriptive door. Where
previously stood the clutter of mailboxes that had several names scrawled in black marker now featured sleek mail slots with apartment numbers. An informant discussed the potential consequences with me: “We’ve been talking about moving.... we don’t know where we’d go.” In David’s home, a similar process was occurring. The rent had increased from $600 to $1000, and the family was struggling to make the rent. The father, working at a florist shop, was oftentimes underpaid or not paid for several months. With two daughters in high school and a son in college, they were feeling particularly vulnerable.

This case of substandard housing raised to a new standard through government intervention is intriguing and seems to align with citizenship theory. Marshall (1950) developed the concept that (social) citizenship rights emerged as a means of creating a minimum accepted level of conditions for citizens. As we see in the above example, the city aims to improve housing to an acceptable level. Here, city housing policy affecting undocumented residence occurs in a context of neighborhood gentrification. However, because this policy has led to rent raises, this policy also limits the housing prospects for undocumented Mexican immigrants, forcing them to increasingly limited, cheaper, most likely precarious, housing. New York’s housing stock is generally available to those who can pay high rents, and those in need of government support must possess legal status. We see exclusion of undocumented residents from the ‘floor’ in order to maintain minimum standards in a territorially-bounded area holds beyond the level of the nation-state. Despite the city’s inclusionary measures, the mechanisms of citizenship reinforce
distinctions in social membership. These overlapping conditions create a vulnerability particular to undocumented residents, whose recourse in housing is limited.  

Marginalized Inclusion

The governance in the context of neoliberal glocalization highlights two important aspects of the predicament of undocumented youth. One, local governance tries to balance economic dynamism, understood by elites as undergirded by neoliberal policies, and social justice, which begins with symbolic inclusion. In the neoliberal economy, undocumented workers are towards one end of a spectrum of desirable worker-citizens, highly disenfranchised but motivated workers in low-skill positions. As we saw in the opening vignette, local power holders point out that undocumented workers are vital to the economy and should be included, though the measures they propose cannot address the fundamentals of social exclusion based on legal status.

Two, we see in the social participation part of the analysis that the local inclusionary measures do not preclude a sense of exclusion. Rather, the exclusion is not experienced primarily as a political exclusion but rather as socio-economic exclusion. My informants’ families, many of whom include documented children, tend to collectively strategize around certain liminal housing and work opportunities. ‘Illegality’ tends to be experienced more as over-arching socio-economic exclusion, moving outside of the local sphere, than a deportability while walking the streets. Positioned at the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy by legal status, youth recognize and struggle with goals beyond the bounds of the family. Kevin told me, “Being an [undocumented] immigrant sucks.” When I asked how, he responded, “It’s so hard just to make ends meet, to have a good

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71 Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for homeless shelters.
life. ” During a particularly harsh winter storm in New York, Christian said, “The bad side of being poor is you have to work in this weather.” “All I want is to live with my girlfriend and get a better job as a cook,” recounted Victor. “What would be better?” I asked. “Getting a day off, holidays, when I’m sick, stuff like that.” I wished Ernie Christmas greetings as he headed into work on Christmas Eve; he would work New Year’s Eve and Day as well. “I just want a job with benefits!” he said.

Conclusion

Previous research explores the implication of political exclusion for undocumented youth, though socio-economic exclusion works against them, too. Indeed, the two forms of exclusion imbricate upon each other. We see this in housing, where the undocumented often occupy dilapidated housing, filling in gaps in the real estate market, and also unprotected from forces of gentrification by the city and state. Low wages force undocumented families to strategize collectively, as the cost of living is expensive, and social mobility is not anticipated. The immigrant bargain results in pressure for youth to work. In work, youth fulfill the market’s desire for low-cost docile workers as they fulfill the need to pay for housing and family needs. Though included in many ways, these youth face a linked marginalization that anchors them to the bottom of the socio-economic hierarchy. We must understand that undocumented youth are marginalized politically as well as socio-economically.

The effect of the policies and practices of the myriad governmental, business, and civil society actors that govern the social life of undocumented youth is complex but clear. Youth are restricted but not excluded from developing social life. In contesting federal deportation policies, New York limits the political exclusion that we see
elsewhere in the US though without offering full rights. Without offering local financial aid for college, opportunity structures for undocumented youth orient them towards full-time work during or after high school. These work opportunities are not very different from those of their parents. Wages give youth some (although limited) resources for maintaining reciprocal relationships with their parents, siblings, significant others and sometimes children. With human capital limited by their political and socio-economic status, they remain precarious at the margins of New York life. Despite having developed capacities for advancement, they become similar to residents without educational credentials, and sadly without citizens’ safety net. Family life is most often spatially centered in small, substandard, overcrowded apartments. While these apartments are vulnerable to development and gentrification, jobs performed by undocumented residents perform an important role in attracting more gentrified residents. The political exclusion of undocumented residents engenders this tension within their social position. Their limited inclusion depends not only on the political bubble that protects their lives but also on the extent of their socio-economic marginalization.

**Boundaries of the Buffer Zone**

Contestation between federal and local actors in immigration matters in the US is relatively recent (Wells 2004; Varsanyi 2010). Here I will outline the principal ways the federal government may influence social life, especially work, family, and housing. With a few exceptions that prioritize young undocumented immigrants compared to immigrant adults, the actions and discourse of the federal level vis-à-vis immigration contrast strongly with those of New York City government. The federal government creates the category of undocumented residents with its policies and practices (Ngai 2004), then
enforced by agencies such as Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) and US Customs & Immigration Services.

New York has successfully contested the major, everyday threat of deportation (De Genova 2002; Willen 2007). While annual deportations have jumped from under 50,000 before 2000 to over 400,000 in 2012 (DHS 2013), New York has stopped its involvement in programs such as the Criminal Alien Program (CAP) and Secure Communities (S-Comm)\(^2\) that have turned routine contacts with police into checks of status, and with it, the risk of deportation. In combination with its public transportation, New Yorkers avoid the fear of “driving Mexican,” where routine police stops result in deportation and family separation (García 2013).

Access to primary and secondary education for all minors without legal status was ensured by the 1982 US Supreme Court case *Plyler v Doe*, though federal bureaucracies prohibit them from normal paths following high school (Gonzales 2011; Abrego 2008), regardless of deferred action status.\(^3\) Using the national Social Security card as the exclusionary mechanism, the (1) federal financial aid program for post-secondary education and the (2) e-verify employment screen exclude youth from post-secondary education and most formal work sectors (respectively) without deporting them. Given the near-necessity of post-secondary educational experience for social mobility, New York’s attempts (via CUNY and the Mexican Consulate) to increase post-secondary opportunities are needed but insufficient.

\(^2\) The CAP program allows ICE to put detainers on foreign-born prisoners, potentially taking custody to deport them. Secure Communities, a program through which information sharing between different levels of government enables deportations of undocumented residents with minor infractions.

\(^3\) Some states also exclude undocumented youth from attending post-secondary education and/or obtaining state financial aid.
Work has been one area of growing inclusion at the federal level. In 2012, President Obama implemented the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program (DACA), in which youth who arrived prior to age 16, are still under 31, have five years of residence, and have evidence of studies may gain a two-year reprieve from deportation, can legally work in the formal economy, and travel freely within the US. In addition to DACA, other federal policies have moved away from criminalizing work by undocumented residents. Workplace inspections have shifted under Obama, with fewer raids that target workers (1,118 administrative arrests in FY 2012) and a focus on the employers using unauthorized workers (CRS 2013).

Following the 1996 IIRIRA law, undocumented youth (and permanent residents with fewer than five years of residence) are ineligible for social welfare programs, including access to housing and health care; the Affordable Care Act continues this exclusion. Stating that the federal government has plenary powers over immigration enforcement, New York State Supreme Court found in Recalde v. Bae Cleaners (2008) that landlords may not ask about legal status when leasing an apartment.

Despite these study, work, and health care limitations, the case of undocumented youth in New York City is instructive in its buffering of legal status-based exclusion. The municipal government has minimized the reach of the federal level vis-à-vis deportation policies. Employers employ undocumented workers in many sectors, though admittedly not in most high-skill ones. Unions see undocumented workers as legitimate and push politically for their inclusion. Community-based member organizations dedicate resources towards fighting workplace abuses and sharing information about legal status.

74 See uscis.gov
Religious organizations provide cultural, legal, and social resources that do not differentiate by legal status. And yet, despite all these local forms of inclusion, most undocumented youth become highly stratified and distinct from their documented peers, in work opportunities, in future visions of themselves.\(^7^5\) While documented youth are willing to work in less desirable job sectors and live with family into young adulthood, they often do not anticipate these conditions to endure.

A final implication of the effect of New York’s policies and practices is the reinforcement of the privileges of citizenship, in line with Chavez’s critique of unequal citizenship regimes (2007). A moral hierarchy treats those without legal status, workers and excluded, as less deserving of social supports (Newton 2005). Economic status, and more specifically social mobility, is correlated with legal status. Though we think of citizenship as a set of political rights balanced by responsibilities, citizenship is also imbricated in a creating societal ‘floors’, minimum acceptable qualities of life for people included. Due to the division of powers, with citizenship being at the federal level, the local level carries on the inequalities and vulnerabilities associated with status.

Though “immigrants greatly shape the city and make areas more livable, the ultimate benefits” in housing, work, and consumption “are often enjoyed by others who have a legal right to the city” (Castañeda 2012: 72). Though Castañeda argues that undocumented residents possess *de facto* urban citizenship, the nature of that citizenship is not spelled out. In fact, the annual possibility of immigration reform may engender social control and make undocumented residents more accommodating. The stratification of undocumented youth at the bottom of New York’s work and housing hierarchies

\(^{75}\) For more on *future selves*, see Chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation.
supports this interpretation. Citizenship may signify “the nationality indicated by passport, participation rights in various public and private contexts, entitlement to benefits, commitment to a particular political or social order, even decent behavior towards one’s colleagues on university campuses” (Fahrmeir 2007).

If we can say that undocumented youth possess urban citizenship, then it is not the ‘flat’ ideal of citizenship proposed by Marshall (1950). It perhaps attempts to fulfill the same function as Marshall’s social citizenship: to minimize the effects of socioeconomic inequality and create social cohesion. The New York citizenship is a partial political membership, partial access to participation in both public and private life, partial entitlement to benefits, and commitment to the municipal sociopolitical order: an uneven sociopolitical space for ‘New York citizens’. This potholed access to certain spaces maintains most mechanisms of stratification that accompany lack of legal status in other places in the United States.

This chapter has described how local government, market, and civil society actors interact to neutralize federal restrictions on work and post-secondary school. Evidence supports the characterization of undocumented young adults as included, though marginalized by the federal restrictions. This local production of marginalized inclusion is similar in some ways to the post-regularization conditions in Paris. The local processes that support those conditions are quite different, as Chapter 8 describes. Paris features more confrontational interactions of one civil society network with the State. The resulting civil society exchange is a negotiated bargain in which the State accords power to a civil society network to shape policy. The resulting regularization policy thus helps youth gain the first step towards citizenship, a temporary visa.
Chapter 8: Passage through Purgatory in Paris: How RESF Enables the Political Incorporation of Undocumented Youth in Paris

Abstract
Engaging literatures on citizenship, civil society, and immigrant political incorporation, this chapter analyzes how Paris legalizes undocumented youth who are legally ineligible for legal residence status. Though much scholarship examines the social membership that civil society may offer immigrants, this chapter describes the process by which a civil society actor contests the state and enables undocumented youth to gain political membership. Based on two years of ethnographic data, this case study identifies and analyzes key interactions between state and civil society actors in the field of governing and policing services to undocumented residents in Paris. A civil society network whose mission is to regularize undocumented youth and their families in France has become a recognized collective actor with a delicate balance of internal values, orientations, and division of labor. After majority-age youth have been refused when trying to regularize their status, the Education Without Borders Network (RESF), through a series of actions contesting governmental policy and practice, works to protect undocumented youth from deportation and secures visas for them. RESF’s embeddedness in schools attracts and assures undocumented youth. Local alliances with civil society and governmental actors, along with specialized knowledge about legal residence, give them leverage to obtain visas from the Préfecture de Police de Paris. The resulting civil society exchange between the network and state actors enables the network some (contingent) external power over areas assumed to be under national control. These findings contribute to how social science literature represents the influence of civil society over formal citizenship.

Introduction
14 year-old Jin arrived in Paris to reunite with his mother, who had left China four years earlier. After he turned 18, I was volunteering with the Education Without Borders Network (RESF)76, and Jin showed me his rejection letter from the Préfecture of Police of Paris (PPP)77: he did not meet the criteria for a visa. His teacher had referred him to the consultation sessions of RESF. Nine months later, accompanying him as an RESF representative to a second Préfecture appointment, Jin received his first récépissé giving him the right to travel, work, and reside in France. How did RESF help Jin regularize his

76 Réseau Education Sans Frontières.
77 Préfectures are the administrative center, and arm of the national State, in each département in France. (Mainland France is divided into 96 administrative areas called départements.) With Paris being both a city and a département, its Préfecture directs the police force and the distribution of visas along with several other functions.
status despite not meeting the legal criteria to do so? Jin’s case does not correspond with the research literature, and indeed the law, on citizenship. With local civil society support, he obtained his first renewable visa on the path towards permanent residency and citizenship.

Chapter 7 described the effect of the overlapping web of actors in New York buffering national restrictions through various social policies. In contrast to those ways that civil society shapes the socio-legal context of undocumented youth in New York, here we see how civil society exerts power on the central State, obtaining legal administrative status for its clientele. The Préfecture enters into an exchange with RESF, an organization that possesses specialized knowledge about the regularization process, contacts with undocumented youth, and the wherewithal to disturb public order to accomplish its goals. This exchange, a set of cooperative interactions, grants flexible (fragile) governance rights in exchange for taking some responsibility in addressing a social problem.

Substantiated by longitudinal ethnographic data, this chapter first describes the policy context regarding residents in irregular status, identifies an unmapped process of undocumented youth regularization, and then represents key interactions between actors in Paris over the distribution of citizenship rights to undocumented youth. RESF actors align with the primary actors involved in the governance of undocumented youth in Paris, coordinating local civil society, along with schools, to contest governmental action. This contestation paradoxically leads to cooperation with the State in direct relations. In opposition to the assumption of national-level plenary powers in immigration, this analysis shows how civil society uses its position to make claims of integration for
undocumented young adults and their families. This policy allows them to stay and avoid many kinds of immigration control.

In the discussion, we will see how this speaks to literature on French immigration policy, the division of competencies in the French system, the role of civil society in the political incorporation of immigrants, and finally how claims are made on the French state by immigrants and groups that represent them.

*The Case of Undocumented Youth in Paris*

Political action regarding undocumented youth, or *jeunes sans-papiers* as they are known in French, occurs in a broader context of anti-immigrant and pro-immigrant sentiment in France. Focusing on a nationalist vision of French identity and culture, the far right party National Front has found considerable voter support for its anti-immigrant stance, placing second in presidential elections in 2002 and a close third in 2012. In an effort to attract some of its voters, the French right party, Union for a Popular Movement, has adopted more restrictive immigration policies (Carvalho and Geddes 2012). Both rightist parties’ platforms in the 2012 presidential election advocated a slashing of visa allocation, including for foreign college students.

While these political parties centralize anti-immigrant sentiment, others represent pro-immigrant attitudes. Hundreds of thousands participated in several counter-protests against support for the right’s platform on immigration, particularly in Paris where half a million protested electoral support for Le Pen in 2002 (Shields 2007). In the presidential election of 2012, the Socialist Party and the Left Front countered with pro-immigrant platforms. Unions, religious organizations, and many local associations support publicly support pro-immigrant platforms and sans-papiers in particular. More than one in five Paris residents is an immigrant, and more than double this if we count children of
immigrants (Insee 2011; Bouvier 2012; Penninx et al. 2004). The Front National won nearly 18% of the first-round national vote, though only 6.2% in Paris.

Though the profile of undocumented adults in Paris was amplified with the 1996 hunger strikes in two churches leading to strikes a decade later, this movement did not encompass youth. Youth arrive accompanied by family, to reunite with parents or other family, or to build a future alone, from a range of world regions: most often Central Asia, China, West Africa, North Africa, and Eastern Europe. As minors, youth do not need documented proof of residence and can attend school. On their 18th birthday, youth face the possibility of deportation should they try to shift their status as required, be caught in a raid or routine inspection at work or on the subway. The visa rules are complex, making it difficult to generalize, but youth who arrive prior to their 13th birthday normally obtain a permit; those who arrive after this birthday do not.

In June 2004, in the Trade Union Center of Paris, parents, educators, collectives of undocumented residents, unions and associations came together to discuss what to do about the situation of undocumented youth and families with undocumented children. Their stated mission was to change the law to allow these populations to grow up in France and to protect them from deportation as more and more irregular residents are deported every year. Beginning with Sarkozy’s term as Minister of the Interior, quotas set expectations for the removal of increasing numbers of irregular residents. In 2001, France deported 9,000 people, while by 2011, 32,922 foreigners were deported, and the objective set for 2012 is 40,000 (Libération 2012). Deportation orders triple the number of actual deportations over the past five years (Secrétariat général du Comité 2011). Given that estimates of France’s population in irregular status tend towards less than 400,000
(Courau 2009), the percentage deported each year is double that of the United States (Passel and Cohn 2009). In Paris alone, thousands of irregular resident students and their family members receive deportation orders.

France justifies its deportation regime as limiting illegitimate access to its generous social welfare system and reinforcing the borders of the nation-state. The intrigue lies in the focus on deportations in popular discourse, and the contrasting absence of regularizations. An average of 30,000 irregular residents per year have been regularized by Préfectures across France since 2006 (Secrétariat général du Comité 2011). These residents may have married a French citizen, leveraged work contacts in a shortage area, become a temporary student or proved their personal and family contacts in France. Though the deportation policy wins media attention, French law allows some to regularize and Préfectures authorize the regularization of thousands whose cases do not fall within the protection of the law. This chapter focuses on the latter situation.

Of the estimated 10-15,000 Paris youth who worked with RESF to avoid deportations and regularize, very few of them have been deported since its initial mobilization, and the first parent in years was deported in January 2012. As we will see in the analysis below, the effectiveness of this organization in protecting irregular residents from deportation and obtaining visas for them is as much due to the organization’s strong network structure as it is to its effective embeddedness in the institutional field (here, the governance of irregular residence) (DiMaggio & Powell 1983).

Methods

78 This list of categories is non-exhaustive and lists the most frequent cases I encountered.
The paper relies on three data sources: ethnographic data, a review of the relevant secondary literature, and analysis of relevant legal and government documents, from laws delimiting service provision to bilateral accords to the Prefectural guide for obtaining visas. Most importantly, over fifteen months from 2010 to 2012, I conducted participant observation with several associations in Paris, predominantly with RESF. Other local associations serve and help integrate adult immigrants, as well as others that focus on immigrant and native youth. My RESF activity followed all possible actions within the network including monitoring several online listservs; manning several weekly neighborhood and city-wide consultation workshops (permanences in French); protesting, organizing and attending neighborhood and city-wide RESF events; accompanying youth and families to courts and administrative offices; attending the annual national network meeting; and other more informal social activities. In addition, I carried on extended fieldwork with a dozen male youth (aged 18-24) and their families, in and outside of their homes, with friends, and sometimes, their schools. From this intimate position, I was able to see at which points they turned to RESF for assistance, or at which points they became more actively involved in the activities of RESF. This analysis is couched in a comparative study of undocumented youth coming of age in Paris and New York.

The Process of Regularizing Undocumented Youth

Most undocumented youth who regularized their residence status took several years to do so. Four steps occurred in the vast majority of cases. First, after they turn 18 years of age, most youth try to regularize by filing paperwork at the Préfecture, as they are legally obligated to do. Without a formal right to a visa, applicants are rejected and
usually given a deportation order. Second, seeking to find a way to rectify their situation, youth ask teachers or social workers for their assistance. These adults refer the youth to an RESF permanence, staffed by activist volunteers. Third, the activist members of RESF assist the youth by responding to any questions they might have, compiling the most effective paperwork possible, accompanying the youth through their bureaucratic visits, and other modes of bettering youth chances at regularization. Sometimes RESF collectively submits their dossiers. In the case of an extant deportation order or a refusal, RESF can refer youth to knowledgeable, trustworthy lawyers, attend courtroom visits, and in extreme cases, mobilize students to rally in support of their colleague’s case. If necessary, they can assist with, or, more likely, refer to other associations or agencies that handle, social problems (e.g. transportation, housing, or schooling issues). Lastly, the youth obtain a student or family-based renewable residence visa.

My field notes on the case of one student, Typhaine, also exhibit how a Prefectural refusal led her to confide in a teacher, which led her to RESF resources. The interactions between Typhaine and her teacher led her to insider knowledge of how to apply for a visa, all-important emotional support, and the network’s tactical repertoire, starting from petitions and ‘elite letters’ to demonstrations outside the court when her second application for residency was met with a deportation order. With RESF supports, the court nullified her deportation order and recommended the awarding of a visa.

Typhaine had spoken to Mr. D [the RESF school liaison] about her status already, telling him she had applied for a visa. Then she received the OQTF [a deportation order]. She spoke with the teacher about it, who convinced her by telling her, see other elements are needed for your application. You need support, and letters, petitions, and public action have an impact. Her OQTF made it clear to her that she needed more resources. Mr. D convinced her to do a petition, and she addressed the class on her status. She was worried that
the fact that she has a baby might make them think negatively about her. Instead, Mr. D told me, there is another mother in the class, and the students thought more about what her situation means while having a baby. The implications of deportation became clearer. The class then took petitions, and had other students sign. Mr. D made copies of the flyer telling people to come to her court appearance.\(^79\)

If we heard a bit about RESF’s tactical repertoire in Typhaine’s case, most cases are more mundane. For most students, the intermediate link is they are referred to weekly or bi-monthly *permanences*, open consultation sessions held in nearly each arrondissement of Paris. Undocumented youth or undocumented parents with children stop in, often referred by schools, social workers or neighborhood associations, to learn legal and social options regarding their particular situation and possibly to assemble an effective dossier for the Préfecture. Regularization is a complicated bureaucratic process,\(^80\) and in an effort to present legitimate documentation of undocumented residents’ ‘integrated’ social life, RESF coordinates the acquisition of paperwork. For example, RESF ‘godparenting’ ceremonies present certificates to youth (explained in depth below), activists procure letters of support from local officials, and teachers are asked to present a portrait of student life. Members also give youth practical advice on how to avoid deportation.

RESF members accompany youth to the Préfecture in their appointments. Unless arrested for lacking proper documentation, the first contact youth have with the Préfecture is the application process for regularization: asking for a temporary visa. The required documentation bewilders the novice, and experienced RESF members help prepare their dossiers and then accompany youth every month to the pre-appointment, where one gets an official appointment at the Préfecture. I will use my first-hand point of

\(^{79}\) Field notes, 3/22/12.

\(^{80}\) The Court of Auditors states, “…the complexity of the law, for a foreigner, to enter and stay in French territory has grown” (2013).
view of my accompanying of Chen to show RESF’s balance between contestation and collaboration. Prior to the first pre-appointment, a core member advised me how to present the youth’s case (emphasizing his family’s presence and his studies) and to prolong the interaction by asking for another appointment if the response was negative. Chen and I, wearing my RESF button, went together with his folder of documents and asked for an appointment. I helped to repeat and respond to some of the clerk’s questions as she asked for preliminary proof of meeting criteria for a visa. Afterwards, Chen seemed truly grateful for the assistance. In my field notes, I wrote that “I felt relieved, recognized, and helpful.”

When we had the official meeting at the Prefecture, we presented his case to a clerk. I filled out a form as an official accompanier, and eventually his file was passed to a manager. She called us over, and said that he did not meet the criteria to be regularized, since Chen’s parents did not possess visas. Since he was with RESF, he could apply to be considered for a student visa. The manager gave us strategic advice for regularizing Chen’s family. When we went to a third appointment at a third location for a student visa, I nearly made a mistake. A clerk who previewed the application noted he did not have the necessary entry visa and his parents didn’t have the necessary financial means to support a student, and told us we had to leave. As I explained that Chen was only a high school student, and an experienced clerk explained to our clerk that it was alright: “We haven’t yet trained you for that case.” He referred us to the clerk who does RESF applications. Despite not meeting the criteria for a student visa (e.g. sufficient income, parents’ legal status, knowledge of French language), the Prefecture awarded Chen a student visa. This
example shows how the organization and presence of RESF can be leveraged to obtain visas for otherwise ineligible candidates.

In another case in which I accompanied a youth, Bao, he buttressed his claim of having personal and family links in France with his school report cards, a letter of support from the French mother of his girlfriend, and my presence as an RESF representative. Without the assistance of RESF, Bao’s first application (at the age of 18) had been rejected for not meeting the criteria for a family visa. With a lawyer, he appealed the decision though the process takes over a year. We returned to the Préfecture, received no decision until the appeal was approved (with newly submitted evidence, contrary to procedure). Following RESF assistance in compiling a dossier and accompaniment to PPP appointments, Bao was accorded a family visa despite fewer than five years of residence.

Some lawyers express solidarity with young immigrants and their families, and RESF members will often advertise them to *sans-papiers* as knowledgeable, discounted lawyers. The RESF listserv disseminates the scheduling of hearings. In my observations, at least a few core members are likely to attend the proceedings. In one case where a youth faced deportation after turning 18, the RESF leader of her school—in conjunction with students and other staff—organized a rally in front of the courthouse.

While I was inside the courtroom, the judge paused briefly as cacophonous chanting entered from the street, about 150 feet from the windows. The noise muffled the judge’s voice and disrupted the orderly ambiance. Typhaine, whose case was pending, had known they were coming and re-adjusted in her seat. I left to observe the rally. About two hundred students and five school staff crammed the narrow sidewalks of the Rue de Jouy in

81 If their income falls below a certain level, undocumented residents qualify for a free or reduced-fee lawyer. Associations often help people to apply for this right.
central Paris, with a few cardboard signs and one young man holding a megaphone. The beige, brown, and black students directed the rally somewhat haphazardly, starting chants until they became embarrassed with the attention, and passing the megaphone. Teachers with whom I spoke claimed they had little to do with the organization of the rally. Most students with whom I spoke did not personally know Typhaine but came to support a fellow student in her fight to stay in the country. Students from Typhaine’s high school have organized such rallies in the past.\footnote{Field Notes, 3/7/12.}

Sometimes youth are arrested by police before being regularized, and garnering the necessary resources (e.g. paperwork, translations, lawyers, supporters) for contestation must be timely. Undocumented youth with emergencies can call special arrondissement phone numbers to alert the network and access their resources. In this way, RESF is able to scrutinize relevant police action (e.g. arrest, round-up, deportation). Interventions include sending online and paper petitions, school records, proof of social participation, and letters to the Préfecture as well as attending court sessions.

Like Typhaine, Souleymane appealed a deportation order, and beheld an RESF-organized rally of hundreds of teachers and students outside of the courthouse on the day of his appearance. “I was stunned to see them there,” he said, and when the court ruled that the Préfecture should issue him a visa, his turnaround from clandestine possibilities seemed complete. The Prefecture, however, appealed and issued Souleymane his second deportation order and third rejection. With the intervention of an RESF leader, he was granted a personal interview with the Prefect, who judged his regularization request to be warranted by his integration (see Chapter 3).

Finally, the undocumented youth receives their visa after this long process of rejection, entry to RESF, and preparation and accompaniment. In gratitude, they repay the RESF member(s) with food or other symbolic gifts. Normally, youth maintain little if
any contact with the network. These examples highlight RESF contestation and the shepherding of individual youth through different authorities that govern residence.

**Contestation of the State: What makes RESF effective?**

To what can we attribute the ability of undocumented youth to gain residence visas in this way? The CESEDA law allows those who arrived before 13 to regularize, limiting exclusion of undocumented youth to those that arrive between 13 and 18 years of age. The breadth of visa categories, the discretionary criteria of integration and allegiance to Republican values, and internal Prefectural discretion create the conditions of possibility that are exploited by RESF.

These factors reduce the number of undocumented youth. But the asymmetric power relationship between the State and undocumented youth, and groups like RESF that support them, still exists. How do they create extralegal space for local inclusion of undocumented youth? RESF exploits bureaucratic discretion while simultaneously influencing local government officials. The legal criteria do not allow for Prefectures to regularize youth, but the discretionary system creates a niche. Media do not report on this green light, though advocates and lawyers understand they can get most through (Têtu-Delage 2011).

The courts have often overruled Prefectural decision-making on appeal from rejected visa applicants and deportation orders. With logistical difficulties of locating people who received a deportation order and a high success rate in appeals, the

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83 A bilateral treaty between Algeria and France sets the threshold at 10 years old for Algerian children.
84 Several types of deportation orders exist. The most common is an ‘obligation to leave French territory’ wherein you are ordered to leave the country and not return for at least 3 years.
Parliament has tightened the laws making it easier to deport. Courts often balance the cost of allowing asylum seekers to stay versus the cost of deportation (Düvell 2011a). Much of the courts’ discretionary power (El Qadim 2008) stems from the wording of the immigration law: issuing a family visa depends on judging the balance of someone’s “insertion in French society”—five years of residence, documented family links, work contract, “possessing republican values”, and evidence of institutional participation—with their family life in the country of origin (CESEDA L. 313-11 7°; Secrétariat général à l’immigration et à l’intégration 2011). One judge spells out how Chinese who cannot speak French or look awkward in a courtroom may be rejected because they look unintegrated:

“The Chinese...they tend to be in their own community, they’re not open to others, one can quickly see the result in terms of integration. They can’t speak a word of French, it’s rare they take classes, and they are not engaged outside of their milieu...that’s why they are rejected” (El Qadim 2008: 70-71).

The analysis that follows explains how RESF attracts and ensures undocumented youth by reducing the social distance between undocumented residents and political institutions; how RESF coordinates locally-based actors around youth cases; and how RESF contests State law and positions on undocumented residents.

Attracts and assures youth: Visible solidarity within schools

Undocumented youth may not know of and trust RESF. From the flow of information in schools, other organizations, and ethnic networks, most youth learn that status is adjustable. Sometimes a family member was able to adjust status in the past, in regularization programs or through marriage. If RESF ‘conductors’ eventually transport
undocumented youth across the boundary of legal residence, it is because they attract them into their sessions and assure them their action will be effective. Having been rejected in their own efforts at regularizing, youth expect that working with RESF is the only way they can get papers. Better-off irregular residents may pay a lawyer before or in lieu of coming to RESF. As Mr. F explained to a confused sans-papiers at a permanence, “We are not lawyers. We are not professionals...our specialty is the school setting, which supports us—teachers, principals, parents, and so on—in the fight for your rights we can be a counterweight to Sarkozy.”

Teachers were the first to publicly champion the cause of their undocumented students (Dupont 2009). Education for minors is a universal right, and school the most important public institution for undocumented youth. The breadth of teachers engaged with RESF expanded quickly in 2006, reacting to the possibility of regularizing but also to overzealous tactics by French police. With the Fédération de Comités de Parents d’Elèves (FCPE; the Parents’ Association Federation) network structure as a guide, RESF recruited and established school leaders at each school. These leaders act as the school liaison for other RESF action and information, most importantly neighborhood permanences and the listserv. Along with other teachers, school social workers, and staff, these leaders often act as a “first contact,” someone in a school who serves as a bridge to

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85 Field notes, 7/28/12.
86 The ‘Sarkozy circulaire’ promised regularization to families of undocumented students. Out of 36,000 applications, only some 8,000 were regularized.
87 Resistance developed from former Minister of the Interior Sarkozy’s strategy of having police arrest undocumented parents or guardians waiting outside school for their children or grandchildren, which was captured on video and reported by popular media. As elementary-school children looked on fearfully, teachers, parents, and other RESF members protected their students and their schools by blocking police and police vehicles with their bodies.
other resources for undocumented youth (Putnam 1995). These teachers tend towards the left of the political spectrum that espouses a more inclusive philosophy towards immigrants, though RESF does not formally align with any political party.

One high school teacher explained how they generate awareness and acceptance of undocumented status: “At the start of every year, most teachers here tell their classes, ‘we know that some of you are undocumented. If you want to talk to us, find out more information, for us to help you, you should talk to so-and-so about your situation.’”\(^{88}\) One undocumented student, Tarek, substantiates this teacher’s practice: “It helps a lot, it comforts, to know there are teachers who support us, who know our situation. It feels official when it is in a school. At the same time, there are some that do not say anything, of course, we know that because some only come out at the last minute or after being hidden for a long time. They are scared or ashamed.”\(^{89}\)

One youth, Souleymane, explained that some school-based rallies in favor of other undocumented students eased his anxieties about telling others about his status: “Souleymane had seen Chinese high school sans-papiers protesting, and he was amazed by the idea that the Chinese could just be out and telling people they were sans-papiers. He said he thought in his head, me, I am sans-papiers, too! He said that sans-papiers carry this shame with them, he felt it, and you don’t want anyone to know... later he told some teachers, and they were supportive.”\(^{90}\) By leveraging school and RESF resources to contest governmental acts, teachers that Souleymane met proved crucial to his fighting against deportation orders and gaining a visa.

\(^{88}\) Field notes, 3/22/12.  
\(^{89}\) Field notes, 10/15/11.  

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These practices in turn generate greater openness between school staff and students, and increases the information staff communicate about the practice. The school leader usually posts a contact name and number outside the school for interested parents or community members, with the RESF logo. They place posters on the door of the school for RESF events, or distribute leaflets or petitions to both students and teachers. They serve as a liaison between students and the principal, who sometimes chooses to support a student’s case for the Préfecture or in court.

The teachers also understand how a principal’s support, or lack of it, changes their tactics and/or effectiveness. An RESF teacher expresses the self-aware positioning of teachers and school administrators in the lives of these youth: “We cannot be neutral. We are engaged in the lives of our [undocumented] students. Even if the principal is a part of the State, the rest of us can still work to support these cases. Even the principal can write a letter of support, and he has.”91 Other principals have gone so far as to allow dedicated protest days in support of immigrant rights.

By being in the right place at the right time, teachers are crucial to resistance efforts and to the effectiveness of the RESF system. What gives rise to their actions? Many teachers and school administrators understand their job as one of bringing young adults into the world, in giving them the resources they will need to be successful workers and citizens. This universal mission encompasses the situation of undocumented students (Marrow 2009). One RESF teacher explained, “it was more about education here, and less about teaching. He said, we try to have them leave with more than just
some training. We have a community here where we know each other.”

He presented himself as an example of someone from a foreign background who had succeeded thanks to the education system. In addition to posters in the teachers’ lounge depicting the adversity of growing up sans-papiers, this teacher also reflected the far left’s embrace of immigrants’—and undocumented immigrants’ rights in particular—in his speech, in posters of undocumented students’ struggles, and in the readily available copies of L’Humanité, a leftist newspaper he had left in the teachers’ lounge.

With such values and direct contact with those in need, teachers are more likely to participate in associational activity than other citizens (Siméant 1998). A minority of schools’ teachers, often informed by their leftist political stance, partake in other RESF actions: acting as ‘godparents’ for undocumented youth in semi-official ceremonies, attending permanences, accompanying youth to courts, and rallying and protesting on behalf of their rights, in front of their schools, the City Hall, or in the streets. They may help to recruit and retain members, especially parents, through less formal meet-and-greets and other events.

Along with neighborhood activists, these teachers, social workers, and other staff carry out bi-weekly or monthly permanences where undocumented youth and their families can ask questions, be oriented to the Préfecture bureaucracy, or develop an extra-legal strategy for regularization. These permanences, which exist in virtually every arrondissement, normally run as an open forum, and thus allow information to flow between activists but also between undocumented residents. The presence of other undocumented residents also legitimizes the RESF action. Members orient youth to the

92 Field notes, 1/26/12.
system of obtaining resources (advice for how to avoid deportation, referrals to social workers or other associations, list of steps of action, including possible RESF mobilization, accompaniment in bureaucratic procedures). The sans-papiers benefit from the institutionalization of experiential knowledge in these sessions. These sessions also benefit the sans-papiers in an altogether different way: they hear others’ stories of barriers at school, family separation, shame and stigma, danger of being deported, arrest or loss of housing. These hardships are normalized through the discussions and collective problem solving. Carlos told me after a meeting, “At least I’m not like [the other undocumented youth]. I don’t have it that bad.”

Coordinates school-based and human rights group alliances

In addition to the visible solidarity of locally-based school staff, other local individuals and groups help maintain the visibility of RESF. This visibility contributes to undocumented youth coming into contact with RESF, and their presence legitimizes the organization, assuring others that the network will be open and effective. A core group manages the multiple listservs (city, region, national, youth city), the website and its press releases and petitions, district godparenting ceremonies, the organization of multiple protests, and communication with the Préfecture.

Teachers’ effectiveness within the network is reinforced by two types of organizations that are organized on the school level: parents’ groups and teachers’ unions. The parent association FCPE developed out of the teachers’ unions and, though independent, remains an organization informally aligned with the left. Like RESF, the FCPE has school representatives as well as a city, regional, and national structure. The extant relationships of the FCPE with both administrations and politicians position them
as a useful intermediary. The commitment from such an established group gives RESF legitimacy, both at the school level and at the city and national levels.

Not surprisingly, FCPE and RESF members often overlap, and their buttons and flags intermingle at rallies or events. Indeed, the parents’ association espouses a mission similar to that of teachers, as one former president of the Paris FCPE explained: “we are for all students, not just *sans-papiers*, but insofar as they are excluded, we support them.”

With the common value of solidarity based in an ideal of equality, the RESF set of values imbricates in that of the FCPE. The solidary RESF perspective sees a limitation of any student as a limitation of the whole school: if one student is distracted by his or her family’s legal situation, then the whole class will suffer.

With over 300,000 members and one million and a half voting families, the considerable resources of the FCPE are frequently employed to the network’s ends. Many FCPE members are also active RESF members as RESF school leaders, in neighborhood *permanences*, as ‘godparents’ for undocumented youth and their families. Other information sharing occurs as, for example, at a neighborhood social event, as an RESF representative, I shared a table with a representative of the FCPE. We looked over each others’ paraphernalia, and chatted about recent local happenings and friends in the organizations we both knew. *Liaisons Laïques*, the magazine of the FCPE, has articles on *sans-papiers* and the RESF movement, written by RESF members.

Parents may be drawn into the network through the informal social contacts that accompany school-going children. Parents may see RESF members regularly, at FCPE meetings, neighborhood festivals, or association fairs. When a child’s friends turn out to
be *sans-papiers*, or one of her classmates face a deportation order, or the police frighten students’ end of day exit by carrying out a deportation order on a parent awaiting their child, some parents become involved in RESF activities.

Teacher unions, which reflect and inform teachers’ political and social values, also play a role. Union representatives enjoy a lighter teaching load in order to help organize teacher concerns, including protecting the right to study of undocumented students. Some representatives use the resources of their position (time, inter-union contacts, and everyday teacher contacts) to reinforce the legitimacy of RESF and coordinate action. Under the heading “United against ‘disposable’ immigration,” one union representative writes sympathetic articles on *sans-papiers* for the union website. “We bring up [*sans-papiers*] events or news at union meetings,” recounted one union representative. “We try to increase support [for *sans-papiers*] among teachers.”

With its network structure, RESF is constituted not only of individual members but also of 221 associations, unions, and collectives across France. While in everyday practice many of these associations that operate in the field of protecting or expanding citizen and human rights are peripheral to RESF actions, they do occasionally organize or coordinate events in common. The mechanism that facilitates this coordination is the overlap of members with RESF, similar to the network’s relationship to parent associations. At *arrondissement* association fairs, national action days, public debates and film screenings, in social centers and also in more informal settings, members of these

95 E.g. Associations with missions in human rights (Ligue des Droits de l’Homme), housing (Droits au Logement), immigrant (La Cimade, Le GISTI), anti-racism (MRAP), or poverty (Emmâus).
associations dialogue and reinforce the legitimacy of their work and the values—solidarity and active citizenship—that underlie their work.

In attracting members of similar causes to recognize the cause of undocumented students and families as legitimate, the common social ground reduces the costs of connecting action across sites and diffusing the issue. This proximity permits recruitment by RESF, and makes future mobilization more of a concrete possibility. The recipients of the listserv include members from other associations. Members frequently pass flyers, informational guides, and contact information of other associations at *permanences* and other events. Associations publish RESF press releases, and vice versa. This coordination gives RESF members a broader repertoire of resistance, specialized information about contesting state actors, and a broader platform from which to contest government discourse and action.

In Figure 7 below we can see the locally-embedded actors in green, including schools, associations, and local politicians that provide services to undocumented youth. These same actors share members with RESF. Restrictions on these services come from the national-level governmental actors in red; RESF directly contests actions of the (national) police, the Préfecture, and the (national) courts. Administering visas as well as policing undocumented residents, the Préfecture (in blue) sits at the confluence of these two opposing pressures, local and national. Appointed by the Minister of the Interior, Prefects are the police chiefs of a given *département*. While they are the lone representative of the (national) state, they possess important discretionary powers (Cette France-là 2012; Spire 2008) in key policies affecting undocumented youth.
Figure 7. The Structure Governing Undocumented Youth in Paris

*Forge locally-based civil society links with local government*

Linkages are not limited to other civil society actors but extend to local representatives. The ideological breadth and number of representatives augment the pool of political allies with whom RESF can engage. The density of representation increases with the imbrication of neighborhood, arrondissement, city, and regional legislatures in...
addition to their national level counterparts (see Table 18 below). RESF then leverages this local strength—in connections with schools, associations, and representatives—to counter restrictive national discourse and policies by proving a useful mediator to the Préfecture. Local representatives interact with civil society by 1) providing certificates to undocumented youth and their families in godparenting ceremonies, 2) writing letters to support regularization applications, 3) participating in protests, 4) speaking at RESF events, and 5) providing an undocumented youth contract to protect them against deportation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Legislative Representatives</th>
<th>No. of Members</th>
<th>Constituents/Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conseil de Paris</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>13,706</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil d'arrondissement</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>6,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil Ile de France</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>286,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conseil de quartier</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Mayors</td>
<td>4,558</td>
<td>490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>111,705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18. Dense Local Political Representation in Paris

With its origins in the French Revolution, parrainages, or civil godparenting, represent another form of contestation of the State by local politicians and civil society. This ceremony, which often occurs at the arrondissement town hall, formally allies residents with undocumented schoolchildren and their families. Teachers and RESF members encourage undocumented youth to participate in order to gain a proof of integration, useful at the Préfecture, and to access the resources of a godparent. After

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speeches by local politicians and activists, the undocumented convene with volunteer
godparents and obtain a certificate pledging the latter’s assistance. At one such ceremony,
I spoke on the wonderful example of recognition by Paris politicians, compared it to the
lack of recognition in the US, and praised the RESF activism. A few sans-papiers
recounted their personal story and how status affected their lives. The arrondissement
mayor normally signs the certificate, which certainly looks official to the undocumented
residents, with the French colors and logo imprinted on top. Technically it bestows no
rights, however it does symbolize solidarity with sans-papiers, provides potentially
useful contacts, makes members feel effective, and the ceremony affords local
recognition for RESF. Citizen values are feted in song and speech, and residents mix
afterwards over refreshments. As we saw above, these certificates and letters of support
from representatives demonstrate integration as well as adherence to republican values to
Préfecture clerks and managers. Once the ceremony is over, different godparents develop
different relationships with their sans-papiers families. Some become close with youth
and their families and offer financial and social support; others respond only in case of
emergency.

In order to maintain a local political presence and potentially recruit new
members, RESF participates in different types of events attended by local individuals and
organizations: after-school parent events, popular festivals, and cultural events. These
events are important means of framing the issue as about equality, disseminating
information to sans-papiers, and coordinating with other organizations. Local politicians,
often from the far left, use these events to stump for themselves. For example, one city
legislator framed the struggle for undocumented youth as one against the far-right Front
National, and lauded her *parrainage* involvement in these “warm meetings full of humanity.” The audience clapped enthusiastically after she demanded a new policy on regularizing youth.

The regional legislator who followed her speech praised his body’s work in providing undocumented youth contracts.\(^97\) “We must protect youth who cannot regularize at age 18. Those who had been under the protection of the Social Funds for Children can apply for a contract that will protect them [from deportation] until age 21.”\(^98\) Though these contracts do not cover all undocumented youth, they are a symbolic statement that the local government is not unified against *sans-papiers*. We will see below that certain local officials will participate in protests with RESF, giving them legitimacy in interactions with the Préfecture.

In contrast to civil society organizations subcontracted by the government (Smith and Lipsky 1993), RESF’s independence from state financing alters its relationship with state actors. Cooptation by the government may be accomplished by appointing outside leadership to run associations, determining criteria associations should use to carry out their missions, and attaching funding to specific desired actions. Associations with similar rights-claiming missions receive much of their funding from various governmental sources, leaving them more predisposed to respond to governmental concerns. RESF actions require only donated space from unions, social centers, and

\(^{97}\) These contracts allow undocumented youth who had been unaccompanied minors to continue to receive state support.

\(^{98}\) Field notes, 5/20/12.
occasionally, *arrondissement* mayors. Funds for needy youth are volunteered by members or raised by selling paraphernalia at events. With little to gain from action except recognition and cessations from the government, RESF is positioned somewhat differently than associations that have been co-opted by the state (Noiriel 2007).

*Individually and Collectively Contests the State*

RESF also has elements prone to direct contestation and this political orientation gives them access to other resources. As one RESF leader told me, “we are a pain in the ass for the Préfecture. That is how we get things done.” Rallies and marches, with and without students, use public space to claim undocumented youth as legitimate. RESF surveys public police tactics as they relate to legal residence. As noted above, RESF also contests action of the Prefectural clerks during visits. RESF activists demand meetings with the Prefect where they make specific claims on the system of distributing visas.

Every month, a few elected officials and core RESF members stage a small protest, ‘Letters against Numbers (i.e. deportation quotas)’, in front of the Préfecture to destabilize the peace and communicate their moral commitment. Despite this practice being illegal, officers come and ask leaders if they are requesting a meeting with an official. The core then publicize these ‘confrontations’ which symbolize their antagonistic stance towards the Préfecture, with press releases to local media and others. Other protests highlight the breadth of RESF allies.

Protests can also be a form of escalation in making claims on the State. In particular cases in well-organized schools, hundreds of high school students have rallied in front of the Préfecture to advocate for a regularization. Anxious to avoid dealings with a group of potentially problematic teenagers in a symbolic public space, the Préfecture
has agreed to meetings with RESF leaders and youth (see below). “They are scared of youth, and they prefer to meet with us instead,” explained one leader. We see similar action in front of courts, as Typhaine’s case above. Small rallies can also raise visibility of claims. When an undocumented father was deported, about 25 RESF activists, including a few local officials, rallied in front of his children’s schools a few early mornings, communicating to teachers, parents, and students the relevance and immediacy of the cause. Leading French newspaper *Le Monde* interviewed an RESF leader about the deportation.

With a strong, responsive communication network, they can oppose police action. The reaction catalyzed and deepened the commitment of members, garnered regular media attention, and pushed them to expand their membership base. What began as a spontaneous alert sent by text message and e-mail about the immediate need for a show of solidarity has now become a more institutionalized anti-*rafle* (police round-up) system, wherein a small but persuasive group of members arrive to scrutinize and oppose such police action. Even when this action does not prevent the police from arresting the individual, the public pressure it creates encourages the police station to release the parent or guardian quickly.

Micro-contestation can occur in the examination of supporting documents at the Préfecture. Before accompanying my first student, two members gave me advice on how to be effective. When the clerk asked Chen what visa he had, he was struck by fear. I spoke up for him, “He does not have a prior visa.” “Where is the proof of his resources?” the clerk asked.” “He lives with his parents, and these are their resources,” I replied. “Well, he needs a visa to get a student visa. And we must have [proof of] his resources.”
As Chen looked on nervously, as did I, she asked the clerk to her left what to do. He told her it was normal procedure and just to assign us an examiner.

In this example, my confidence and language ability inside a governmental agency supported Chen’s case; my presence itself, as a white adult with an RESF button on, accorded us the additional respect of her asking a colleague for verification of procedure. Certain activists with more flexible schedules have become experts in this type of micro-contestation; indeed, several of them know the clerks well, and transactions are done more or less automatically.

If the above analysis shows how RESF directly pressures the Prefecture to accord visas, several RESF actions facilitate the Préfecture’s work. In every visit to the Préfecture, I met with the youth beforehand to review and verify his dossier. This organization makes the interaction with a clerk or examiner more efficient, and saves making multiple visits due to insufficient paperwork. Along with a few other organizations (La Cimade, above all), RESF has become an efficient means of building and transferring specialized information on undocumented residents and residence, including information on the social position of sans-papiers, their means of entry, problematic social situations, where they live, and how to communicate with them. When the Besson law established new regulations in 2011, RESF held training sessions to orient activists to its practical implications.

*Negotiates with the State*

The contestation sets the stage for the *civil society exchange*, a different, more cooperative, interaction with the State. In direct head-to-head meetings with the Prefect himself (and a few key members of his cabinet), we see the recognition of the existence
and claims of RESF as a political actor (Tilly and Tarrow 2007) in the institutional field governing undocumented youth. On September 25, 2012, Prefect Boucault, his deputy Maillet, and chief of staff Rose met with three core members and two youth at the Préfecture. This analysis follows from minutes taken by RESF.

At the start of the discussions, the Prefect said he knew of RESF and the work that the network did. RESF entered the discussions with a list of demands/concerns: a group of undocumented young adults awaited action on their dossiers, presented collectively to the Préfecture on July 4; others were issued a student visa and later had difficulty adjusting their status after their studies were finished; other youth dossiers were rejected following a decision in their favor by the courts; others were kept in limbo with 3-month visa renewals; Préfecture bureaucrats subjected youth to informal and formal language tests as criteria for regularization; and in general, practice showed a lack of clear working rules regarding the status of undocumented youth and their families. And most importantly, RESF raised their demand that youth be not deported but regularized.

The Préfecture recognized and approached the group as a useful source of specialized information about undocumented residents and life: as feedback to their bureaucratic policies. While the Prefect referred to the need for a *circulaire* (administrative memorandum/interpretation) approved by the government in order to carry out some of RESF’s requests, it did not reveal the role they themselves play in writing such *circulaires*. Further, though they began talks stating that “regularization can only be done within a framework set up by the government [by the President and his Cabinet]”, the following discussion openly condoned special treatment for youth
represented by RESF. In fact, the Préfecture repeatedly asked for the “collaboration” of RESF to establish a list of legitimate undocumented residents whom they should service.

Pointing out how they could work in concert to establish a more efficient “method”, the chief of staff Rose pointed out that “they are unable to follow [these undocumented] youth, so they propose to work together.” While RESF rebuffed the first offer of “working together to put together the dossiers”, which seemed too close to doing the Préfecture’s work for them, Police Chief Maillet continued that “they work this way with other collectives, [who] present cases, [around] mistakes there is a back-and-forth, an exchange.” Despite an internal combative discourse with the Préfecture, RESF representatives showed where cooperation was possible: “We signaled to them that they had a list of the 92 cases from the collective presentation of dossiers; that all the dossiers presented to get appointments at the Préfecture [at the Foreigner Reception Center] were accompanied by RESF members; and that they are identified as RESF throughout the process” by buttons and by the identification form for accompagnants.

The Préfecture took the demands of RESF the most seriously when they pointed out the inefficiencies of the bureaucratic procedure: cases where individuals had to return four or five times to the Préfecture, cases where Préfecture appeals led to a more drawn-out administrative procedure. To streamline these processes, the Préfecture proposed that they “have regular contacts and rapport...working together, in their common interests.” The Préfecture sees RESF as furnishing more information, expertise, and legitimacy in order to “do the sorting” of who should gain visas. Though RESF objects to this language, they did gain a promise to reduce the number of 3-month visas, to appeal fewer cases judged by the courts, and to work together to set legal standards. While a new
circulaire was being decided, the Prefect asked RESF to inform them of any particularly urgent need for visas.

These actions from one select meeting demonstrate a more cooperative relationship between a local branch of the State and one civil society actor. RESF obtains an extralegal pledge from the Prefect to examine dossiers that do not meet the legal criteria for residence. In the above examples in which I accompanied youth in their Préfecture appointments, Préfecture managers and clerks practice discretion in according visas. This alternative system for RESF youth is not represented in the literature of the political-legal incorporation of (undocumented) immigrants.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This novel process of a civil society actor gaining such leverage over citizenship rights contrasts with many assumptions of how civil society can work vis-à-vis the centralized State. Here, I first sketch out the assumed process of immigration and integration in France and the role of civil society. The chapter ends by arguing how this type of state-civil society is indeed a novel one.

Political scientists outline three basic categories of policy relating to immigration: entry visas, citizenship requirements, and immigration control (Schain 2012; Givens and Luetke 2005). Scholars represent France as a country that does a relatively poor job of integrating its immigrants, compared to other immigration countries (Schain 2012; Garbaye 2005; Simon and Steichen 2014). France has liberally allowed more than one hundred fifty thousand immigrants to gain visas each of the past ten years (INED 2011), though its lack of institutional support for religious and ethnic minorities has limited their social participation (Schain 2012; Garbaye 2005). Historically, France has allowed fewer
of its immigrants to naturalize, compared to Britain and the United States (OECD; Le Monde 2012).

Favell (2001) argues that France’s *public philosophy* on integration frames how people think about immigrants, including what role policy should play in making them French. France’s policy shifted from an underlying philosophy focusing on insertion into the economy to one centered on civic republicanism, highlighting the political and cultural goals of integrating immigrants. This orientation towards folding immigrants into the French mold understates the ethnic and religious identities of the newcomers (Schain 2012). Schain provides the caveat that “although public philosophies are often clear on objectives, their link with public policy is highly variable” (*ibid.*:15; see also Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012). The ethnographic, practice-based data enables a more realistic representation of the administrative processes of regularization in Paris.

One contributing factor to the consistent implementation of this public philosophy has been the centralization of the French state. Beginning in the 1980s, a series of decentralization policies have diluted the highly centralized Napoleonic model of prefects leading the 100 *départements* of France. (*Départements* are the administrative level between the region and the county, and were established so that a man on horseback could cross it in one day.) Scholars have framed the Minister of the Interior and the National Assembly, on one hand, and prefects on the other, as making and implementing French immigration policy (Hayward and Wright 2002). Prefects have often been the target of local claims making because of the discretion they have been afforded in granting rights on a case-by-case basis (Siméant 1998; Blin 2005; Têtu-Delage 2011). While prefects wielded vast executive and administrative powers in the past, today we
can describe France as having “its own form of multilevel governance” (Brunet-Jailly 2007:30). In particular, mayors, councils, and the courts have become important actors in a “tightly entangled” and “more complex” system of policymaking (ibid:10) on most issues, including immigration and integration. This chapter presents an extension of this trend.

Local-level actors have been empowered through this diversification of power holders and an increase in the contracting out of government functions. Although “policies on immigration...have been defined not only by legislative and administrative decisions but also by international agreements and court decisions” (Schain 2012:28; Guiraudon 1999), “policies may be less important than they appear to be, and administration and court decisions may be more significant” (Schain 2012:5). At about the same time as the decentralization laws, policy on associations shifted to allow freedom of association by foreigners (Withol de Wenden 1994). The Social Action Funds (FAS, which has become ANCSEC today)99 of the government and groups like the Federation of Associations in Solidarity with Immigrant Workers (FASTI) encouraged the development of associations by immigrants (Schain 2012). These trends highlight the growing involvement of not only a diverse set of local government actors but also of local civil society.

Rather than focusing on how ethnic and class divisions affect immigrant politics, Ireland (1994) advocates analysis of the interactions between political institutions at the local level. In this vein, Garbaye (2005) highlights how differences in the styles of governing and influence of political parties at the local level lead to significant variation

99 FAS was established to fund various policies that encourage integration of immigrants. ANCSEC promotes social cohesion and equal opportunities for immigrants.
between cities in how national policies play out. In comparing Lille and Roubaix, Garbaye also describes how bottom-up community mobilization is rooted in the dynamics of local institutional environments. The development of immigrant rights and representation depends on both top-down and bottom-up processes, often blurring that distinction (Santos and Marques 2004). If RESF has become an effective actor, it is because of the Préfecture’s valorization of its work.

Scholars have downplayed the contributions of civil society to French integration policymaking. Noiriel (2007) points to the cooptation of associations by the Socialist Party, and Wihtol de Wenden (2012:90) claims “the role of civil society organizations ... is, according to the French tradition in policymaking, very small.” Literature on civil society and integration in the US illuminates the benefits to social incorporation that community organizations can provide. De Graauw (2008) shows how organizations provide language and citizenship classes, offer services like health care and legal advice, share information about work and politics, and create a positive self-identity through cultural activities. This social incorporation role can lead to some political incorporation, at least in allowing organizational leadership to represent its constituents to local politicians.

Cordero-Guzman and Navarro (2000) take this a step further, explaining that how these organizations in the US are “de-facto state representatives and agencies in their communities.” Government officials “struggle to learn about the needs and interests of a large portion of the city’s residents” (De Graauw 2008:329), and nonprofit allies possess this strategic resource. In fulfilling this role to local government, Cordero-Guzman stresses that “the line between the CBO and the state is sometimes blurred in practice”
(Cordero-Guzman 2005:907). By offering undocumented youth bridging social capital
(Putnam 1995, 2001), this case extends the functions of associations or community-based
organizations. The temporary visas they obtain can be later used to continue studies
and/or work.

With RESF’s use of youth protests and representation of mostly minority youth,
the State may ironically appreciate the intermediate role they play with youth that allows
youth to regularize unnoticed. France has paid more attention to integration policies after
a series of episodes of urban violence (Schain 2012:33), including developing
relationships with, and increasing resources given to, associations. Indeed, Withol de
Wenden and Leveau (2001 :152) wonder if “the actors of the association movement
might be the new intermediaries of control and violence reduction policies?”
Associational work may thus function as “... a complement to the insufficiency of certain
public policies and a form of partnership (associations are often privileged interlocutors
of social action...) ...” with the State (Withol de Wenden and Leveau (2007:182).
Bloemraad (2006) argues the effective embeddedness of ethnic organizations in cities
raises naturalization rates, as they provide the information, resources, and trust needed to
complete the process.

Beyond facilitating naturalization applications, civil society organizations can
also make claims on the government to secure rights for undocumented residents. Sans-
papiers have experienced limited autonomy within the organizations that represent them
as the political, cultural, and symbolic resources provided by natives have been necessary
to make successful claims on the State (Nicholls 2013a). In order for government actors
to receive undocumented residents as legitimate, the latter are identified as members of
the national community (Nicholls 2013b). By extending public reach and maximizing emotional resonance, alliances with a diverse set of already-legitimate actors thus facilitate the performance of these roles (Siméant 1998; Nicholls 2013b). Another important aspect is having propinquity to government policy makers: undocumented claims makers have needed brokers to negotiate with the State (Barron et al. 2011).

This process of mediation in post-residence visa distribution, which often obliges applicants to meet criteria set by the Prefect and criteria set by the associations, positions the relationship between the Prefect and brokers at the center of immigration and integration policy. Whether this process is initiated by associations or by the State is not clear (Wihtol de Wenden and Leveau 2001:182-3). From the perspective of the State, working in this way has its advantages. Keeping the undocumented in an irregular status for a long time can serve to discipline them (Auyero 2012) and “dissuade other potential candidates” (Têtu-Delage 2011:112). The strong incentives (to conform to national discourse and) to act as an integrated citizen, all the while being undocumented, are beneficial to the State. Choosing to regularize undocumented immigrants “à la carte,” to use Alexis Spire’s phrase (2005), serves a dual function of immigration and integration policy. Those who have already become “good French citizens” are accorded permits to stay on a case-by-case basis.

Because these cases are decided by département-level prefects, this discretionary policy also serves the secondary function of guiding their relationships with local actors. Brunet-Jailly underscores how this local orientation guides how the Prefect works in multilevel governance: “the success of [a prefect’s] career is proportional to their ability
to work well with prominent and successful [municipal] elected officials and with their networks of friends and political allies” (Brunet-Jailly 2007:19).

In this chapter, we see evidence of a local, civil society-brokered process for undocumented youth to gain visas, and in so doing, some citizenship rights. Civil society exchanges, negotiated bargains involving civil society actors, highlight how civil society may interact with state actors. While market exchanges involve the trading of money for a good or service, civil society exchange involves an accord wherein a civil society actor claims some responsibility in addressing a social problem and a state actor accords the power to shape policy and attain favorable treatment in response.

Youth who had been previously refused a visa turn to RESF members in their schools and neighborhoods, who then help them through the complicated, long, and often demeaning process of regularizing. Youth overcome stigma to make contact with teachers regarding their status. The RESF network structure connects information and resources with associations, and gains legitimacy from local representatives. Their legitimate local presence, supported by diverse network members, allows them to claim to represent a broad coalition of citizens advocating solidarity with undocumented residents (Halprin 2006), calling the moral legitimacy of the state’s visa decision-making into question. These local alliances, some provocative actions, and proximity to a hard-to-reach group position them in a strategic partnership with the Préfecture. Even without meeting objective criteria, the subjective criteria for obtaining visas then makes Prefectural discretion accessible.

Other scholarship (Spire 2008; Cette France-là 2012) has described this Prefectural discretion in depth, though they overlook how the Préfecture tries to use
associations to manage order in “hard-to-reach” policy areas (Rossteutscher 2005). Along with local legislatures and mayors (see Table 18), the locally-embedded Préfecture responds to local social and political conditions. Local political and social goals aim to represent residents’ local concerns (Rossteutscher 2005) and maintain order, partly by minimizing social ills and potential unrest that may come from them (Bode 2006). Examples include suburb youth killed by police, housing squatting and evictions, undocumented residents squatting in abandoned housing, and a strike by undocumented workers. Riots, ongoing protests, and public acrimony represent important economic, political, and symbolic costs to the State. Civil society involvement minimizes these occurrences by 1) funneling resident demands through established legitimate representatives, 2) having access to and contact with those affected by the social problem makes it easier for the government to respond should they occur, and 3) hedging the risk of any government action taken regarding undocumented residents through social partnerships (Smith and Lipsky 1993). The Préfecture makes use of associations—and RESF—to balance their enforcement of residence laws with the need for stability in local social conditions. Though attempts to broach cooperation and to co-opt by the government and Préfecture have been noted elsewhere (Noiriel 2007), here I highlight how RESF—with help from other locally-embedded actors—contests and cooperates with the Prefect in order to fulfill its mission.

While governments have contracted nonprofits to carry out their services (Smith and Lipsky 1993), the work of RESF performs an explicitly political task (identifying legitimate residents) from the government, not a social one. Using resources of the State (i.e. local politicians and schools) and a repertoire of contestation, they have gained the
ability to regularize individuals that are explicitly excluded in the law. These selected RESF actions demonstrate how the network aligns local actors to successfully contest the exclusionary acts of national actors. They have clearly won cases that would otherwise be lost, acting as political conductors, guiding youth across the legal boundary. Accompaniment to Préfecture appointments and to court highlights the network’s simultaneous role as agitator and facilitator as members who know the system ensure organized paperwork for the clerk.

In assisting thousands of undocumented youth obtain visas, RESF contests and wins citizenship rights for them. This visa does not guarantee immediate citizenship though it allows youth to pass the most difficult step towards eventual citizenship. The expanded social responsibilities since the expansion of the welfare state have shifted the relationship between the government and citizens. Today in Paris, the government works hand in hand with associations to provide services to residents. The decentralization has created a ‘closer’ system of representation. The mayor and legislative bodies encourage associational activity that responds to a local social issue, such as housing, refugees, or undocumented immigrants. Both of these shifts allow the government to respond to its people more effectively and to distribute the responsibility, and the visibility, of the social issue.

Furthermore, contact with RESF changes the socio-legal context for sans-papiers youth. Beyond the resources against deportation RESF offers undocumented youth, its presence has positively impacted those youth who come into its system. Undocumented youth fear deportation and also exhibit shame at their status being public. These restraints discourage youth from telling others about their status. The awareness of RESF within
schools mitigates this shame, and students that work with the network see how working with an organization can help in navigating an intimidating visa system. For youth that come into contact with it, the network has an important impact on their social life and trajectories. By contesting deportation, challenging the Préfecture individually and collectively in order to obtain visas, RESF radically changes the life chances of these youth. At a moment when they face radical exclusion, the network uses their social positioning in concert with local leverage to deepen their social and legal integration.

The findings run counter to the way the literature represents citizenship processes, as a straight-line process that immigrants follow after they develop a sense of belonging and complete a series of bureaucratic procedures. Most literature examining the mechanics of citizenship justifies the national level as the most appropriate—and only—level to study despite the role of localities in the process of acquiring citizenship. The local constellation of government, market, and civil society actors delineates the institutional field governing undocumented social life in Paris, including the possibility of changing status. The role of civil society in this governance structure differs from département to département (Cette France-là 2012). RESF is well-organized in Paris, allowing them to be much more effective than in Oise, two départements to the North. The interactions of RESF with the Paris Préfecture exemplify an innovative form of exchange, civil society exchange. These interactions grant flexible (fragile) governance rights in exchange for taking some responsibility in addressing a social problem.

This chapter described the process by which undocumented youth gain a legal administrative status through contestation of the State by RESF. This process is central in the transition to adulthood of sans-papiers youth, and we have noted the different social
lives of regularized young men compared to young men in *situation irrégulière* (see Chapters 3 and 5). In the conclusion, I use citizenship theory to argue that the limbo and purgatory socio-legal contexts aim to discipline these young men into becoming more docile subjects.
Conclusion:
In the Local Interstices of Inclusion: Social Policy & Undocumented Youth in New York City and Paris

Summary
How do Paris and New York compare with their inclusionary and exclusionary projects vis-à-vis undocumented youth? Cities have some power to shift policy and practices towards these youth in three possible directions: towards restricting their social participation and presence; towards increasing it; or in changing their status entirely. The three filaments of institutional action—governmental, market, and civil society actors—support the social membership of undocumented youth, although influenced by the governmental division of powers between the national and the local, orient youth differently. Market opportunities offer New York youth greater resources for deepening social relationships, though Paris shifts youth to temporary legal statuses (that offer access to work) more flexibly. Each city incorporates its undocumented youth, reducing the possibility for consequent social problems, such as chronic unemployment and the extent of youth disaffection. The responses of both cities can be understood as best-case scenarios in their respective countries, with each of these local strands supporting certain limited aspects of inclusion for undocumented residents.

As we saw in the social participation inventory analysis (Chapters 4-6), the biographical narratives (Chapters 2-5), and the QCA analysis (Chapter 6), the work opportunity structure in each city strongly shapes the resources that undocumented youth can use in their social lives. With the NYPD’s ‘don’t ask, don’t act’ policy on immigration status, New York’s local government largely protects undocumented youth from the federal deportation regime, while that of Paris does not. Local governments in each city have developed and supported inclusionary policies and practices in a way that
meets market demands for a flexible workforce and responds to civil society claims of social and political representation. Both cities encourage access to work through efficient public transportation systems, and to varying extents, ethnic social networks that allow access to jobs. The dissonance between the federal and local level has limited the social membership of youth to the city limits, and few of my undocumented informants have traveled far outside the city.\footnote{When legal status changed for informants, so did their mobility. Those in France who gained a visa, they frequently returned to visit family in their country of origin. Those with DACA in the United States were able to visit family and friends outside of the city limits.} France’s social welfare system depends on the participation of the formal economy, and they tightly enforce the workplace for illegal work. By eliminating resources for reciprocal interactions with family, friends, and partners, this exclusion from the labor market inhibits intimate and peer relationships, self-esteem, and family social life. In areas where undocumented workers complement the French workforce, the government regularizes them. Those who do obtain temporary visas go on to accrue meager but crucial work resources. Although limited compared to New York, their family and peer relationships improve, and as does self-image, albeit slowly. New York youth use wages to develop respect and self-respect—whether by paying for a gym membership, buying deejay equipment, buying new clothes—which plays into relationships with family, friends, and partners. Youth with jobs can pay rent, go to a restaurant, give gifts, pay bills, and more easily attend social events.

The local responses regarding work are a net positive for undocumented youth, though only part of how cities incorporate their undocumented youth. In tandem with the liberalism of the job market, this dissertation has also examined the political, social, cultural, and symbolic resources that civil society can offer marginalized residents, and
the tools local governments have at their disposal to manage those two sets of actors (i.e. the labor market and civil society). In minimizing certain aspects of exclusion, New York policies position undocumented youth as resident workers. Links between local government and civil society allow for immigrant representation, which leads to some resources for undocumented residents. With its emphasis on ethnic neighborhood-based communities, undocumented youth may not feel excluded though without the educational and occupational foundations of social mobility, they are not likely to feel fully included, either. Though not yet manifest, the (long-term) effects of the DACA program may change that occupational immobility. While this follows from the greater likelihood of US cities to provide civil rights (individual rights to privacy, speech, assembly, due process) rather than political or social rights (Kinney and Cohen 2013), Paris provides a means to obtaining minimal political rights, which bring baseline civil and social rights (see Appendix D for the specific bundles of rights associated with different legal statuses). The opposition of Paris civil society to government immigration policies allows for a legitimate challenge to formal exclusion as many undocumented youth gain a temporary legal status. Youth, while initially relieved at gaining this relative security, experience some disappointment at other forms of social exclusion that they encounter.

In the end, even with spaces of inclusion in low-end jobs and in ethnic communities, undocumented youth face a difficult transition to adulthood. In New York, work opportunities are distinct from those of their peers and educational trajectories are flattened. The exclusion produced locally and nationally pushes youth towards a strategy of working in a family unit at a time when their (immigrant and nonimmigrant) peers remain studying and whose social life blossoms. In Paris, most youth are funneled to a
temporary status though they continue to feel excluded from mainstream work and social opportunities. Undocumented status is another axis of stratification of the children of immigrants, even for those who have obtained DACA status or a visa. The period of exclusion from mainstream opportunities in work, internships, and education has left them behind their high school friends.

**Issues in Longitudinal Ethnography**

In the six years of this project, several aspects of the context have shifted. Politically, the Socialist Party won control of the executive and legislature of France in 2011-12. In 2009, Obama began the first of his two terms as President. Both presidents position themselves as pro-immigrant, though they promote strong border policies and have continued, even amplified, the interior control of undocumented immigrants. They also face civil society pressure as a result. In Paris, energetic student protests in support of a deported high school student have been connected to a growing number of regularized *sans-papiers* youth. In New York, smaller protests in support of immigrant rights have gained the support of local politicians. The DREAMer movement has directly and indirectly pressured Obama to enact immigration reform, leading to the implementation of the DACA policy.

In each case, we see that the boundaries and context of being undocumented are ever-shifting. What implications does this have for my research? First, the changing context calls attention to weaknesses in a more positivistic comparison of the two cases. The distinctions between the two contexts have clarified this research as a *federalistic* study (Ferrari 1990), situating the studies independently based on the social, economic,

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101 Ferrari (1990) uses the federal structure as an analogy for research methods. A federal study thus has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. The vertical axis examines
legal, and political specificities of each context. The cases of this federalistic model are assumed to develop autonomously with multitheoretical findings. Vertical comparisons are understood to analyze variation within a category while horizontal comparisons look for differences based on similar cases. For example, this findings of this study justify an examination of the production of “illegality” in each context. The specific spaces of inclusion afforded within a local system give breath to the life chances and social meanings of the undocumented youth within it. The comparison of New York and Paris shows that certain spaces of inclusion are directly connected to documentation though sometimes other forms of social exclusion (e.g. labor market exclusion of youths and of immigrants in Paris) also inform informants’ spaces of exclusion.

Boundary theory has helped to bring together some of these longitudinal elements (see Chapter 6). Shifts in the context can be represented by boundary shifts, as is the case in the Valls circulaire of November 2012 that reduced the years of residence sans-papiers youth need to get a temporary visa. Shifts in the socio-legal context can also result in boundary blurring or brightening. Politicization and technologies of identification can brighten the boundary. Obama’s DACA program, with its two-year reprieves from deportation, blurs the legal boundary somewhat. Individual youth normally cross a social boundary as they acculturate and learn the native language in middle and high school. Youth can also cross the legal boundary when they gain a temporary visa, as eight did in Paris and one did in New York. Using boundary processes to represent these phenomena allows us to see the relationship between the social and
legal in each city. With its more flexible regularization practices, based on civil society exchange (Chapter 8) and discretionary understandings of social integration, Paris has a tightly-imbricated social-legal relationship (see Figure 4). New York, in contrast, shows a loosely imbricated social-legal relationship in which social life is not dependent upon legal status (see Figure 5).

The primary guiding conceptual framework, linking citizenship, identity, and governance, applies equally well to each case. In each city, youth produce acts of citizenship (Isin and Neilsen 2008)\textsuperscript{102} in relation to certain governance constellations, giving rise to social identities and social trajectories. In tracing the ways that cities respond to undocumented residents, the most relevant aspects of the context become more apparent. The details of how residence permits are distributed, influenced by both the division of competencies and the nature of the relationship between government and civil society, are central. The set of social experiences to which residence permits allow access is also different in each context. Limitations to accessing full citizenship, shaped by the governance actors’ policies and practices towards my informants, ensure their social trajectories remain flat.

In Paris, those who gain temporary visas have not completely ended the waiting game. They continue to collect preuves (supporting documentation) and wait in line at annual renewal appointments. And even then, most report waiting for a permanent job. Guoliang works and lives in a Japanese restaurant outside of the city, and visits his family in Paris on Sundays. Souleymane complains about not finding a legitimate job offering

\textsuperscript{102} “Acts of citizenship” (Isin and Neilsen 2008) are actions that develop sense of belonging to the nation-state. These acts are the product of participation in the nation-state.
more than 12 hours per week. Though other French youth also face difficulty in finding work, employers still hire immigrants at lower rates (Simon 2014). The less regulated New York labor market paradoxically allows for greater stability in jobs, albeit in low-quality unskilled jobs. In New York, when the new proposals for immigration reform are discussed on Univision news, a Spanish language television station, my informants and their parents no longer broach the topic with me: a meaningful change in status is desired but not anticipated. Miguel has decided to give his dream of playing in a band priority, a year after considering entering a CUNY program. For most in New York, waiting unspindles the connection to educational institutions, and with it, hopes for social mobility.

The second axis that presents potential methodological issues is time (Smith 2006). The young adults with whom I’ve worked have also changed from their younger selves. One assumption in the analysis of the shifts of individuals is that their aspirations develop from their resources found in their socio-legal context. I have tried to capture these by noting which dreams my informants articulate in everyday life, and also asking them questions about how they envision their lives at different times in the future. From these data, I have mapped their most salient possible selves as adolescents and later as young adults. This is one way to map the richness of the individual within his social context. This approach also avoids facile comparisons to native-born youth. Many informants did not hold middle-class visions for their future (though some certainly did). Rather, their dreams reflected gaining respect from family and community members by successfully fulfilling family and community obligations. Even these dreams may be diminished by the social exclusion stemming from legal status. This more complex way
of representing social trajectories recognizes the multiple domains of social life (see Chapters 5-6) that may be affected by legal status.

Bringing these two axes together, the changing policy context and changes in informants over time, presents some opportunities for analysis but also some challenges. Even small changes in the context have important effects, such as better information sharing by teachers and other school personnel. In New York, CUNY and the DOE are making slow but steady progress in deepening their outreach (Smith 2013). In Paris, the initiative of RESF provides this information sharing, which remains dependent on the engagement of activist teachers and others.

We also see evidence for larger effects of cities on the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth. Cities are the gateways to a bevy of legal, administrative, social, economic, and political resources. The most important thing to provide is freedom from deportation. With local control over policing, American cities can more easily provide relief to undocumented residents. With most youth gaining a temporary visa in Paris, a similar result is achieved though on a more discretionary basis. With a temporary visa, French youth can access schooling and begin their ad hoc approaches to a getting a job. With its extensive ethnic organizations, New York surely offers greater cultural inclusion for immigrant youth compared to Paris. These are only a few aspects of immigration and integration policy managed by cities, despite the assumption by many scholars that the national level has plenary powers over immigration issues.

Methodological Contribution

A more positivistic approach to the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth might assume similar contexts throughout a nation-state or solely focus on
schooling. While these examples might produce useful scholarship, they would underrate the multiple and everyday nature of social exclusion, as well as the contingency of the systems of “illegality.” In contrast, the multitude of comparisons this research affords produces a more comprehensive but also a more nuanced picture. We can see how the coming of age is affected by legal status, but also influenced by the complexities of local governance. We can see how the different social positions of undocumented youth within a city can lead to different trajectories. As argued above, we can also see the similar practices of disciplining undocumented youth while integrating them.

Another factor that led to this more comprehensive picture is the iterative, longitudinal data collection. *Cross-case exchange*, in which the comparison de-centers the research context, leads increased sensitivity to individual and contextual variation (see Chapter 10). The socio-legal inclusion of an unmapped process of regularization in Paris was undercut by later exclusion from the labor market. This lack of access to jobs made it more difficult for these young adults to begin and maintain romantic relationships. For undocumented youth, the socio-legal and socio-economic contexts are experienced simultaneously.

Disciplinary boundaries also may over-simplify the analysis. For example, some Education scholars describe moments of exclusion experienced by undocumented students (Patel 2012) but do not explore the potential for contestation by school personnel. In the same way, many political theorists see undocumented residents solely as political objects (Blin 2010), or on the other hand, as an incredibly mobilizable force (Voss & Bloemraad 2011).
Governmental and other actors try to manage undocumented residents (and potential irregular migrants) primarily using the tools of legal and economic exclusion. With current conditions—the inequalities of global capitalism and the increasing ease of transportation and communication—we can expect undocumented immigration to increase. The United States, China, Brazil, India, Mexico, Greece, and Malaysia are only a handful of countries that have politicized populations of undocumented residents. If the exclusion faced by these people is global and growing, there is also a need to share experiences of contestation.

*Citizenship and Cities*

This dissertation has sought to bring together portraits of how young people experience exclusion with descriptions of the systems that produce “illegality.” With its processes of boundary shifts, crossing, and blurring, the effects of governance actors’ practices can also be represented in the boundary model. Cities hold tools that can affect each of these processes. If, at the national scale, the neoliberal project has encouraged the arrival of flexible workers while keeping them outside the formal apparatus of the state, at the local level, we see more innovative political and administrative designs.

These cases of undocumented youth who face multiple forms of exclusion as they come of age present an interesting perspective on the role of cities in a neoliberal era. Through their own policies and discourse and through international covenants, States have claimed to provide and guarantee rights and access to education, jobs, family life, and more. With the devolution of powers and responsibility for budgeting to the local level, a wide swath of actors in cities have become important brokers and guarantors of rights. While the increase in actors provides more points of contestation of policy, the
reduced engagement of the State means greater variability in provision of rights (i.e. social inequality). As the governance constellations expand, (internal) state sovereignty is spread more broadly as well.

The work of T.H. Marshall (1950) has become an important reference point for citizenship theory. Analyzing the case of the England, Marshall traces the development of civil, political, and social rights. By setting a socio-economic floor for all citizens (i.e. social welfare rights), social rights have been an important corrective to the inequalities expressed by capitalism. Today, in the current neoliberal context, the mechanisms of citizenship are less clear (Zuern 2011). Even with countries with similar social welfare systems, immigrants constitute a challenge to this system. In Marshall’s model, formal citizenship overlaps neatly with substantive (social) citizenship. With the neoliberal shift over the past 40 years, membership in a community—assumed to be based on an exchange of citizen responsibilities for rights (Turner 1997)—does not suffice to access substantive citizenship (i.e. social rights).

For both citizens and noncitizens, citizenship is “much more than membership, for it is a key instrument for the state’s control, rule, and discipline over the national population” (Guarnizo 2012: 18). Citizenship regimes “determine the boundaries of everyday behavior and access to opportunities and societal rewards” (ibid.). Guarnizo argues that citizenship is one tool of social control used to create and maintain social cohesion in an increasingly unequal world, though it should be specified that this mechanism also controls those without citizenship.

Undocumented residents are perhaps the starkest case of this distancing of the fundamental exchange of rights and responsibilities from social rights. Some scholars
(Soysal 1994; Jacobson 1996) argue that human rights norms provide a new means of inclusion for immigrants, and in a few important ways, they do (Torpey and Caplan 2001 example). Nation-states remain the predominant authorities that provide rights to individuals (Maas 2013; Joppke 2010; Kivisto and Faist 2007). Countries’ welfare programs, however, are built on an exclusionary floor. With respect to large undocumented populations, social rights do not mitigate the inequality produced by capitalism (both in the sending economy’s push and the receiving economy’s pull). Including undocumented residents could blur the boundary of access to nationally-based social rights. Excluding them ignores the underlying effects of the receiving country’s political and economic forays into other countries. Whether framed as sojourners or as long-term residents, immigration advocates see the State’s lack of recognition as an irresponsible blind eye to social justice.

The local level offers cases of being more sensitive to both inclusion and exclusion. Hazleton, Pennsylvania, does all in its powers (in fact, more) to exclude undocumented residents, in an example of local contestation of neoliberalism (Varsanyi 2008). Larger cities, on the other hand, have provided more welcoming structures to receive and integrate their newcomers (Ramakrishnan and Wong 2010). New York and Paris have provided access to certain rights, including education, mobility, work, health care, and criminal justice, among others. These provisions are, however, quite fragile in the sense that they depend on the dynamics of grassroots organizers, political parties, nonprofit flexible service provision, the whims of the job market, and the support of varied sympathizers and co-ethnics.
Current local perspectives on immigrants and undocumented youth view each as a net positive, bonding together different sets of actors around a consensus of public policy and practice. As described in Chapter 4, the market-oriented framing of undocumented residents as a needed boost to “economic dynamism” convinces many that the regular influx of immigrants is highly desired. In a tighter job market, Paris and French governments frame immigrants as a population to be managed. If managed well, immigrants fill in needed shortage areas; if managed poorly, they become a threat to national identity. Informed by a social justice perspective, each city also has actors that view the inclusion of immigrants as a moral good, though public philosophies of integration guide how they understand their role in the integration process. New York actors assume an ethnic community as the main vehicle of integration while Paris ones see access to citizenship rights as guiding it.

The clash of two important discourses, neoliberalism and social justice, inform the contours of local governance towards undocumented residents and youth. Do we see evidence for what scholars have called urban citizenship? David Harvey (2007) and others (Purcell 2003) have presented urban citizenship as a solution to the social exclusion that has accompanied neoliberal development. When immigrants perform citizen duties by “participating in the labor market, bringing up families, paying taxes, participating in religious communities, volunteering, doing civil or social work, working for government agencies, acting as labor representatives or community organizers, forming community and neighborhood associations, and speaking at public events and in the media” (Castañeda 2012: 72), these scholars argue they merit access to the rights of citizenship.
Other scholars contest this loose definition of citizenship. When we analyze the multi-faceted concept of citizenship as understood by Fahrmeir (2007), “the nationality indicated by a passport, participation rights in various public and private contexts, entitlement to benefits, commitment to a particular political or social order, even decent behavior towards one’s colleagues on university campuses,” we do not see support for full urban citizenship in either city. In New York, we see evidence for a potholed, uneven access to spaces, entitlements, and participation. Even as proposals seek to expand to include a ‘city passport’ (municipal ID card), others question how much such a policy will help undocumented residents, since it marks them as undocumented (see Chapter 4 for more). In Paris, we see that even with formal inclusion in the political urban community, informants do not express a strong sense of belonging, continue to experience socioeconomic inequality, even if it does includes some passport rights, such as freedom to travel.

With my own hopes tied up in questions of possible reform, I was hopeful that reform was imminent. Over the next six years I have developed a better understanding of which stars need to align to produce such a reform. I have become wary. Even when contesting exclusion based on legal status, some in the Paris and New York social movements develop legitimate criteria of inclusion, which of course exclude those youth seen as less legitimate. On a more hopeful note, this dissertation identifies allies who are standing up for undocumented youth in each city. The organization of New Yorkers fighting for undocumented youth has grown quickly, with Dream Teams (groups of undocumented students) at most CUNY campuses and more frequent public rallies.
The category of being undocumented is constructed differently in each city, with children that arrive under the age of 13 in Paris legally allowed to regularize. In line with De Genova’s (2002) understanding, this dissertation argues that illegality is highly contingent. We see support for very different experiences of illegality in Paris and New York. These localized conditions of illegality make up the sociolegal context for my informants’ coming of age. In particular, the organizational field in each city has a distinct logic. By offering low-end jobs and cultural inclusion, the ethnically organized field of New York offers more symbolic and material benefits to undocumented youth. By offering the possibility to contest legal exclusion, Paris offers temporary visas that can be used to work and study.

In each context we see administrative action that offers greater inclusion, according to different logics. In the US, the DACA program offers work permits to qualified undocumented youth. It does not offer educational benefits or put youth on a path towards legalization. The Valls circulaire eased the administrative criteria for regularization of undocumented youth. While these administrative shifts do offer real benefits to youth, they do not respond to the broader problems we have seen in my informants’ lives. In New York, it does not facilitate moving into better jobs because most do not have the educational capital needed for occupational mobility. In Paris, regularized youth still face high barriers to obtaining employment.

Bringing together these cases of how cities respond to the presence of undocumented youth, several things crystallize. Each city has developed policies and practices that improve life for undocumented youth, compared to other cities. With

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103 Algerians must be under 10 years of age at arrival.
organizations that fight for human rights in Paris highly legitimate and the socialist government looking for social pacts with civil society actors, many youth are funneled through RESF to a legal status. In New York, policies recognize undocumented residents as legitimate but do not legalize them.

These different approaches do lead to one similar outcome. While regularization does not lead to socioeconomic equality in Paris, it does eliminate the threat of deportation. Likewise, the threat of deportation is mitigated by New York’s policies but youth mostly are stuck in the lower-working class. Many classic works of scholarship argue or assume that citizenship rights serve to bring about greater socioeconomic equality (Marshall 1950; Turner 1997). In the United States, the refusal to accord citizenship rights has excluded youth from more typical social mobility, while in France, the possession of some citizenship rights has not led to substantial mobility. Instead of emphasizing this side of citizenship studies, undocumented youth experience citizenship regimes as a means of disciplining done by the state.

My analogy of limbo and purgatory (Vaughn 2004) provides a simplified image of the distinct experiences of waiting to get papers in each city. Purgatory is a transitory state of suffering before being deemed a legitimate candidate for full inclusion, and the process of regularization leaves most in Paris anguished and then weary. In Medieval Catholic theology, those in limbo were sinners but good people who had to wait for redemption. Likewise, the undocumented youth of New York await the full promise of citizenship in a temporary state of suspension. Only a federal immigration reform offers full redemption.
Sociologist Javier Auyero (2012) writes on how this waiting works in the lives of the poor. First, waiting (for full inclusion) engenders expectations that something positive will be coming. As he states: “The state tells its subjects, either implicitly or explicitly, with words or with actions: ‘Wait, be patient, and you might benefit from my (reluctant) benevolence’” (Auyero 2012:14). But the criteria that would end the waiting are unclear to undocumented youth. While a courageous group of undocumented youth fight collectively and publicly for their rights, most come to understand that “whatever outcome brings the end of their waiting is ... pretty much determined by politics; and politics is not understood as an activity that they do or as a motor of collective change, but rather as an alien, distant practice that renders them powerless” (ibid.: 18).

With distinct “illegalities,” Paris and New York produce different senses of waiting. Waiting in Paris tends to be experienced as a drawn-out struggle with bureaucrats and unseen politicians. Waiting in New York is more akin to that of Beckett’s Waiting for Godot, a spectral, indeterminate presence with no clear point of reference. Both are the product of a disciplining by the state that teaches one to feel “dependent and subordinate” (Schwartz 1975:856). “By producing uncertainty and arbitrariness,” “waiting (re)creates subordination” (Auyero 2012:19; emphasis in original). Sociologist Guarnizo argues that “citizenship... is certainly much more than membership, for it is a key instrument for the state’s control, rule, and discipline over the national population... and determines the boundaries of everyday behavior and access to opportunities and societal rewards” (Guarnizo 2012:18). I would argue to expand the scope of the social control produced by citizenship regimes: within a given state,
citizenship regimes govern both citizens and non-citizens. Further, it also controls opportunities for those not present in that state.

The lives of my twenty-four primary informants, their families, and the hundreds of undocumented people whose paths my life crossed show that despite this control, some social life perseveres. When their dreams of school or return are blocked, they cope with the effects of their “illegality” (Gonzales 2011). They can and do, however, act on other dreams. This dissertation has shown some lives in which “illegality” is only one of multiple narratives of undocumented youths’ lives. As they have become adults, a meaningful sense of belonging has blossomed, especially in New York (see Appendix D). When Ernie says that his son is everything or when Temo gives his mother hard-earned money for the rent, the central significance of family life shines. As they have waited without the financial aid to fulfill their educational aspirations, time has dissipated their base of skills. When Souleymane gains more educational experience and Guoliang toils away at a live-in Japanese restaurant, family members see them as doing good and legitimate work. Now past their periods of waiting for temporary visas, they still wait for socio-economic opportunity. Some do not wait. When Armand and Luis leave Paris and New York, respectively, for better opportunities in their home countries, they are exploiting inclusive spaces in citizenship regimes.

By leaving to look for opportunities elsewhere, Armand and Luis hope to affect the pace of their transitions to adulthood. Most New York undocumented youth—including Fred, Ernie, and Christian—have faced an accelerated transition to adulthood, taking on the adult responsibilities of working full-time, paying rent and other household bills, and starting families of their own. David and Luis have slowed the pace of their
emerging adulthood by completing college degrees. The experiences of most New York undocumented youth thus lie in contrast to the extended adolescence and more slowly emerging adulthood of their peers (Arnett and Tanner 2006; Silva 2013). Armand and Souleymane, in contrast, contemplate leaving France to speed up their adulthood. The lack of work opportunities slows down their and their families’ expectations of adult responsibilities. This decelerated transition to adulthood, exacerbated by legal status, is also common amongst second generation French residents (Buchman and Kriesi 2011; Arnett 2006). Souleymane, Chen, Tarek, and Guoliang aspire to what they see as the adult stability of a full-time job.

This representation of undocumented youths’ transitions to adulthood as multiple and contingent on locality is a break from—albeit not a complete one—from popular representations of “illegality.” Willen (2007) used a quotation from the Book of Jeremiah, (31: 33-34), “I shall put my law into their inward parts,” to represent the intention of systems of “illegality.” Here, youth respond to local productions of “illegality,” administratively, legally, and socially produced but also changeable (Menjivar and Kanstroom 2013). Willen’s characterization may apply to purgatory in Paris, which prevents most youth from the resources they need to support relationships; this extreme form of “illegality” also has an end as they gain visas. The criterion of years of residence for obtaining visa all but assures this to occur. Those youth in limbo in New York are not restricted in this same way, and their hearts and hands build meaningful lives.
Chapter 10:
The Epistemology of Comparative Ethnography: Cross-Case Exchange to Enrich
Representations of Social Context

The methodology of this dissertation mixes elements of grounded theory with two approaches that emphasize deeper contextual development. Duneier’s extended place approach proposes ethnographers use a mix of induction and deduction as they follow informants to sites of power in order to investigate asymmetrical power dimensions of interaction and how they are built into the social context. The seemingly distinct extended case method (Burawoy 1998; 2000) emphasizes the extension of cases over time and space in an effort to develop theory. I argue that the ethnographer’s transition from micro to macro in these approaches benefits from developing comparative cases in an iterative manner.

I use a multi-sited, longitudinal, comparative ethnography on the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth to explain the benefits of “outward iterative ethnography.” I followed and interacted with New York undocumented youth in daily activities, in and outside of school, which provided some sense of daily and intermittent interactions with power. Aspects of the context remained invisible, however, until I developed the case of undocumented youth in Paris. One context-level abductive discovery was of the visible role of governmental and civil society actors in the lives of some Paris informants led to an investigation of their counterparts in New York. Likewise, informants’ focus on educational and family life in New York led me to analyze these aspects of social membership in Paris, where they would otherwise less visible. Iterative field work, beginning with informants and looking outward for relevant social context, cultivates a dialogue between the cases that identifies visible and invisible meso- and macro-level context. A dialogue between cases encourages greater reflection on the definition of categories, identification of relevant context, and the implications of the immediate empirical findings for theory construction and elaboration.

September 2008. Outside, students leaving ABC High School chatted with friends in Spanglish, stopped at the corner bodega, being New York City teenagers. A former teacher (me) and a senior talking quietly, we sat in wood chairs at one of the ten wood tables in the school library. With high cheekbones, jet-black hair, a thin frame, 17 year-old Ernie is a good-looking if usually invisible teenager. Speaking slowly and thoughtfully, Ernie explained his plan for his future. He is planning to finish high school at ABC, then work for two or three years, and then go to Mexico to study, to Puebla. When he finishes, he’ll have a career, and he can come back. It is impossible for him to
study here, he says, because he is an “immigrant.” He associates the word immigrant with being undocumented, something I have observed with many other students. He can’t get a loan, so it’s not possible, he said. I asked if he had spoken about these issues with anyone at school or his friends. Ernie shook his head no.

*September 2009.* A 16 year-old sophomore, Israel, had studied in a bilingual program for two years in middle school. He had a more conservative style, with combed hair, shoes, and a tendency to wear polo shirts. Sometimes he would sit with only a friend or two in the cafeteria; other days he would sit with the larger group of freshman Mexican students. I noted how he enjoyed participating in class. On a March morning, Israel asked me what I was doing after school. He said he couldn’t go to [the nascent] Spanish Club because he was going to look for a job in a couple commercial areas. We spent three hours going from store to store on three avenues. I realized he would have better luck if I did not enter with him, and after each store he would tell me how it went. I asked him why this urgency of finding a job, and Israel told me his older brother, who was his father figure, told him he couldn’t stay in the apartment if he didn’t pay $400 a month in rent. “You don’t need working papers?” I asked him. “No ... it’s off the books.”

*September 2010.* Ernie’s neighbor, 18 year-old David, headed off to a distant, elite university on a full scholarship. His parents were worried about how he should get to school without his undocumented status becoming a problem. “They” would ask him for ID. Several years before, his father had obtained a driver’s license from another state. He would drive him to the campus, he said, making the 16-hour drive in one day.
September 2011. We re-adjusted our poses once again while waiting in line with the mostly North and West African immigrants. 23-year old Kassi was applying for a visa renewal at a Paris administrative office. He had been undocumented for six years during which he had received three deportation orders. “[You’re doing this] so you can remain French,” I joked. “I am not French. Not French yet,” Kassi replied in a half-serious, half-joking face. He had lived in Paris for nine years.

September 2012. I had left Paris a month before, and I called 19 year-old Chen to check in via skype. He was one informant I felt confident would do well now that he had his papers. I had helped him obtain a temporary visa, and compared to my other informants, he spoke good French and was fairly well socially integrated with French-born friends. He was in his usual bubbly mood. I asked how la rentrée—back to school season—was going. His voice smoothed out and quieted down and he said, “I left school. I’m working at the restaurant full-time, and it doesn’t really matter.”

September 2013. 23 year-old Christian and I waved goodbye to his one year-old US-born daughter and US-born wife in their New York studio. He was feeling upbeat, and he showed me the driver’s license he had just received, the result of an administrative policy President Obama set in motion. He had worked for four years at a furniture factory and was scoping out new opportunities with DACA. “UPS pays $15 an hour to start!” “I asked the medical assistant how much she got paid. It’s such an easy job! You need a certificate, but I could get that this year.”
These are a few of the stories I’ve written down in field notes in the past several years. How can they be woven together in a systematic way? How can I justify theory that derives from such different experiences in two different cities in two different countries?

My Study

Below you will find a brief introduction to the epistemological foundations of social scientific inquiry, seeking to justify and explain the use of qualitative methods in approaching my study, continued in Appendix B. As you will see, the direction of my research project has developed over time and space. The research question itself has remained relatively constant over the six years of the project: how do undocumented youth come of age? The multidimensionality of how undocumented status affects youth as they transition to adulthood has become clearer over the course of the study, and the depth and breadth of relevant context has shifted significantly as well. From these research questions, I sought to identify facts, name concepts, and develop theory. Here, I use this multi-sited, longitudinal, comparative ethnography (Smith forthcoming) on the transition to adulthood of undocumented youth to explain the benefits of comparative ethnography. This methodology uses iterations of moving from more inductive work to deductive and abductive work to develop comparative insights.

Here, I will describe how this project developed methodologically and highlight when data informed a new conceptualization of the methodology. Often social scientists are advised that research design should be set prior to doing research, in order to make the study ‘scientific’. Quantitative work may play out like this more often than qualitative. Nonetheless, most often some preliminary finding shows the inadequacy of
the hypothesized model, and the model is adjusted. Publications of these studies do not, however, show how this happened.

*Longitudinal Design*

This research has benefited from three more or less discrete phases: introductory, outward, and iterative phases. First, the *introductory phase* sought to establish the promise of continued research. While some scholars (George and Bennett 2008) advocate that researchers must know a lot about contextual factors to set up the study, the pilot phase allowed me to ground my ideas of contextual factors from *data from the field* as opposed to the literature. This step means that the concerns of my informants ground my theorization rather than other studies that have been done on similar populations. Theoretical dialogue then followed with other studies, which increases the validity of my claims. I would be more likely to read things into the situations had I entered with a theoretical orientation in mind; instead, my informants’ words and actions drove the (early) theorizing. In forming the comparison between youth in New York and Paris, I investigated the two contexts for similarities. Was there enough between the two contexts to usefully compare them? The national contexts had many important similar characteristics. In each country, the anti-immigrant rhetoric of a vocal minority found its way into politician’s mouths. This exclusionary stance was followed by a more severe deportation regime, and the numbers of undocumented people deported jumped in each country in the past ten years. Paris and New York are the largest cities in their respective countries, with similarly large immigrant populations. They each feature a diverse service sector-oriented economy and a mature civil society. Experts viewed each city as having
large undocumented populations (Foner 2006; Sénat 2012) and tens of thousands of current and former undocumented adolescent residents.

The research design identified two local contexts for undocumented youth. Within each context, I have narrowed my geographic focus to two neighborhoods. These limitations allow me to develop a degree of familiarity with local organizations, businesses, politicians, and other possibly relevant actors. Within each city, I’ve worked with a dozen primary informants and their families. In each city, I also had an (informal) comparison group of those with papers but in similar social situations to my informants. Sometimes they were classmates attending the same schools. Sometimes they were neighborhood excluded youth in afterschool programs. Sometimes they were brothers and sisters with papers. I did not conduct interviews with these youths though they are part of my research design. This design facilitated different case comparisons. I could compare 1) the trajectories of youth in Paris against those from New York (Chapter 6); 2) the trajectories of youth within each city (Chapters 4 and 5); 3) within-site biographical cases of similarly situated youth (Chapters 2 and 3); 4) the orientation of the two contexts (i.e. their structures of illegality) (Chapters 7 and 8).

These questions of context are as important as the other part of this pilot phase: gaining entry. To meet undocumented youth, I needed to identify locations where they are likely to be in the context of their everyday lives. After the initial encounters, a certain diagnostic period followed in which I tried to understand the most important concerns of my informants. This diagnostic period relied extensively on grounded theory tenets (Charmaz 2006, Charmaz 2008). Field notes and analytical memos pointed to emergent themes that directed the inquiry. In this case, the most significant emergent
theme was legal status. Prior to my initial time in the field in New York, I was not aware of the extent of this issue on my informants’ lives. Literature on assimilation, the education of immigrant and children of immigrant students, and urban sociology interacted with my field notes.

Aspects of the New York context remained invisible, however, until I developed the case of undocumented youth in Paris. For three months in the summer of 2010, I did pilot work that began with associations and an activist network in two neighborhoods in Paris. This presence led to contact with dozens of sans-papiers youth and convinced me that this comparison was possible to undertake and theoretically promising. Here, literature on French & European immigration, political movements of undocumented, citizenship, and the social and political incorporation of (undocumented) immigrants.

Second, once relationships with youth were established in each city and the pilot phase ended, I began a ‘full’ phase during which I collected data with a set of undocumented minors (mostly, a few in Paris were already adults) as they came of age. In this period, I spent regular time with each youth and his family in as full a social space as pragmatics allowed. Participant observation in New York began in schools and moved to homes, in neighborhood spaces, with neighborhood organizations, and both informal and formal celebrations. Sometimes I was able to sleep over at a family’s apartment and visit workplaces, though this access differed by person and their family. In Paris, I sought access to similar spaces: schools, apartments, neighborhood associations, parties, and parks. This period was the meat of my data collection.

The third revisit phase involved a return after some time doing preliminary data analysis. In all cases, this involved an extended interview with my informants. In most
cases, I did follow-up participant observation with youth in other settings as well, with family, in church, with associations and nonprofit organizations. During the revisit phase, I turned to the literature on governance, associations and nonprofits, neoliberalism.

The comparison that is part and parcel of each of these three phases (see Appendix B) is a mix of induction and deduction. As Glaser and Strauss (1967) write, “Others may try to verify the hypotheses that are generated by constantly comparing conceptualized data on different levels of abstraction, and these comparisons contain deductive steps.” In an explicitly comparative project like this study, the necessary move towards abstraction, as seen in the move from Chapters 2 and 3 towards Chapters 6 and 9, happens as the cases develop in dialogue.

This approach, which follows a grounded theory logic, may be useful in other naturalistic work, including inductive work, purposive sampling, and the tentative application of findings (Lincoln and Guba 1985 in Bowen 2008). These approaches are explicitly distinct from positivistic work done using experimental or quasi-experimental design. It assumes that the researcher is able to document everyday life as it occurs, informed by the multiple constructions of various participants (including the researcher). The researcher, for her part, must document how the data collection happened. And this is my attempt to do that, highlighting the most important moments (see Appendix B for more detail). Naturalistic studies minimize interview, respondent, field, and situational effects that can lead to erroneous data collection (Burawoy 1998).

The Tradition of Explaining & Situating Inquiry Within the Discipline

In the vein of C. Wright Mills’s appendix to the Sociological Imagination (1959), in which he noted his process of developing ideas and how sociological research actually
takes place, here I seek to position my scholarship within sociological inquiry. Social science seeks to develop propositions, build concepts and theory, and test the relevance of that theory to a certain scope of social life. To accomplish this broad objective, social scientists collectively build a literature using more than one methodological approach. Individual scientists’ projects may speak to one aspect of that objective. This middle-range theory then enters a dialogue with other scholarship. This chapter describes my methodology, and justifies its epistemological approach. I hope they allow you, the reader, to interpret my analysis and how it may fit in the literature.

Quantitative sociology remains important today, with ever-more sophisticated sampling and analytical techniques, in showing us what our world, especially US life looks like, broadly speaking. In immigration studies, we have a more-or-less clear picture of where national groups of immigrants settle, where they live, and what kinds of jobs they take. We have data on how their children assimilate as they transition to adulthood (Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Todorova 2008; Kasinitz et al. 2008; Portes and Rumbaut 2001). In the United States, we even have fairly solid data on how many of these immigrants arrived without a visa, or with one that expired at some point after arriving. We know millions of them arrive as children (MPI 2010).

How are these undocumented youth coming of age? Here, quantitative work has methodological constraints that limit its use. Sampling undocumented youth is problematic because they are difficult to distinguish from other immigrant youth, and the process of distinguishing them is full of uncertainty. We don’t know to what extent youth would acknowledge their status in a large survey, and it would be very costly to do such a survey. Furthermore, making such a survey longitudinal poses its own issues: how do you
do such a survey anonymously? Scholars who use such surveys fret about how many of the original sample will continue to participate. Identifying and representing the most influential aspects of social context in surveys remains a challenge. In the case of undocumented youth, such lack of information makes it difficult to develop valid and reliable questions. How do you track the shift in policies and practices that affect undocumented youth?

Undocumented youth undergo dynamic processes of inclusion and exclusion as they become adults, though how these happen and under which conditions remains under-theorized. Though not without their drawbacks, qualitative methods offer more promising possibilities for better understanding these processes (Smith 2010). One advantage is that you can sequentially follow the patterns of observed behavior. Accounting for time is a necessary but not sufficient condition for claiming causality (Abbott 2001). Another advantage is the low inference in vivo data of working with informants’ language: rather than forcing survey respondents to fit their experiences to assigned categories, analytic categories find their origin in respondents’ self-representations in words and acts.

With different regimes of illegality (Jones-Correa and de Graauw 2013) with different effects, we must not take the situation of undocumented youth to be similar in different sites. Part of what we are investigating is the category. Does the category shift in different contexts? Part of the ethnographic process, then, was to learn how to make an informed decision about how to operationalize undocumented in each location. One then has to be close to the experiences to identify key characteristics of the transition to adulthood for undocumented youth. And this takes time (Smith 2008). This paper, along
with Appendix B, will lay out the iterative process of theory construction using inductive, deductive, and abductive logics, that I used to comprehend the category I was investigating, identify characteristics, conceptualize the relationship between those characteristics and the context, and finally theorize how those concepts relate.

As Smith (2006) has pointed out, the ethnographer is the instrument of data collection, and this chapter seeks to describe the interpretive lens through which I collected the data for this dissertation. As I describe the research process, you will better grasp how my relationships with informants then colored the data collection and analysis. First, I will situate my ethnographic approach in some keys works of literature and briefly describe the methodological scope of this project. Then I describe my comparative, iterative approach, elaborating on key moments of induction, deduction, and abduction. Later I describe the benefits of this approach and how it could fruitfully be applied to increase the validity and reliability of other works (see Appendix B). Finally, I describe some advantages and issues in positionality in such a comparative study.

Overlaying Literatures

The methodology of this study brings together three literatures on methodology: comparative study, ethnography, and case study. Ethnography theory allowed me to reflect on my entry and theoretical orientation in the field. It also pushed me to move from the micro level of my informants’ subjective meanings to the macro forces structuring their decision making. Case study literature focused more on the link between the cases I was building and the broader context, and kept me looking for multiple means of assessing outcomes. Finally, comparative methodology raised questions of how each case spoke to the other. Should the twin ethnographies in Paris and New York be
considered as two independent cases, or as comparative cases? The common thread across all of these literatures is the process of comparison and iteration. These two methodological foci—comparing and working through a collection and analysis repeatedly—increase the rigor of the data collection and analysis, and support my claims of validity and reliability.

*Ethnography, Induction, and Grounded Theory*

In beginning my research, constructivist grounded theory (Strauss and Corbin 1994; Charmaz 2006; Charmaz 2009) and Duneier’s concept of diagnostic ethnography guided my inquiry. One does not begin by testing a proposition, and theoretical orientations are de-emphasized. Rather, one works through a systematic process of collecting data and analyzing, finding patterns in the environments, activities, and words of the informants. Fieldnotes that describe observations and participation are open coded. Codes can then be analyzed for patterns. At this point, codes can be refined and applied to other situations and other informants, resulting in selective coding. This inductive phase occurs especially during early coding and memo writing. What do informants say and do and worry about?

Analytical memos reflect patterns found in the data and allow the researcher to build a reflexive practice. “Memos give you a space and place for making comparisons between data and data, data and codes, codes of data and other codes, codes and category, and category and concept and for articulating conjectures about these comparisons” (Charmaz 2006: 72-3). Memos, which reflect a combination of inductive and abductive logic, serve different functions: confirming or refuting the appropriateness of codes early

104 Analytical categories derive from careful analysis of informant data. Orienting the data towards *in vivo*, low inference categories *grounds* the theory that the study produces.
in the process; developing questions from data; moving from specific data to a more abstract level of concepts; verifying the consistency between different levels of analysis; and in my study, testing the fit of the comparison(s). As one moves through the research process, early induction and the researcher’s position in an academic community of inquiry leads to looking for connections in the data with (potentially) relevant extant theories.

Grounded theory uses this emerging theory to orient the research. The deductive part of grounded theory methodology, “theoretical sampling means seeking pertinent data to develop your emerging theory” (Charmaz 2006:96). Statements, events, and cases that “illuminate your categories” are used to “saturate” the categories (ibid). Pursuing these theoretical ends is distinct from statistical sampling, which seeks representative findings.

As the researcher’s diagnosis guides to a certain extent the inquiry, Duneier (1999) advocates spending “time in the field” to develop reliability. Are the interactions the researcher is witnessing representative of interactions in the life of informant? Are they changing their self-presentation for the researcher? Collecting reliable data at this level is essential to readers trusting your findings. Though if the ethnographer stays on this micro level of interpreting meanings in everyday life, she risks neglecting the influence of macro factors that structure that life. Steinberg calls this the ethnographic fallacy: representing only the cultural level of situations (Duneier 1999:343). Such an approach neglects the import of many of the dominant theories of social science. In the sociology of immigration, it ignores representations of the mainstream and theories that use forms of capital as important theoretical constructs (Alba and Nee 2003), whether in
the assets immigrants bring with them or in the characteristics of the contexts that receive and incorporate them.

To avoid this ‘fishbowl approach’, Duneier proposes that ethnographers might “try to grasp the connections between individual lives and macro forces at every turn, while acknowledging one’s uncertainty when one cannot be sure how those forces come to bear on individual lives” (ibid.: 344). He calls this focus on how organized power can influence individuals’ lives the extended place method. He sought to identify organizational structures that represented deep social structure in the everyday lives of the immediate fieldwork. Duneier engages in ‘multi-sited ethnography’—he interviews and observes other relevant situations that come to influence life on Sixth Avenue (the primary site of his study): police, federal housing officials, train station officials.

Duneier develops this approach in dialogue with Michael Burawoy’s extended case method (1998; 2000). Like the extended place method, Burawoy’s approach seeks to identify the micro-macro forces that affect a social process (Burawoy 2000), though with a greater emphasis on moving from the individual to the general. As he is developing research, Burawoy more deductive approach advocates a constant dialogue with theory. Duneier, on the other hand, maintains his central focus of explicating the social position of his informants until his theory is developed. Which of these approaches better develops representation of the relevant social context? My approach incorporates aspects of each as I seek to maximize iterations in analyzing relevant comparisons, across both space and time.

Struggling to explain how induction leads to innovative theorizing in older models of grounded theory, grounded theorists and others (Charmaz 2009; Timmersman
and Tavory 2012) have begun to articulate the role that *abduction* plays in a grounded theory process. Derived from pragmatist philosopher Charles Peirce, abduction refers to the creative process of formulating hypotheses based on surprising evidence (Peirce 1958 in Timmersman and Tavory 2012: 168). “In brief, abductive inference entails all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, checking them empirically by examining data, and pursuing the most plausible explanation” (Charmaz 2006:104).

Timmersman and Tavory distinguish their approach from grounded theory by arguing that (1) abduction should be seen as primary over induction and (2) the researcher should have a toolkit of theories in mind when analyzing data. Both agree that “grounded theory’s meticulous methodological guidelines of iterative rounds of coding and memo writing facilitate theory construction through processes of revisiting, defamiliarizing, and alternative casing” (Timmersman and Tavory 2012:169). Timmersman and Tavory see the ‘resetting’ function of abduction, encouraging future rounds of induction and deduction in the desire for more comprehensive theory that explains more of the data. Finally, dialogue with other researchers in a community of inquiry refines abductive theory construction.

Here the case study literature may provide some practical insight. While ethnographers are developing cases (see Small 2009) throughout the course of study, the relevance of (which) macro phenomena is a constant consideration. The process of casing (and re-casing and alternative casing) then includes elements of abduction and deduction. Cases suppose a certain relationship between elements of the context, in particular that the units of analysis are the most relevant ones.
Cases

In establishing a research design, I problematized setting the boundaries around a case: what will I describe and how will it relate to other things? “Comparable objects of research must be established so that boundaries can be placed around measurement operations” (Ragin 1992:219). I use different techniques to do this. To compare across individuals, I’ve developed a subject-informed inventory of social participation. This allows us to compare the transition to adulthood from a (fairly comprehensive) qualitative viewpoint. “Comparison is employed as a creative strategy of analytical elaboration through research design” (Bloemraad 2013: 28). One realization as I make the argument that outward, iterative ethnography helps deepen our representations of context is of the blurry boundary between research design and theorizing, how closely connected they are. The ethnographic data collection and qualitative analytical strategies thus construct the cases.

In Ragin and Becker’s volume on *What is a case?* (1992), several authors discuss best practices in the construction of cases. Cases are instances of a more general phenomenon, and cases are constructed as the researcher situates the collected data with other concepts and theories. Vaughn, for example, argues theory elaboration could benefit from moving beyond the case that stays on one level of analysis and one unit of analysis. Constructing theory, models, and concepts, the heuristic process of analyzing cases benefits from a dialogue between different levels of analysis. Elements of social structure that bear on a circumstance can be identified and isolated, the interactional level and the group level. After comparing the organizational forms that situate our cases, we should reflect on the implications of these similarities and differences in elaborating
theory? This reflection forms some of the basis for claiming reliability in qualitative work: clarifying how others can build on the theory (re-)construction.

Ragin explores ‘casing’, the meta process of constructing cases, which also shed light on an advantage of comparative studies. Ragin states, “In-depth knowledge of the cases would be required to be able to identify [the distinctive theoretical features]” (224). A zoom-in view of cases is not sufficient to develop a clear idea of the boundaries of cases; a broader perspective is needed. Here, comparison can shed light. “Comparable object of research must be established so that boundaries can be placed around measurement operations” (Ragin 1992: 219). Triangulation of methods, using biographical, inventory, fuzzy set, boundary, and governance modeling methods, allow me to put different cases in the same field (Desmond 2014) in dialogue. Developing theory necessarily claims certain features of social context are more salient than others, and the less-salient features are largely neglected. This presents a danger: not recognizing the absence of a given feature, say the absence of police in the lives of informants. The identification of relevant contextual factors benefits from the dialogue between comparative cases. The comparison can add a systematic step to the process of identifying relevant outside forces.

In comparison to Duneier’s study of the sidewalk and its unhoused men, undocumented youth are defined in relation to first according to law and secondarily according to society—not in relation to society and then law—and so the relevance of one group of factors (legal brings to mind the multi-level governmental actors of legislative, judicial, executive, and administrative branches, for example) to another group of social factors leads to an array of possible casings.
This debate centers around the drawbacks of the grounded theory approach to develop theory that reflects important aspects of the context. To represent the context as embedded in the micro context of informants’ (physical) social lives or as embedded in larger contexts has important consequences on the implications of research. The zoom-lens view implies an understanding of agency in culture, whereas the zoom-out view shows how individuals’ opportunity structures may be constrained by broader social phenomena.

Though the nature of developing cases is not confronted directly in their approaches, it has a clear impact on the logic(s) of their development. Burawoy and Duneier use single cases in developing their approach. Understanding how his holistic single-case study developed, Duneier says “my research focus was evolving as I came to get a sense of what might be gained if the book included a more comprehensive view of the street” (Duneier 1999: 334). Burawoy illustrates his method with a single-case study of race in a mining company. A later work, Global Ethnography, highlights a series of holistic single-case studies around the world.

Yin (2009) classifies case studies into a two by two matrix of types. One can explore cases holistically or as embedded in a context, and we may examine a single or multiple cases (see Figure 1 below). The methodological logic that underlies research design differs with the type of cases constructed. Whereas a holistic study analyzes the global nature of one form of social organization, an embedded design analyzes multiple units of analysis within the same context. Evidence from multiple cases can increase the validity of findings. The multiple units of analysis also increases the validity, in that the
findings at one level must not preclude the findings of a different level. This embedding avoids the danger of thinking you are comparing apples & apples when you’re not: non-equivalence of concepts (Oyen 1990). One challenge of embedded multiple cases lies in presenting a coherent analysis, a story that makes sense across levels of analysis and contexts.

I organized a project based on multiple embedded cases (Yin 2002). Iterative, non-linear process of the 5 aspects of study design: 1) a study’s questions; 2) its propositions; 3) its units of analysis; 4) the logic linking data to proposition; 5) criteria for interpreting its findings. Generalization is analytic (Yin). Partly an exploration of the variables, too.

Figure 8. Basic Types of Case Study Design (Yin 2008)
I argue that the ethnographer’s transition (1) from micro to macro and (2) from inductive grounded theory towards abductive analysis benefits from developing comparative cases in an iterative manner. Comparing cases allows a process that begins from inductive grounded theory, integrates meso and macro contexts, and continues to dialogue with other cases deductively and abductively. This process then can be iterated in order to further develop aspects of a case that may be more compelling.

Comparison and Abduction

How does comparative logic align with the ethnographic and case study logic? To a certain extent, all work is comparative. Implicitly or explicitly, scholars compare their findings against the literature or national averages. Grounded theorists compare their empirical facts for fit with concepts and theory. Comparative methods, though, usually refer to studies of different cases. This type of comparative analysis formalizes (alternative and re-) casing and the deductive and abductive steps of theory construction. Revisit studies make comparisons with earlier findings with the same research subjects.

These comparative approaches depend to some degree on the methods of agreement and difference as established by J.S. Mill. The method of agreement says that where two cases with a similar outcome have only one factor in common, that factor is the cause of the outcome. The method of difference states that if two cases have different outcomes but share all factors except one, then that one differentiating factor is the cause for the discrepancy (Mill 1862). Social scientists today shy away from claiming causality from Mill’s methods but see them as “a valuable step toward eliminating irrelevant factors and approximating causal conditions in the ‘real’ world” (Berg-Schlosser et al. 2009: 3).
Lieberson (1992) advocates scholars making small-N comparisons to be careful about their claims. Qualitative researcher studies also try to explain all the variance, he points out. However, with complex causality, researchers cannot make a simple analysis of necessary and sufficient causes. This analysis, while important to studies that employ a quasi-experimental design and positivistic ones that focus on explaining the variance of a given outcome, does not cover the scope of many scientific studies, including this one.

This study is most interested in constructing theory writ large, in particular with tracing the process of coming of age in a context of contingent constellations of illegality. As Lieberson puts forth, the richness of social context does not allow the simple finding that X or Y explain the variance of the outcomes of a population Y. Rather, it seeks to identify the mechanisms of when undocumented status becomes salient and affects opportunity structures and then investigate the social and legal structures that comprise those mechanisms. These mechanisms may be multiple, and they may function as mechanisms for intermediate outcomes. The goal is to systematize the importance of steps in a process that has been traced out.

The relevance of socio-legal concepts to my study necessitates a deeper look at the basis for comparison between Paris and New York. Podgorecki (1974) differentiates between what he calls ‘centralistic’ and ‘federalistic’ socio-legal studies. The former assumes a common socio-legal base and deductively develop hypotheses to test in two or more places, while the latter situates studies independently based on the systemic, economic, legal, and political specificities of each context. Federalistic models are assumed to develop autonomously (Ferrari 1990) with multitheoretical findings. Vertical
comparisons are understood to analyze variation of a category while horizontal comparisons look for differences based on similar cases.

Coming from an antipositivist perspective, Burawoy names *dialogue* on multiple levels as a defining principle of inquiry. *Dialogue* here really means comparison, and the main axes of comparison in my study are between the informants and me, the researcher (needed for establishing rapport and consistency in positionality); between the different informants in each city; and between cities. The longitudinal aspect of my project follows Burawoy’s *revisit* logic of comparing cases and their context over time.

The cross-national aspect of this research design leads to “interdisciplinarity: it is simply difficult to establish acceptable comparisons between countries and cultures without bringing in broader ranges of variables than those of only one discipline ...” (Rokkan 1978:5 in Oyen 1990:11). Internationalization and interdisciplinarity require in expertise in varied literatures, and a broader community of supporting scholars, but may also bear fruits (Smelser 2002). This comparative turn forces a more explicit incorporation of this methodological process, as in “grounded theory [which] begins with inductive analyses of data but moves beyond induction to create an imaginative interpretation of studied life. We adopt abductive logic when we engage in imaginative thinking about intriguing findings and then return to the field to check our conjectures” (Charmaz 2009:137-38).

Acknowledging the complexity of social life, Ragin (1992; 2008) develops a system of empirical analysis based on configurations of conditions. Using Boolean algebra to analyze the relationships between a set of variables—as occurs in the social world—and desired outcomes. This approach also has the advantage for qualitative
researchers of gainfully making use of all the cases. If multiple sets of conditions lead to a single outcome, they will both be included as a solution. Statistical methods do not allow for this type of analysis.

Employing this Boolean approach with the goal of allowing probabilistic statements to be made about a given set of conditions, Ragin and colleagues developed fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA). “The various techniques of QCA precisely identify and narrow down such ‘conditions of occurrence’” (Berg-Schlosser et al. 2009:3) inductively.

Data analysis followed varied methods. Explained more fully below, I used process tracing, mapping, and traditional coding to analyze the cities’ contexts. Also explained below, I also developed an innovative inventory approach to comparing comprehensive data, and triangulated it using biographical analysis. In case comparisons that rely on biographical logic of analysis, the examination of the sequence of events and their meanings to participants leads to the description of a causal life narrative (Heimer 2001 in Smith 2008). QCA analysis works best for small to medium-N studies, and so I use it to explore differences between informants of each city. One strength of such a multiple analysis (i.e. the construction of multiple case-comparisons) is its testing of the adequacy of the modeling of the context. Undocumented youth is a visible cause in each city, and the comparison across sites avoids the popular framings of the issue. In choosing cases, much of the literature sees to the “continuous interplay” between the empirical fieldwork and the theoretical development (Strauss and Corbin 1994:273) on the basis that “ideas and evidence are mutually dependent” (Ragin 1992:218). Here, the multiple comparisons and multiple formal data analyses make this a more complex
process. When a comparison is made, a comparison of the empirical data from each site may uncover an unequal representation of context, which then can be applied deductively to the other site or youth. In this way, “Case comparison can generate startling contrasts that allow and, in fact, demand us to discover, reinterpret, and ultimately to transform our theoretical constructs” (Ragin 1992:177)

**Advantages of this Iterative Approach**

This research project on undocumented youth has shifted from one centered on school-based outcomes to a broader comparison of how local actors influence the parameters of their social lives. I struggled with how to appropriately represent the social context of the young people with whom I worked. School-level ethnography, while important, has limitations in its implications. With a year of fieldwork, it was clear that factors outside of the classroom and school (e.g. availability of financial aid, family financial needs, uncertainty of future as an undocumented youth) impacted educational trajectories more than factors inside the school (e.g. classroom learning, language ability, teacher relationships). While those school factors are important, they are not primary (i.e. if they were improved, the process of education-work decision making would not shift). By moving outwards towards the political economy context, we understand more why families came, stayed, and settled. We understand more about the various reasons why cities and the organized groups within them support and promote the inclusion of undocumented residents. We see the strength of qualitative methods: the mechanisms of opening up (and closing) opportunities for social life as one experiences them in real life, from approaches to enforcement to community organizations to jobs to family resources (‘here’ and ‘there’ in the country of origin). We can begin to understand action and
inaction on the political incorporation of youth, and importantly, how political incorporation structures social incorporation.

The comprehensiveness of this representation is the result of a process of working through a phase of induction during diagnostic ethnography, then working outward in a manner that includes deductive and abductive elements, and building in revisit studies (Burawoy 1998; Smith 2006). With this broader data collection, undocumented status emerges as a category that engenders multi-dimensional effects. Effects of status affect family life, relationships with others, the composition and characteristics of social networks, the social capital of school staff, work possibilities, and more. Determining the causality between these different effects is difficult. Configurations, as expressed in QCA or as traced in biographies, then better represent how causality works in real life. I’ve chosen these analytical strategies given the framing of the case.

This research thus developed from a dialectical interplay between theory and empirical findings. This chapter, along with its support in Appendix B, synthesizes aspects of the methodology literatures on ethnography, case studies, and comparison. An ethnographic approach is better able to represent external forces when the representation of the context is not taken for granted. A dialogue between cases encourages greater reflection on the definition of categories, identification of relevant context, and the implications of the immediate empirical findings for theory construction and elaboration.

Using this methodology, there are several rich stories that emerge. One is about the marginalized inclusion that undocumented youths experience as they become adults. They are stratified to the lower ranks of the workforce, and without a change in status, see few prospects for mobility. The second story highlights how some youth fight the
exclusion they experience, against the odds, whether by taking advantage of transnational resources (Chapter 2), making civil society connections (Chapter 3) or developing in-school resources (Chapter 4). The third story is about what kind of cities Paris and New York are for their undocumented youth. In New York, youth benefit from the relative inclusion that civil society and politicians have fashioned: limbo. In Paris, the more conflict-oriented civil society negotiates with politicians and bureaucrats to funnel youth to a legal status: purgatory. More broadly, we see two examples of a growing phenomenon: precarious youth becoming adults who are liminally included.

In this last section, I evaluate criteria of this study’s fit; relevance; trustworthiness (i.e. validity); reliability; and reflexivity (Charmaz 2006).

**Fit and Modifiability.** To what extent does the theory fit the data collected? I have aimed to maximize the fit of analysis and theory to the data collected through a process of fit and re-fit over time. Fieldnotes comprise the core of data, and so categories derive from in-vivo, low-inference codes from words that informants use themselves. My guiding priority was to capture comprehensiveness before fine-tuning my data collection and analysis. In analyses of social life, this approach led to the rating of 55 indicators across 11 domains of social life. Youth shifts in possible selves over time—how they see themselves in the future—highlight the continued influence of legal status. These data have encouraged me to always maintain a contingent model over time, with changing priorities as informants transitioned to adulthood.

The duration of the study has allowed three checks of fit. The first was sharing my analysis and findings with informants. Second, I was active in a ‘community of inquiry’ over the past six years and have received feedback on my research and benefited from
related research. Third, policy changes have been a test of the fit of my modeling. My constellations of governance, based in relational understandings, have retained analytical value over time. In moving back and forth between Paris and New York, I was able to inform informants in each city about the situation in the other city to see how they respond. Informant reactions and questions then help to understand how they their own situation.

Relevance and Workability. The duration and depth of the working out creates a multidimensional representation of social worlds, and shows how a multitude of actors influence how legal status plays out in the lives of youth. The multiple level of findings tell a credible story about what it is like to come of age without papers. The governance modeling can be applied to other situations to demonstrate intended or unintended mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. The multilevel analysis is intended to speak to the agency of multiple actors, starting from the youth themselves to local organizations and governments. The depth of the comparison makes the findings relevant to each city, and provides possible solutions to providing better social access to youth.

My theoretical sampling has sought variation in experiences of the undocumented. My models are thus based on the variation in informants, whether they be academically strong, politically active, family-centered, or more socially isolated. Social distance from mainstream institutions emerged as a key factor when exploring how informants dealt with being undocumented.

Trustworthiness and Internal & External Validity. Qualitative researches sometimes avoid the positivistic connotations of internal and external validity, though I find the distinction useful. Internal validity asks ‘To what extent do the contexts and causal
factors explain the outcomes in undocumented youth informants”? Some factors have already been discussed, such as checking with informants and the benefits of longitudinal research. The use of negative cases, especially in seeing how regularized youth fare with respect to their undocumented peers, highlights the salience (and lack of) of legal status at key moments. The comparison to similarly situated documented people, especially coming from the same schools, also uses the same logic. The triangulation of data analysis also supports the processes explained here. The consistency of findings across analyses using biographical, inventory, fuzzy set, governance, and comparative logics supports claims of internal validity.

External validity asks about generalizability: ‘To what extent can these results be held true for other cases?’ What good is such research should immigration reform pass? First, it adds to a growing body of literature about the importance of the local level in incorporating immigrants politically and socially. Second, the boundary and governance modeling can be applied to other investigations dependent on social or political context but with different ‘inputs’ (e.g. subjects with different configurations of capital or different institutional environments). Importantly, the study as a whole examines how youth are excluded by systems of power and how they adapt and cope with that exclusion. Studies that examine this kind of inequality continue to be necessary reminders that our institutions are vitally important to how we construct our lives within their bounds.

Reliability. Because the number of cases is limited, both in informants and contexts, I can evaluate the results of the analysis fairly well. The data that underlie each case is deep, multidimensional, and longitudinal. If findings do not ‘ring true’, this could result in a
shift in analysis or a re-examination of data. Triangulating through data analysis can raise the salience of certain contextual factors that otherwise would be neglected. Finally, this chapter on my research process and positionality gives the reader some information through which to understand my findings and theory.

This approach supports looking at each city as a best case scenario within its national context, with a focus on how that actually happens. To what extent can cities act to produce positive outcomes for undocumented youth? That becomes an implicit research question once the studies are situated as best-case scenarios. Here I am returning from the embedded design, each case within the production of illegality in each place, to the larger unit of analysis: illegalities. I can put forth a (contingent) description of illegality and its effects on youth. The context has become the target of study (Yin 2009).

This process of building dialogue is broader than the scope of this chapter. Appendix B describes the iterative processes that allowed this comparison: 1) piloting, diagnostic process, 2) the work out (from micro to macro) process, 3) the initial comparison process comprising the Paris diagnostic process, 4) the process of refining the question and relevant context, 5) the second work out (micro to macro) process, 6) the second comparison process, and 7) a second process of refining the question and relevant context.

Positioning of the researcher

“Making context and dialogue the basis of an alternative science unavoidably brings into prominence power effects that divide the extended case method from the principles of reflexive science” (Burawoy 1998:7). In this section I describe how my positioning impacted data collection and analysis.
I began this project in September 2008, one month after I finished teaching summer school in New York. My hope to improve the lives of immigrant youth who were like my former students motivated me to begin research. More broadly, I am an advocate for immigrant rights; in the US political context, I would be called an ‘ally’. This was an important part of how I presented why I was doing research, and usually was enough rationale for youth to allow me to hang around for a bit. My teaching also greatly facilitated my initial entry. Students and teachers knew me and didn’t find it unusual for me to be sitting in the back of their classroom or at their table for lunch. And I was more accessible speaking Spanglish in jeans and a sweatshirt in the student cafeteria. The biggest leap was to go into their homes, to sit down and become more comfortable with their parents. Attending Spanish-language Catholic mass was an intermediate ground where families and I could feel equally comfortable. While I was an educational insider—an American—in other ways I was a cultural outsider steadily improving my Spanish. My first month-long trip to the Mixteca region in Mexico in January 2009 earned me some legitimacy with families: I had seen their land and sometimes their families. This trip also allowed me to directly address my privilege of being a citizen with informants and their families. As I brought back gifts from Mexico to a few families, I explained that I felt guilty about being able to go but at least I hoped I was an in-person intermediary between familia aqui and alla [here and there].

When I entered the second site in New York, it was also a high school where I had taught. But it had been six years. That meant that I knew many of the faculty but didn’t know students. Here my assets positioned me differently. I met informants in the cafeteria and library and used snowballing to know more students. I had knowledge of
Mexico, and could show maps and photos on my iPhone. But this school was larger. The Chinese students sat at “Chinese” tables; Mexican and Central American students sat at theirs. I stood out and felt like an outsider. I remember one Spanish teacher encouraging me to be more like a student in her class, and students came to see my presence as more normal.

With time, I feel that the role I felt I played and youths’ perception of me converged. Partly friend to talk to, partly an expert on schools, partly a family friend: in a word, an avuncular mentor. My masculinity was never noted, in contrast to my whiteness, the most remarked feature of early conversations with informants and their families. At a party where I was asked to be the master of ceremonies, one father told my then-girlfriend that I was his “first white friend” and handed us cups of ‘punch’. I was an in-the-know person in terms of access to mainstream institutions (especially DOE, CUNY) but also could look up government (e.g.) information easily. Teenagers also asked me about everyday teenage topics: phone plans, finding a job, and their romantic relationships.

For all the differences in my entry in Paris, I was surprised to play a similar role for most of my informants. Having worked with a few schools, administrators and teachers, as well as the main civil society organization for undocumented youth, I was also an ‘in-the-know’ person with access to mainstream institutions. Many of the Paris informants first assumed I was a French insider. I accompanied several people in their appointments at the Préfecture of Police of Paris as an official accompanying guide. My French abilities, in speaking but especially in writing, were stronger than my informants. I also capitalized on being not French at certain points, and my informants did not miss
an opportunity to make fun of French people. A few informants proposed visiting me in New York.

The age difference between my informants and me was at least ten years, though my young face and casual clothes made for an easy older-brother relationship with most informants. The use of Facebook gave us each a chance to see the consistency of our self-presentation.

At various and many moments during the study, I reflected on my relationship to my informants. Beyond the privilege of being born with US citizenship, I have had much more educational experience than my informants and more generally, have enjoyed the benefits of a middle-class life. Two things have mitigated this sense of privilege. First, my feeling of being a cultural outsider—always being worse in spoken Spanish than my informants, for example—kept me quieter than I might have been around others. I was most often in others’ spaces and naturally gave them precedence to define the situation. Proximity to people that are now old friends also carries the potential of becoming embroiled in personal fights. As relationships between informants’ parents and with girlfriends have ended, I have tried to minimize my judgments. When solicited, I gave my perspective.
### Appendix A: Transition to Adulthood Inventory of Social Participation and Well-being

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Negative Outcomes</th>
<th>Positive Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing/Home</strong></td>
<td>housing instability&lt;br&gt;decrepit, unsafe or unhealthy conditions&lt;br&gt;unable to rent/contribute&lt;br&gt;lack of food/clothing</td>
<td>housing stability&lt;br&gt;safe healthy conditions&lt;br&gt;contributing to rent&lt;br&gt;no lack of food/clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment</strong></td>
<td>joblessness&lt;br&gt;job abuse (unpaid hours or longer than legal hours)&lt;br&gt;job stress, including no set schedule for work&lt;br&gt;stagnant job position or pay&lt;br&gt;lack of job satisfaction&lt;br&gt;no vacation or sick days&lt;br&gt;cannot claim unsafe conditions or disrespect&lt;br&gt;no medical benefits, no pension, etc.</td>
<td>employment&lt;br&gt;legal standards followed&lt;br&gt;lack of job stress&lt;br&gt;opportunities for job growth and promotion job satisfaction&lt;br&gt;vacation &amp; sick days&lt;br&gt;safe conditions, respectful atmosphere&lt;br&gt;no benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>no postsecondary education&lt;br&gt;dropout HS&lt;br&gt;lack of confidence and fluency in native language&lt;br&gt;lack of non-peer relationships in school&lt;br&gt;getting into trouble in school&lt;br&gt;low grades (less than 70 (NYC) or less than 10 (Paris))</td>
<td>postsecondary education&lt;br&gt;graduate HS&lt;br&gt;speaking native language well&lt;br&gt;non-peer relationships in school&lt;br&gt;behaving in line with expectations&lt;br&gt;above-average HS grades (above 80 or 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>lack of family support&lt;br&gt;family needs cause great stress&lt;br&gt;family separation&lt;br&gt;family instability (divorce, running away, domestic violence)</td>
<td>loving, supportive family&lt;br&gt;lack of stress in family interactions&lt;br&gt;no family separation&lt;br&gt;family stability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Operationalized

- **-1 point**
  - Not moving annually; no change in occupants
  - No broken, unsafe furniture, no overcrowding, beds for each occupant
  - Can pay one’s share of rent; household can pay rent
  - Family members eat as much as they please; clean, season-appropriate dress

- **+1 point**
  - Moving several times a year (or strong possibility of it); change in occupants
  - Broken, unfinished parts of the house; noticeable insect infestation; overcrowding
  - Can’t pay one’s share of the rent; household can’t pay rent
  - Family members must skip meals or wear dirty, thin clothing

- **Full-time work (30-40 hours)**
  - No job (job is sought)
  - Report legal standards are followed
  - Report infrequent or low levels of stress
  - Understands possible promotion avenues, feel they are within reach
  - Self-report of overall satisfaction
  - Paid vacation & sick days exist & have taken
  - No or few incidents of injury or insult
  - Wage above $10<br>Wage below min wage<br>Medical or pension benefits

- **Continuation beyond high school in 4-5 years**
  - Drop out HS<br>Report comfort and confidence speaking English/French (corroborated)
  - Speak regularly with staff, teachers or administrators
  - No behaviors described as problematic in school
  - No cutting, no arguments with students or staff

- **Reports and evidence of recurrencet lack of emotional and/or financial support**
  - Reports and evidence of stress from family interactions or unmet family needs (financial, care-giving, emotional, psychological)
  - Separation from at least one parent for a period of over 6 months (later: with evidence of suffering resulting)
  - Reports and evidence of divorce, running away, domestic violence, major fights

- **No such reports or lack of evidence**
  - Reports and evidence of getting along with family members (emotional and/or financial support)
  - Need for family supporting members (financially, care, emotionally, psychologically)
  - Separation from parents or siblings for more than 6 months (later: with few emotional repercussions)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Legal Behavior</th>
<th>Civic Participation</th>
<th>Health &amp; Mental Health</th>
<th>Psychosocial</th>
<th>Peer Relationships</th>
<th>Antisocial behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>failed immigrant barrier</td>
<td>plan to or make good on immigrant barrier</td>
<td>reports and evidence of lack of or failed intergenerational reciprocal obligations</td>
<td>reports and evidence of lack of or failed intergenerational reciprocal obligations</td>
<td>reports and evidence of lack of or failed intergenerational reciprocal obligations</td>
<td>reports and evidence of lack of or failed intergenerational reciprocal obligations</td>
<td>reports and evidence of lack of or failed intergenerational reciprocal obligations</td>
<td>Like spending time with peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>arrest record</td>
<td>no arrest record</td>
<td>arrest record</td>
<td>no arrest record</td>
<td>no arrest record</td>
<td>no arrest record</td>
<td>no arrest record</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>gang membership/involvement</td>
<td>no gang involvement</td>
<td>arrest record</td>
<td>report or evidence of gang membership/close association</td>
<td>report or evidence of gang membership/close association</td>
<td>report or evidence of gang membership/close association</td>
<td>report or evidence of gang membership/close association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fear of police enforcement</td>
<td>feel they can report crimes to police, etc.</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>any attendance at organizational event or activity in past 6 months</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>any attendance at organizational event or activity in past 6 months</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic participation</td>
<td>no participation in civic events/activities</td>
<td>no attendance at organizational event or activity in past 6 months</td>
<td>any attendance at organizational event or activity in past 6 months</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>includes religious, school, club, CBO</td>
<td>irregular participation in civic activities</td>
<td>exceptional participation only</td>
<td>at least monthly attendance at organizational event or activity in past 6 months (esp. preparing events)</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td>report or evidence of not going to police, of fear of contacting police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no leadership</td>
<td>leadership in civic activities</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does not use public resources (e.g., parks &amp; libraries)</td>
<td>use public resources (e.g., parks &amp; libraries)</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
<td>reports leadership activity only</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>no recreational participation</td>
<td>Participant in recreational activity</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of lack of recreational activity</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of lack of recreational activity</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of lack of recreational activity</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of lack of recreational activity</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of lack of recreational activity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No explicitly political action</td>
<td>Explicitly political action</td>
<td>No evidence or self-report of participation in any organized political action</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of participation in any organized political action</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of participation in any organized political action</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of participation in any organized political action</td>
<td>Evidence or self-report of participation in any organized political action</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Mental Health</td>
<td>major mental health issue-recurrent/chronic</td>
<td>hospitalization or episode of mental health condition</td>
<td>no report or evidence of mental health condition</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chronic physical condition</td>
<td>good overall mental health</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>can’t afford needed treatment</td>
<td>good overall physical health</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
<td>self-report or evidence of policy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychosocial</td>
<td>negative help-seeking orientation</td>
<td>generalization of observation of school, work, and housing contexts (and others, if salient)</td>
<td>generalization of observation of school, work, and housing contexts (and others, if salient)</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lack of self-confidence</td>
<td>self-confidence</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no outlet for masculinity</td>
<td>outlet for masculinity</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>negative feeling for future (lack of self-efficacy)</td>
<td>positive feeling for the future (self-efficacy)</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>lack of satisfaction with self</td>
<td>satisfied with self</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td>reports and conversations about negative engagement with peers around the themes of strength, aggressiveness, mastery of one’s environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Relationships</td>
<td>Lack of caring peer relationships</td>
<td>Lack of evidence of exchange of ‘friendly’ sentiments with peers (symbolic gifts, discussion of current situation, ongoing interactions)</td>
<td>Evidence of exchange of ‘friendly’ sentiments with peers (symbolic gifts, discussion of current situation, ongoing interactions)</td>
<td>Evidence of exchange of ‘friendly’ sentiments with peers (symbolic gifts, discussion of current situation, ongoing interactions)</td>
<td>Evidence of exchange of ‘friendly’ sentiments with peers (symbolic gifts, discussion of current situation, ongoing interactions)</td>
<td>Evidence of exchange of ‘friendly’ sentiments with peers (symbolic gifts, discussion of current situation, ongoing interactions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antisocial behavior</td>
<td>Caring peer relationships</td>
<td>Evidence of at least monthly interactions with peers; gives positive reports of spending time with others</td>
<td>Evidence of at least monthly interactions with peers; gives positive reports of spending time with others</td>
<td>Evidence of at least monthly interactions with peers; gives positive reports of spending time with others</td>
<td>Evidence of at least monthly interactions with peers; gives positive reports of spending time with others</td>
<td>Evidence of at least monthly interactions with peers; gives positive reports of spending time with others</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Partner Relationships</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>No relationship with partner</td>
<td>Relationship with partners</td>
<td>Evidence of not wanting to enter relationships with peers due to lack of trust</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unstable relationship</td>
<td>Stable relationship</td>
<td>Evidence of lack of satisfaction in relationship and lack of mutual support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dependent partnership or unfulfilling relationship</td>
<td>Accepting the role of being a supportive partner</td>
<td>Evidence of little investment in relationship and little evidence of motivation to maintain relationship</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of feeling of growth</td>
<td>Feeling of personal growth</td>
<td>Evidence of personal investment in the relationship (time, other resources) and feelings of personal growth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transnational measures</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No transnational practices</td>
<td>Transnational practices</td>
<td>Evidence of or self-report of action aimed towards the hometown or country of origin</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrequent communication</td>
<td>Frequent or important communication</td>
<td>Evidence of infrequent and cursory communication with family or friends in country of origin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No sending of remittances</td>
<td>Sending remittances</td>
<td>Evidence of or self-report of difficulty having everyday conversation in maternal language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaking maternal language less than fluidly</td>
<td>Speaking maternal language fluidly</td>
<td>Evidence of or self-report of difficulty having everyday conversation in maternal language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing maternal language less than well</td>
<td>Writing maternal language well</td>
<td>Evidence of formal writing in maternal language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of confiding in others, of depending on others, of being able to turn to peers when in need</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of a document page with text]

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Appendix B: Methods

Here I present a detailed description of the methodological process that I follow to build commensuration between the two cases of Paris and New York as best cases for undocumented youth. The seven step, iterative processes that allowed this comparison include 1) piloting, diagnostic process, 2) the work out (from micro to macro) process, 3) the initial comparison process comprising the Paris diagnostic process, 4) the process of refining the question and relevant context, 5) the second work out (micro to macro) process, 6) the second comparison process, and 7) a second process of refining the question and relevant context. I conclude by applying this framework to two other studies.

Piloting and Diagnostic Ethnography

I began this project as I entered graduate school in September 2008. While I address my positionality in greater detail in Chapter 10, my entry to the field was largely shaped by six years working as an English as a Second Language teacher at New York public high schools and one year working with immigrants in Bordeaux. At ABC High School in New York, where 80% of students are Latino and where I taught from 2005 to 2008, Mexican students were sometimes dissed by other Latino students (for being Mexican) and were less involved in school activities. The research question that I used to guide my early field notes was to understand what factors influenced the school achievement of a small sample of Mexican students and how. To examine the variety of possible responses to this question, my pilot research design identified high- and low-achieving youth, upper- and lower-classmen in two high schools where I had worked. The ESL programs at each school were quite distinct, and I hypothesized that might have an important impact on achievement. With my teacher’s mind trying to avoid potentially problematic situations arising from intimate time spent with female teenagers, I decided to focus on male students.

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105 As defined in Suarez-Orozco, Suarez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008).
I spent time with my informants during the school day in the cafeteria, the library, their ESL and content classes, in the hallways and other social spaces. I went with informants from school to homes, workplaces, and parks. On the weekends, I spent time with their families in various places, at home, in churches, in the neighborhoods they lived in. Following Duneier (1999:341), “I sought mainly to diagnose the processes at work in [these] setting[s] and to explain the observed patterns of interactions of people.”

Aware of the high dropout rate of Mexican students in New York City schools, I began my study seeking to understand the challenges and obstacles Mexican students faced as they progressed through high school. As I worked with youth, I realized the most relevant research theme seemed to be about undocumented youth. Though I knew some of my former students had been undocumented, I had very little understanding of its prevalence or of its effects.

Here are some memos consolidating and reflecting on some field notes I took during the school year 2008-09.

September 2009. Miguel is an affable, polite 16 year-old junior. He wears glasses and has glowing skin that offset the (artificial and teenage-rebellious) effect of his heavily-gelled, spiky black hair. During the 10 am ‘lunch’, he sits with a dozen freshman and sophomore students who are mostly male and mostly Mexican. He is a good story-teller and joker who has earned the respect of his lunch friends. Miguel, who had immigrated at age 10 and was in a bilingual program, favored Spanish over English. He told me in an interview that he was strongest in Math and Chemistry and weakest in reading-intensive courses like English and History.
I was supposed to track Miguel in his classes today, but he didn’t show up to school. His English teacher told me in a judgmental tone of voice that she wasn’t going to be able to pass him if he “can’t do the basics” such as showing up for class. He left me a message later that afternoon: “I’m sorry that I wasn’t there today. I work until after midnight in Harlem and take the train back and only made it home at 1:30. I woke up very late and didn’t get to school until 5th period.” 5th period begins at 11:19 am.

The next week, he explained to me that his family needed him to pay the rent. His family rented two apartments in one building for his parents, his four brothers and sisters and their spouses and their six children. His father was a musician whose work was up and down. When he told me about this, his tone assumed that I would view his situation sympathetically. He criticized the guidance counselors, who wouldn’t put him on a schedule that started later in the day. “I want to do well in school,” he said. He shifted, “But for someone like me, a degree won’t get me anything new, and work is first.” “What do you mean, like you?” I asked. “If you don’t have a social security [number],” he replied.

Rene, a 17 year-old senior whom I had taught, sat in his advisory class as a teacher reviewed the application process of the nearby public colleges. He handed out brochures that highlighted academic programs at various campuses. December 2008. My eyes looked around the room of 12 seniors examining the CUNY and SUNY brochures. Students listed programs they might be interested in, but Rene didn’t open the brochure. I sat behind him, and so I tried to engage him in the exercise. He half-heartedly opened the brochure, and I tried to elicit some interest or talent that could
correspond to a major. “Let’s find some programs you could do,” I said. He opened it to humor me. “I’m don’t think I’m going to apply now,” he said privately.

I realized that in spite of my interest in exploring in-school factors for trajectories, the more important story was happening outside of it. I re-assessed my research design. Starting with the data informants’ daily lives, I asked what are their main concerns? I knew undocumented students could not access (state or federal) financial aid, and those who were upperclassmen knew this as well. On a micro level, I remained sensitized to identifying central concerns of my informants. As we saw in the cases of Miguel and Israel, many students’ need to work for daily and family expenses seemed paramount to the lack of access to the normal paths to college. To investigate from their own viewpoints, rather than impose normative goals on them, I sought to understand my informants’ mental maps of the future. What futures did they see as possible and desired? My thinking here was to keep the dependent variable variable on the informant. How did undocumented status influence those possibilities and pathways towards them?

At this point, a family lens fit the data well. Decision making about whether to attend college and/or work was happening between my informants and parents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. The relevance of the immigrant bargain concept, the intergenerational negotiating around the expectations of the children for the sacrifices in immigrating of their parents, took my notice. I wrote a paper on this and presented it at the American Sociological Association conference. I saw evidence for other influences as well: pressure from school and specific teachers, motivation from romantic relationships, expectations of fulfilling traditional male gender roles, friends’ paths, and transnational resources.
While some scholars (George & Bennett 2008) advocate that researchers must know a lot about contextual factors to set up the study, the pilot phase allowed me to ground my ideas of contextual factors from *data from the field* as opposed to the literature. This step means that the concerns of my informants ground my theorization rather than other studies that have been done on similar populations. Theoretical dialogue then followed with other studies, which increases the validity of my claims. I would be more likely to read things into the situations had I entered with a theoretical orientation in mind; instead, my informants’ words and actions drove the (early) theorizing.

**NYC “Work Out”**

Over the next two years, I continued to spend regular time with my informants and with the family lens in mind, most often with their families. I did in-depth interviews of informants and also did ethnographically-grounded interviews when events transpired that would give me a look into informants’ mental maps. Oftentimes, I’d describe the scene that happened and ask the informant to fill in additional information or ask about motivations for specific statements.

I also began to investigate more closely the broader context of social structure that influenced my informants’ understandings and actions. Still with an inductive logic, the focus of my memos shifted more to possible micro-macro links. Persistent questions framing my data collection included: Where do they cross with social institutions and public institutions? How do these relate to their future aspirations? Do they use these to resolve their issues relating to status? Why or why not? What are informants’ constraints & opportunities? How do institutions that organize power affect the microsettings of my informant fieldwork?
Pilot work sensitized me to how social networks, social capital, and social locations might structure youth fantasies of the future, and I looked and listened for evidence of these. I put these together with responses from interviews in which I asked youth about their dreams at various points in the future. Here I sought to represent a more comprehensive view of the topography of my informants’ mental maps. Where did they see power rising to block their paths, and where did they see their opportunities.

I interviewed organizations they and I had identified as powerholders in the neighborhoods of my informants: teachers and administrators, community organizations, afterschool programs, and priests. I looked outward to see what were conditions within high school counselors, college admission at CUNY, and the policies governing state and financial aid. Each of these factors may have a decisive impact on youth trajectories. Counselors who do not provide information on possibilities for undocumented youth leave such youth believing they cannot continue their studies. Restrictive financial aid policies hurt undocumented youth partly due to the increased tuition of attending CUNY.

On three occasions, I traveled to Mexico to meet family of informants and better understand the influence of transnational social fields. Two of my informants had moved back to Mexico with the goal of studying, and I was able to maintain some in-person fieldwork. For some, the transnational social field offered more strategic resources for following one’s educational goals, and others toyed with the idea of returning for this as well. Return as a key theme emerged, and the Mexican fieldwork elucidated how. These trips also gave me greater cultural facility and a more legitimate member of family gatherings in the eyes of my informants’ families.
Sometimes my informants clearly pointed to the importance of these actors. Having worked for over 20 years at one store where the boss repeatedly treats his pay day as optional, the upright father of one informant asked me if there was a way to get papers. Someone had told him if you pay your taxes and can show you’ve lived somewhere for ten years, ‘they’ will give you papers. At this point, I realized the superficiality of my knowledge of immigration laws. I spoke with a few academic experts, a few lawyers, and a nonprofit leader to gain clarity. I learned about U-visas that offer a visa to undocumented youth who have been victimized or abandoned. A few Internet sites had some information as well. These conversations clarified what informants knew and how they might act on different information. I filtered this information to the families with which I worked, including assistance in their neighborhood.

This interaction was one in which I strongly felt a responsibility to be an ethical researcher. Though I expressed to the family that I could never say I was 100% sure about the possibilities of the law, they viewed me as an authority. If I said there was absolutely no way they could legalize, they would not pay a lawyer to get them a green card. If I said it was possible through a lawyer, I believe they may have paid several thousand dollars to a lawyer. In the end, I explained the law as I saw it but urged the family to call a lawyer that worked with a nearby community-based organization, and gave them the number.

Much of what my informants knew about questions of legalization came from Spanish-language media, especially televised news programs. I was aware of the developing Dreamer movement, though in 2009-10 more organizing came from
California than New York. I noted that none of my informants indicated any orientation toward political involvement.

Several key concepts and working hypotheses arose during this phase. In comparison with other youth from the same high schools, I noted that my informants showed signs of changing social relationships. First, most had no immediate plans for college, and had lost contact with formal education. Second, most had found full-time work. Third, most engaged in fewer friend and peer interactions than before. Fourth, I thought two groups may be emerging: those who have romantic relationships and work and those who intend to (return to) study. Educational decisions were a concern, though for most not the primary concern. My broad data collection, allowing for variation in how legal status affects the transition to adulthood, allowed for multiple hypotheses to emerge.

**Diagnose and Compare**

In early grant proposals, I hypothesized that the different legal and institutional environments of France and the US would affect the incorporation of undocumented youth. I believed that the reach of France’s strong state would affect youth earlier and more severely in France; and that the historical and bureaucratic structures that encourage political activity in France would mobilize more youth around changing their status.

An initial period of diagnostic ethnography in Paris, less grounded theoretically than my initial fieldwork in New York, focused on (1) whether youth experienced exclusion in a similar-enough way to justify a comparison and (2) to what extent the contexts merited a comparison. I did not presuppose the degree to which the cases would be in dialogue.
Conducting pilot fieldwork from June to August 2010 in Paris, several leads showed promising distinctions between New York and Paris. I met a man who had been living in fear under a different name, hidden from all forms of public life except work. I noted origin-based stops in the subways and how the technology of a national identity card facilitated distinctions. I was also aware of a discourse countering President Sarkozy’s discourse against immigrants and sans-papiers. This contestation was at least partly on the local level, from associations partly funded by the government. One group, the *Reseau Education Sans Frontières* (RESF), published a guide to regularizing and helping youth. In contrast to New York, I discerned the import of leftist political ideologies that underlie rights-oriented groups in Paris but some disaccord between these groups.

Forming the comparison with undocumented youth in Paris forced me to articulate several aspects of context that otherwise would have been unexamined or at least less examined. The choice of Paris was based primarily on three factors. Estimates of undocumented residents in France were sufficiently high to merit investigation. Second, they were visible enough to attract significant press coverage, more than undocumented residents in New York. Third, I hypothesized centralization of the French state and the broader welfare programs would make the fight over gaining legal status more difficult. I also anticipated at its best, the study might create some linkages between separate movements of undocumented youth and residents in different countries. Undocumented residents might then be viewed more linked to global causes than any country-specific ones (e.g. Mexicans coming to the United States). My initial framing of
the comparison was only an initial motivation to conduct comparative research; the framing has shifted over time as the two cases speak to each other.

In developing the cases of the two cities, it would be important to make embedded comparisons—that is, draw out the social life of the undocumented students but also investigate how the category of undocumented is constructed and enforced. Are the paths into it and out of it similar? Are the experiences of exclusion similar? You can tell from this language that I am not making the assumption of a “perfect comparison”; I am able to investigate the extent to which a comparison is valid. I ask the same questions about what is assumed to be the same category. The emerging evidence from each city speaks to factors that may be less salient in the other context. Like in sculpture, we can draw attention to the absence of certain factors, what is not being said, where there is not material.

One important consequence of the comparison was developing a more rigorous definition of ‘undocumented youth’. In New York, I worked with youth that had immigrated between the ages of 10 and 12 years old. I quickly learned during pilot work in Paris that ‘undocumented’ youth who arrived before the age of 13 had the right to regularize their status at adulthood (CESEDA). Further, administratively, minors could not be undocumented but became *en situation irregulière* on their 18th birthday. I found this surprising because the literature on immigrant integration often paints France as comparatively low vis-à-vis other countries. Indeed, the legal category of undocumented meant many minors who would be undocumented in the US legal context were given greater access to rights that accompany residence. From this early point in the
comparison, my research thus oriented towards the construction of illegality in each context.

Two key choices still remained, however. With few sources of information for where I might encounter undocumented youth, I wasn’t sure whether I could better find youth in Paris or outside of it in the suburbs. While in New York, I worked with Mexicans; I thought Algerians or North Africans might be a good comparison group. How I responded to each question would shift the comparison with New York. I found organizations that worked with youth in diverse, popular neighborhoods, and collected data while working with them. I also identified academics whose expertise may inform my decision making. Professors Smain Laacher, Nicholas Jounin, and Catherine de Withol Wenden advised me to stay within Paris, where networks often situate newcomers. They pushed back against my use of North Africans, who do not dominate the ranks of the undocumented. Algerians, for example, benefitted from the right to citizenship for some time after independence. Even today, their rules governing their administrative situation differ (better as footnote?). There was no natural comparison group from one national origin; the mix of undocumented residents in France is diverse.

Grant writing also was a useful deductive moment to frame comparisons and work through the logics of various contextual factors. This is how I framed my entry and selection of informants in a 2012 grant application:

I initially identified undocumented youth informants in Paris, who entered France between the ages of 13 and 16, through fieldwork with organizations and then snowballed to meet classmates, friends, and neighbors who were undocumented. I selected youth irrespective of national origin, to reflect the broad mix of undocumented residents and to document possible cultural differences. In both cities, my interest lies in examining participation of these adolescents in various institutions including but not limited to school, nongovernmental organizations, family, peers, law enforcement, medical facilities, and religion. As part of this process, I collect data
on the relationship between students’ institutional experiences and the dynamics of feelings of shame, hope, denial, depression, violence, and help-seeking orientation. Data collection employs participant observation, life narrative and grounded interviews, group discussions, thematic apperception tool, and other social psychological tools. Accounting for the most salient aspects of their lives (Duneier 1999), experiences in education, work, family, peer group, intimacy, community, and the state are systematically documented.

A few examples showcase a few ways in which contextual differences became apparent. The first captures distinctions in the socio-political climate vis-à-vis undocumented residents. The second captures a surprising moment when I realized that youth who did not meet the criteria for legalization were sometimes legalized.

[December 2011] Today’s march was interesting to me for several reasons. First, there were a thousand people marching for migrant rights in east Paris! In New York, we’ve not seen large numbers of protestors since 2006. As far as I know, there is no international migrants’ day celebration in New York. In face of the new Alabama law, there were only a few hundred people attending the rally. Many groups in the Paris march were citizen allies, one of a dozen (often leftist, rights-claiming) organizations that often seemed to know each other. I marched with Souleymane and Abdul, both of whom have been regularized. Second, many people who were audibly immigrants, and others openly claiming to be sans-papiers, marched without interference from police. If the police go after individuals on the street or in the train stations, here there was no evidence of that. This resonates with the provocative political actions of the 9ème Collectif, a collective of North African sans-papiers, and the Rue Baudelique squatters who marched every Wednesday to the Gare du Nord train station to demand regularization.
[January 2012] 

When we went to a third appointment for a student visa, and a clerk referred us to a clerk that knew the case of undocumented youth. Despite not meeting the criteria for a student visa (e.g. sufficient income, parents’ legal status, knowledge of French language), the Prefecture of Paris awarded Chen a student visa. I had seen this obtaining of visas by undocumented residents before but not led the process with the government clerks.

The possibility of this change of status forced me to re-calibrate my working model of how context affects undocumented youth. More contingency was needed. I first saw certain individuals as being particularly useful in helping legalize youth, and I coined the concept of a conductor, someone that understands the opportunity structure for legalization well enough to guide a sans-papiers youth across the line of legality. This possible switch of status, which I did not see in New York until the implementation of DACA, allowed me to see how the possibility of a legalization affects the negative effects of ‘illegality’.

Building on my sense of the shift of social experiences as youth come of age (Smith 2006), I developed a plan for follow-up fieldwork with informants. Through my earlier research in Paris, I had identified key actors involved in the regulation and enforcement of legal residence: governmental and administrative actors such as Préfecture functionaries and the police on the local level, and the President, Parliament, and judges on the national level. Several actors offer services to or are involved in the regularization of undocumented residents: associations, parent associations, schools, unions, a network dedicated to aiding undocumented youth, lawyers, and local politicians. I had developed relationships with key informants in each of these settings. I tracked both undocumented
youth and my informants in these organizations in their interactions with governmental
and administrative actors.

**Refine Question and Relevant Context I**

As I wrote analytical memos on key concepts, I compared my findings with my
previous research in New York: Why are these codes different? What in the context
makes them different? This process often led me to have a ‘meta’ model in mind.

Engaging the modeling of context in boundary work (Alba 2005; Zolberg and Loon
1999), the nature of the boundary between undocumented and documented residents
could be bright (when distinctions between the two groups are easy to perceive) or blurry
(when distinctions between groups are less clear). Youth who were able to regularize
their status cross the boundary between the groups. I then set to identify what contextual
factors led to these boundaries characteristics.

From the perspectives of individual youth, social possibilities are envisioned
before being actualized. These dreams might exist with regard to any of the institutions
stated above. As I collected these data on youth *possible selves*, I asked if we see similar
fantasies and aspirations between youth within each city as well as between them. Every
feature of their lives cannot be tracked, or held together in a coherent way, especially the
cultural specificity of informants’ experiences. The richness of this data raises a surfeit of
possible comparisons, and so I used *social trajectory* to represent the outlook of youth
vis-à-vis their social context. Of the factors that comprise trajectory, I focused on
theoretically relevant features such as school-work plans, family and peer relationships,
and changes in legal status. My informants’ social trajectories might be “family first, so
work,” “leave gang, family first”, “get papers, look for a job”, and “study for career.” This reduces the “property-space” as advocated by Lijphart (1975).

I struggled to represent the contingent complexity of individual decision making in a structured opportunity structure. I developed a Pac-Man analogy. In Pac-Man, players must avoid enemies (deportation regimes) while gaining power pellets (social participation) in a maze (governance structures). Getting enough power pellets enables players to advance to another level (legal status). From a grant proposal:

“In Paris, Souleymane received the first of his three deportation orders just after he turned 18. At the age of 19, he arrived to the courtroom to appeal a second order, cheered on by his entire school and most of the staff. With the help of an advocate, a year later, he personally met the city’s Police Chief, argued why he should be legalized, and won. Also in Paris, Chen graduated from high school and now washes dishes in restaurants, fired every month or two, told that without papers, the possibility of a raid or inspection is too risky. Ernie graduated from a New York high school with an unsure future, and followed the most certain prospect: working at a factory where an uncle works. Luis also graduated from a New York high school, realized the difficulty of paying for college as an undocumented student, returned to Mexico to study architecture and fulfill his dream of becoming a professional.

I argue that we can understand these four disparate outcomes, and the larger social processes producing them, by using a Pac-Man analogy, which focuses on (1) the labyrinth of obtaining rights associated with citizenship (governance structure), (2) the possibility of moving up ‘a level’ towards citizenship bolstered by civil society (citizenship), and (3) youth’s negotiation of social mobility with the fear of
enforcement (identity). In Paris, youth like ‘play for promotion’ Souleymane that enter into the structure/labyrinth, and gain social participation, are likely to be rewarded with residency, though the path may not be easy or straightforward. ‘Do not play’ Chen does not enter into the structure, and exhibits very limited social participation and will not gain residency. In New York, youth like Ernie display limited local social participation but remain without a path to citizenship, like nibbling at the power pellets but remaining on the same level indeterminately. Luis decides that to be socially mobile, he must strive elsewhere, and he leaves to study in Mexico.”

I was viewing this maze mostly from the local perspective, making the claims I could make a Paris-New York comparison, rather than a France-US one. Furthermore, informed by the literature, my fieldwork, civil society groups, and media reports, I realized that each city was a best-case scenario. Administrative discretion in terms of enforcement and regularization differs from Paris, its close suburbs, and other départements. Likewise, space emerged as a key factor in New York. Those in upstate New York, even just traveling on a bus, faced tougher enforcement of legal status. In both cities, public transportation opened up work and social opportunities while minimizing enforcement. (Bloemraad 2013; Glick Schiller. FitzGerald 2012)

At this point, I had data on the lived experiences of youth in Paris and New York, some themes had become more salient, and had formed some early hypotheses about the most relevant social and political institutions that structured their integration. In order to increase the reliability of my early findings, I (1) read more of the literature on how certain social phenomena impacted individuals, (2) did extended fieldwork and
interviews with outside actors, and (3) asked my informants about those forces in revisit interviews. In order to better understand the comparison between Paris and New York, I asked informants about what they would do in hypothetical situations that represented my understanding of the other city.

“Work Out” II

This revisit phase began after being in the field for nearly four years. In contrast to the inductive work of the diagnostic phase and the (not exclusively) abductive work of the working out phase, here I had a theoretical framework in mind. I was checking its fit with new data, sensitized to anything that would strike me as surprising. Burawoy (2003: 646) posits that “With the revisit we believe the contrary: There is no way of seeing clearly without a theoretical lens.” The youth had transitioned into adulthood. How did individuals change? How did structures change? Do they drive me to alter my modeling? Engaging the Pac-man image of micro and macro interaction, I focused on social participation and the legal rules of the game. How would informants react to the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion I had identified as they became older?

Over the two years from my pilot study in Paris, two thirds of my informants there had obtained a temporary, renewable visa with which they could legally work. Only four of the twelve youth in Paris worked full-time. Meanwhile, none of my New York informants had lawful status until DACA, though nearly all worked full-time\(^\text{106}\). My informants had a sense of moving up or being stuck depending on the local labor market conditions. I collected information about they found jobs and how they described work experiences. When possible, I visited youth at work places.

\(^{106}\text{One attended college on a full scholarship and only began working with DACA status. A second only began working, in Mexico, after obtaining his bachelor’s diploma.}\)
Influenced by the national State, each city took a position on the employment of undocumented residents. Politicians understand how undocumented workers benefit local employers and also how the social justice lens of civil society includes them. Collecting data on how these local actors coalesce around undocumented resident employment might shed light on why immigrant families settle in a given location.

Two administrative developments—each fortuitous and potentially troublesome for my analysis—shifted the broader structure of undocumented life in each city/country. In the United States, Obama put in place the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). The Dreamer movement had pressured his reelection campaign for action on immigration reform, for which he needed Latino support. For those who fulfill DACA criteria, primarily entering before age 16, being under 31 years old, and having an educational credential of some type, DACA offers a (renewable) two-year relief from deportation, work authorization, and a temporary Social Security number. Some of my informants qualified; others had not graduated high school and worked full-time or had been stopped by Border Patrol on an earlier border crossing.

While this program shifted my representation of the legal context, it also allowed me to track how individuals would respond to changes in structure, shedding light on their imagined futures and their social distance from institutions. At about the same time, Francois Hollande was elected President of France, and his Minister of the Interior Manuel Valls issued a circulaire, shifting the legalization policy of sans-papiers youth. Now, youth with proof of three years of residence, schooling, language ability, and other social participation could obtain a temporary residence visa. These inclusionary steps in each country did not significantly diminish the deportation regimes in each country. In
fact, more undocumented youth in Paris have been deported since the administrative order than before.

These developments highlighted the utility of the governance model to represent how the provision of rights—the mechanism of citizenship—works. When national government policy shifts, local organizations serve essential roles in policy implementation (Riesma 2013). The social distance between youth and these organizations would underlie their uptake and long-term effects. When investigating the impact these programs had on undocumented youth, I began with data from everyday life of my informants. Had they obtained DACA protection, if so, how, and to what ends? I also volunteered with two organizations that provide services to assist youth apply. Outreach is an essential step in the implementation of this type of policy, and volunteering gave me insights into how it might affect youth. New York State gave funds to a few immigrant organizations for outreach, and New York City later gave funds for educational classes to help youth fulfill the criteria.

We see how additional time in the field can help. Extending the time range of my data on these youth will deepen and extend outcome data, allow me to test findings and refine my theory, and allow respondents to reflect on their own pathways as they have become adults (Burawoy 2003). Much like Abrego (2008), who contextualized her study of undocumented college students in California before and after the passage of a policy that facilitates their inclusion, my longitudinal fieldwork provides data to analyze key changes in the governance of irregular resident youth. In the Paris case, we see the change in the new government’s approach to governance of irregular resident youth with the recent circular of Minister of the Interior Valls to end detention of minors and the
impact of European institutions on enforcement practices. The new Préfet of Paris has also entered into discussions with civil society actors about new city procedures for undocumented youth. In the New York case, I have collected data on the changes in the organizational field and in individuals’ social trajectories before and after the implementation of the DACA program.

The effect of these administrative changes on youth trajectories followed earlier variation in social participation and social distance from institutions. In Paris, the Prefecture told 19 year-old Tarek he did not provide sufficient proof of his time in France (language fluency may also have played a role). A French translator for a foreign company, 19 year-old Marcelo used the more relaxed criteria to regularize and now attends a prestigious French university. In New York, 21 year-old Israel does not qualify for DACA because he was “returned” to Mexico on his first crossing attempt at age 13. 21 year-old David, on the other hand, received DACA and used his work permit to find a job in a biology laboratory while in college. These varied impacts to policy changes highlight the uneven social position of undocumented youth, exacerbated by the effects of “illegality”.

**Compare II**

I took advantage of an important benefit of longitudinal and qualitative work. With several years in the field, I was able to examine one city for similar structures after having identified them in the other. Likewise with individuals, I could ask about topics I hadn’t first realized were relevant in the study. My insights then grew in depth but also in breadth and comprehensiveness. The two contexts of the study took multi-dimensional representations. I then set about formalizing a comparison. In framing the comparison,
some aspects need to be in dialogue. Oftentimes, researchers will minimize contextual differences and focus on differences in respondent outcomes (e.g., Lamont 2000).

One strategy I used to help identify what was salient in the comparison, cross-context case checking (CCCC), was to ask informants about the situation in the other city. Do they think that is similar to their situation? What would they do there? If they could, how would they try to change the situation there? Responses to this question were often insightful, guiding my representation of the context and of the mental maps of my informants.

I explained that there was no organization such as RESF in New York that was active in schools and could help youth to change status. Souleymane asked me, “Why don’t you start it then?” I thought about how the network worked by coordinating local actors to put pressure on the local prefects. “Parts of the network approach might work,” I responded, “but there isn’t a local target like the Prefecture in New York.” The parliamentary system in France allows a greater diversity of political representation than in the United States, which results in broader representation of undocumented issues.

With some youth, my mention of the situation of undocumented youth in the other city did not elicit interest. Especially in New York, I often faced a blank stare when I spoke about how politicians in Paris or organizations protested in the streets. Though the 2006 May Day immigrant rights protest shows the mobilization potential of New York’s immigrants, a lack of interest in such affairs did not interest the vast majority of my undocumented youth. In a converse way, finding steady work was a major accomplishment in Paris. They asked where undocumented residents in New York worked and how they found the jobs.
Informants’ mental maps thus contributed to my representation of relevant governance structures. I began to understand how actors’ positions on undocumented youth influenced others’ positions. Whereas the conductor was an important actor from the point of view of youth, that conductor was organizationally situated. Those organizations have different rationales for their involvement, and the organizational field offers important guidelines for action. These considerations led me to emphasize *governance constellations*, the contingent way that actors respond to a social issue.

The benefits of this approach became clear while doing my fieldwork in Paris, I met a future minister, a Presidential candidate, regularly saw a council member, and participated in godparenting ceremonies for undocumented youth (more detail in Chapter 8). These politicians have taken a stand on this issue, despite the relatively small percentage of Parisians that were undocumented. Why? Inclusive associations contest restrictive policies; bureaucrats serving universal missions like teachers contesting restrictive policies; RESF coordinates civil society in Paris on this issue; and local government is responding to their pressure.

How was the transition to adulthood similar and different? To understand how the transition could be different for different youth, I developed biographical narratives, tracing key moments of inclusion and exclusion. Chapters 2 and 3 include these representations of the different ways that youth experience “illegality.” The objective was to show a range of experiences rather than tell a simple story of exclusion that happens as they become 18. Their stories then tell a story about which mechanisms become most salient in influencing trajectories.
These individual trajectories lend support to differences not only between youth in one city but between cities. Access to legalization was greater in Paris, though one New York informant obtained a U-visa when applying for Deferred Action (DACA). Access to jobs was much easier in New York than in Paris, and had a significant impact on other social life and feelings of inclusion. That being said, job opportunities and their attending consequences leave New York—and Paris—youth extremely stratified.

In Paris, I coded my notes for actors involved in the RESF organization. I developed matrices to analyze what types of actions each actor was doing with regards to undocumented youth and RESF, and their motivations for such actions. I mapped how actors interacted, which showed the relevance of the local Paris context for contesting national policies and practices restricting *sans-papiers* social life.

For every generalization, there are a few cases of outliers that do not follow these lines. One New York informant has graduated from college in Mexico, and has secured a professional job there, albeit far from his nuclear family in New York. A second New York informant, the recipient of a full scholarship, has graduated from an elite American university. DACA gives him the ability to work after graduation, and he expects legal status will not prevent him from neither a job nor a middle-class social life. In Paris, one informant who regularized at age 19 has entered an architecture college, has married, and works at a highly-valued job in a marketing company.

The restrictions on social life and its effects on youth varied both by individual and city. As I moved into the analysis, several key questions about casing remained. How to represent the experiences? What units of social experience should I use? I began with the key features of individual youth, but also wanted to aggregate them to compare
between cities. Furthermore, does this aggregate perspective jive with the memos and the biographical analyses I had begun?

As you will see in depth in chapters 6 and 7, I developed a comprehensive set of categories to use when evaluating the nature of my informants’ social experiences. These categories had emerged as relevant to how youth thought of their lives, pertaining to romantic partners, family, school, work, community, health, their country of origin, peers, and self-identity. I settled upon these categories by keeping fit a primary objective. Assessing social practices in different contexts to form a rigid comparison was not my goal. With my two dozen informants’ subjectivities in mind, I set criteria to classify a set of experiences as positive or negative; I considered experiences that fell between the criteria to be neither positive nor negative. This quantification represents a set of positive assets and negative obstacles that shape opportunity structures. These scores allow me to compare experiences between cities and to triangulate other analysis with an independently calculated measure of informants’ experiences. I assessed categories by reviewing interviews and field notes. With many years of field notes, I relied on a database that organized my field notes by date, theme, informant, and event.

Finally, in addition to comparing governance constellations, biographical narratives, and inventory scores, an image reflects the different experiences in Paris and New York. I worried that findings would risk becoming a judgment of in which city undocumented youth have it better. The youth I worked with struggled in both Paris and New York. A religious analogy helped differentiate the experiences of youth in each city. In Catholic theology, limbo is the place non-Christians and unbaptized babies go after death to wait until the second coming of Christ. Purgatory, on the other hand, is where
sinners go to expiate their sins before being allowed in to paradise. Limbo is being stuck in jail before trial, and purgatory is like doing your time. These analogies focus illegality as an experience that must be endured by youth.

**Refine Question and Relevant Context II**

While the question of how undocumented youth remained central, this dissertation showcases formal analysis of several comparisons. First, I examine transitions to adulthood involving a comparison of early and later experiences of “illegality.” Second, I compare the variation between informants within each city. Third, I compare experiences between undocumented youth in Paris and New York. Explicating those comparisons requires an analysis of the contexts that differ between adolescence and early adulthood; between social positions of informants within a city; and between the local contexts for undocumented youth, respectively. In addition to data on individuals, this dissertation thus describes and explains the political-legal and socio-economic policies and practices from local actors that constitute systems of illegality.

These overlapping analyses provide a depth and breadth of contextual representation that helps to

Chapter 6 argues that examining governance structures, especially through comparison, clarifies the extent to which local actors (in a system of multi-level governance) shape life of young undocumented residents. Chapters 4 and 5 then describe three ways that cities can shape undocumented life—by regulating their presence, providing opportunities and services, and offering the chance to change legal status—in New York and Paris, respectively.
To exploit the rich longitudinal data, I use multiple units of analysis: individuals’ social participation in varied domains; the aggregated social participation by city; broad trajectories based in salient domains (education-work-family-partner balance). Through this analysis of cities, citizenship, and social membership, I show the process of coming of age without papers. We can compare differences in social membership with the potholed spaces of inclusion and exclusion furnished by cities.

With many comparisons at play in this project, frequent mapping of the most salient elements allowed me to showcase various facets of the 3-D and develop relevant images and narratives for each part of the theorization. Boundary theorizing allows for comparisons on a more abstract level.

First, subjects had to be situated relative to institutions. The context of reception anticipates an initial entry point at a given place, and the context of integration supposes a shift over time towards mainstream institutions. Boundary analysis (Alba and Nee 2003; Tilly 2006; Alba 2005) represents these relational shifts with a line between the mainstream and outsiders (i.e. immigrants). As Zolberg and Loon (1999) argued, different social structures may constitute this boundary of social inclusion and exclusion. Further, Alba (2005) has elucidated two potential characteristics of this boundary line: its blurriness or brightness. With a bright boundary, there is little ambiguity regarding membership; a blurry boundary reflects the converse. Boundaries then represent the broader social structure.

Boundary theorists also can represent how individuals are situated in relation to the boundary. Individuals can cross the boundary; the boundary may shift to include (or exclude) them; and the salience of the boundary may change.
A key surprising finding was how legal status is navigated in Paris. It was clear from the revisit interviews that many had boundary-crossed to legal status and its rights to work as they transitioned to adulthood. Here, a second surprising finding was the exclusion that informants continued to feel in many ways. In clear contrast to my undocumented informants in New York, even youth with work visas faced difficulty finding a job. They were most often poorly positioned to profit from higher education. These two surprises pointed to the salience of two relevant boundaries: social and legal. What was the relationship like between these two boundaries over time? In the experiences of my informants, were the two interconnected? As you can see below in Figure 2, I used a Venn diagram to represent the double boundary that youth face. This was a useful heuristic device for thinking about what opportunities exist across sites.

One assumption built into this representation is that without legalization of some kind, mainstream social integration is very unlikely. A few well-known undocumented people, such as Pulitzer Prize-winner Jose Antonio Vargas and the California lawyer admitted to the bar, show this is not necessarily true, but it holds true for my informants and, I would argue, most undocumented immigrants.
Theorizing in this way also hides certain features of my cases. When we identify the actors that constitute the border guards so to speak of the legal and social boundaries, we are representing how power is present. Here, the mechanisms that allow boundary crossing or boundary salience carry different images. Is those in power have effective outreach into undocumented populations, but the boundary is still salient, one might imagine a ramp getting them in.

The micro-macro and time representation possible in boundary modeling make it particularly apt for my study. My 3-D ethnography identifies the actors who constitute those boundaries. From the perspective of the informants, salience and awareness of the boundary’s mechanisms comprise the blurriness or brightness of the boundary.
Theorizing the boundaries of social life also brought me to analyze more closely the social boundaries my informants experienced. Here, I again formalized the implicit comparisons I was making in evaluating undocumented youth in each city. In New York, my informants’ high school friends and classmates faced disadvantage. Yet nearly all had attended postsecondary institutions, including those whose academic writing was not strong. Many worked in retail or other service jobs. Engaging the extended place method then led to a focus on the relational distance between informants and their local context.

Compared to average Americans, both of these groups face considerable disadvantage. In particular, the high costs of the New York housing market are relevant. In a later chapter, I explore how the gentrification of many New York neighborhoods leaves undocumented youth and their families particularly vulnerable. While the family of his high school friend received Section 8 housing assistance, family members of my informants take more jobs and work longer hours. The qualitative difference in imagined futures between my informants and their classmates is large. While in their early 20s, each work in low-wage jobs, though for college-going immigrant youth, they are a means to an end. For most undocumented youth, they are the end. For most undocumented youth, work aspirations topped at a ‘clean’ service job, such as delivering for FedEx. In contrast, on the lower end, their classmates sought office jobs and low management positions, and on the upper end, corporate and professional positions.

If one desires to emphasize the broader distance of assimilation, one might compare undocumented youth to the mainstream rather than similarly-placed immigrant youth. This perspective emphasizes the stratified consequences of different opportunity structures. Some post-secondary educational achievement is a near-necessity for a job
that leads to a middle-class lifestyle. To make such a comparison, one may rely on Census data for their same-age counterparts. Segmented assimilationists may find a comparison to working-class peers more appropriate; one may compare the findings of Arnett’s study on their transition to adulthood. Kasinitz and colleagues (2008) closely examine New York’s children of immigrants and their transition to adulthood. Finally, the Suarez-Orozcos and Todorova (2008) provide insight into the school performance of immigrant teenagers.

**Applying the Method**

Certain areas of interest may not merit such an approach. When the researcher has extensive experience with the informants’ environment(s), the pilot phase may be shortened or eliminated. When the research question has been well-researched such as the role of class in educational institutions, the process of ‘working out’ may not require as much fieldwork. Representative datasets may lend insight into the relevant contexts and mechanisms of exclusion. When contextual factors in different sites are similar to a large degree, the comparative iterations may add little to the representations of context.

The evolution of the methodology I describe above may, however, be of use for certain classes of study. Studies that examine the social effects of a legal construct would benefit from this type of comparative research. One example might be studying how former prisoners respond to programs to prevent recidivism in different places or how an ethnic minority experiences discrimination in the workplace. The governance structures structuring life in each context—prison exit programs and anti-discrimination programs, respectively—differ depending on the actions of the different governmental, civil society, and market actors; we would expect informant outcomes to likewise differ. These studies
benefit from an in-depth focus on the context of integration that positions individual actions.

Sadiq’s study examining how undocumented immigrants gain citizenship rights in Malaysia, Pakistan, and India could be gainfully re-imagined using my methodology. Sadiq points to the shocking conclusion that undocumented immigrants are able to access these rights while rural non-migrants lack such access. Had Sadiq followed individuals rather than reporting from governmental and journalistic reports, his findings would shift considerably. The ability of some non-citizens to gain rights over several decades of residence and employment in a “new” place of residence does not seem as surprising as his findings suggest. Further, his central concept of documentary citizenship—being a citizen on paper—ignores the social distance that individuals have with respect to institutions. That long-term residents in cities may be socially closer to institutions than rural farmers is not as surprising when those institutions are part of the analysis. My longitudinal focus on real individuals and working-out process situates the processes in legal and social institutions.

Lamont’s comparison of the moral boundaries of working-class men could also be re-imagined using my approach. Her study examines differences between working-class men of white Americans, African-Americans, white French, and North African French immigrants. She argues that she can represent her interviewees’ mental maps, and inductively find patterns across their maps. These maps may suffer from bias from interview, respondent, field, and situational effects (Burawoy 2009). This bias may impact the validity of her findings. By theorizing the relevant race-ethnic groups ahead of her data collection, and attempting statistically-representative sampling with a small-N
sample, the reliability of the findings might also be called into question. Using my approach, we could see how the processes of working-class solidarities work, and identify the relevant actors that create workers’ sense of moral selves through iterative, multi-sited fieldwork. The spotlight would move from un-grounded interviewee (situational) meanings to the actors (and their actions) that influence those meanings. Insights of this latter type, focusing on micro-macro links, benefit from the validity and reliability of a longitudinal, iterative methodology.
### Appendix C. Background Information on Primary Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Country of Origin</th>
<th>Age at Arrival</th>
<th>Age in 2010</th>
<th>Place of meeting</th>
<th>Change in Legal Status</th>
<th>Year of Legal Change</th>
<th>Age at Legal Shift</th>
<th>Inventory Score</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Ernie</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>ABC High School</td>
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<td>2012</td>
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<td>David</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Special Juvenile Immigrant Status</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>DACA</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
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<td>Luis</td>
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<td>20</td>
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<td>Mexican resident and citizen</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
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<td>n/a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Souleymane</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>family-based visa</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul</td>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>RESF acting troupe</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
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<td>Mamadou</td>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Neighborhood RESF</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
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<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>snowballing</td>
<td>student-based visa</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guoliang</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>snowballing</td>
<td>family-based visa</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Neighborhood legal workshop</td>
<td>student-based visa</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huang Fu</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>Bao</td>
<td>China</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Neighborhood RESF</td>
<td>family-based visa</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcelo</td>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>RESF JM</td>
<td>family-based visa</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarek</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>RESF JM</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karim</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ari</td>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Neighborhood RESF</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## Appendix D. Rights and Belonging of New York and Paris Undocumented Youth

### Adult Citizenship Practices of Undocumented Youth, by Immigration Status, New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship Dimension</th>
<th>Without DACA (3)</th>
<th>DACA (6)</th>
<th>SIJS visa (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activity</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
<td>Limited formal and informal political participation possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
<td>Limited formal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Rights</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Access to financial aid, health care, housing rights; expands after five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Yes, via family and work attachments</td>
<td>Yes, via family and work attachments; Increased with DACA recognition</td>
<td>Yes, via family, school, and work attachments; Increased with formal recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic rights</td>
<td>Restricted to Informal Economy or Formal Economy w False Documents</td>
<td>Minimal restrictions</td>
<td>Minimal restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Rights</td>
<td>Limited by enforcement policies &amp; practices</td>
<td>Unlimited within United States</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Must be renewed every two years</td>
<td>No renewal necessary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: One informant now lives in Mexico.
### Adult Citizenship Practices of Undocumented Youth, by Immigration Status, Paris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship Dimension</th>
<th>Without status (4)</th>
<th>Employer visa (1)</th>
<th>Student visa (1)</th>
<th>Family visa (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Formal</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>Possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Activity</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
<td>Informal political participation possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Rights</td>
<td>Many restrictions</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
<td>Few restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
<td>No formal rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Rights</td>
<td>Access to subsidized health care</td>
<td>Access to assistance to low-income families, subsidized health care, postsecondary education, housing aid, etc. *</td>
<td>Access to assistance to low-income families, subsidized health care, postsecondary education, housing aid, etc. *</td>
<td>Access to assistance to low-income families, subsidized health care, postsecondary education, housing aid, etc. *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Limited to extended family</td>
<td>Limited to extended family</td>
<td>Limited to extended family</td>
<td>Limited to extended family; sense of exclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic rights</td>
<td>Restricted to Informal Economy or Formal Economy w False Documents</td>
<td>Employer must pay feel add’l fee; restricted to employer</td>
<td>Limited hour restrictions; fees must be paid to hire</td>
<td>Minimal restrictions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Rights</td>
<td>Limited by enforcement policies &amp; practices</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
<td>Unlimited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Must be renewed every year with evidence of work contract</td>
<td>Must be renewed every year with evidence of continuing studies</td>
<td>Must be renewed every year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** * Certain conditions apply for access to certain social rights when under 25 years old.

**Legend**
- Exclusionary
- Inclusionary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QCA Thresholds</th>
<th>Social Network</th>
<th>Social Capital</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
<th>Civic Participation</th>
<th>Inventory Score #1 (average of means)</th>
<th>Inventory Score #2 (additive)</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Legalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>alone</td>
<td>isolated &amp; no help-seeking</td>
<td>no ability in language</td>
<td>no participation in orgs</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>negative</td>
<td>no work</td>
<td>dropped out of HS</td>
<td>No legal status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>immediate family</td>
<td>working-class resources &amp; no help-seeking</td>
<td>limited ability in conversation (BICS)</td>
<td>some participation in ethnic org</td>
<td>0-1.5</td>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>under minimum wage or under SMIC</td>
<td>GED</td>
<td>DACA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>family and sparse ethnic network</td>
<td>working-class resources &amp; help-seeking</td>
<td>strong conversation skills (BICS low CALP)</td>
<td>some participation in ethnic org &amp; other religious or hood orgs</td>
<td>1.5-3</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>minimum wage or SMIC</td>
<td>High School diploma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>dense ethnically only network (includes family)</td>
<td>middle/UM class resources &amp; no-help seeking</td>
<td>strong conversation skills (BICS emerging CALP)</td>
<td>some participation in non-ethnic orgs</td>
<td>3.0-4.5</td>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>above $10/hour or above SMIC</td>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>Student- or employer-based visa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>more mixed network than ethnic</td>
<td>middle/UM class resources &amp; help-seeking</td>
<td>developing literacy skills &amp; strong conversation skills (BICS &amp; developing CALP)</td>
<td>much participation in ethnic org</td>
<td>4.5-6</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>above $12/hour or 1.25x SMIC</td>
<td>Associate’s Degree</td>
<td>Family-based visa or SUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>dense ethnic and mixed network</td>
<td>mixed class resources &amp; no-help seeking</td>
<td>strong literacy &amp; speaking in language (BICS &amp; CALP)</td>
<td>much participation in non-ethnic org</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>35+</td>
<td>above $15/hour or 1.5x SMIC</td>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree or higher</td>
<td>Full citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>dense multi-stranded network (none particularly strong)</td>
<td>mixed class resources &amp; help-seeking</td>
<td>much participation in ethnic &amp; non-ethnic orgs (pretest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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