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Hegemonic Practices and Neoliberal Ideology: Conjunctions and Disjunctions in Discussions of Social Identity

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Hegemonic Practices and Neoliberal Ideology: Conjunctions and Disjunctions in Discussions of Social Identity

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

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in

Sociology

by

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August 2014

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This dissertation would not have been possible without the assistance and support of many individuals. My parents were a constant source of emotional support; they kept pushing me forward when I wanted to stop. My mentors in the sociology department believed in what I was doing and encouraged me “just get it done.” My Chair, Dr. Adalberto Aguirre, Jr., encouraged me to pursue my intellectual interests in neoliberalism and social identity. He encouraged me to examine the formation of hybrid identities on the U.S.-Mexico border as an outcome of neoliberal practices. He also introduced me to the notion of “bodies out of place” to discuss the perception in American ideology that the border moves with the Mexican body. Dr. Augustine Kposowa encouraged me to examine neoliberal practices in social policy initiatives such as zero tolerance school policies. Dr. David Swanson was very supportive of my decision to examine the exchange between social identity formation, neoliberalism and Globalization. I know I have accumulated a very large intellectual debt with my mentors.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother,
a shining light in my life,
who has never stopped believing in me.
Neoliberalism emerged as an economic framework for raising accountability regarding the economic costs and benefits of social system transactions. But neoliberal practices have extended their scope beyond the economic sphere by materializing as social practices and policies that process social identity to accommodate neoliberal goals. Under the influence of neoliberalism and its conservative political values civic discourse has given way to a language of commercialization, privatization, and deregulation that has resulted in subjective identities rooted in the workings of market relations. The exchange between neoliberalism and the processing of social identity is best observed by examining the construction, maintenance and commodification of identity on the U.S.-Mexico border. Since the 1970s the U.S.-Mexico border has been and continues to produce shifting boundaries and identities that facilitate the expansion of neoliberal economic reforms. Social identities have been produced on the border which merge labor with transnational neoliberal reforms; in a sense, producing a class of laborers whose
identities are not localized, instead they are globalized. The shifting of boundaries has resulted in the identification of the border with immigrant bodies, resulting in the border moving with bodies across national boundaries. The movement of immigrant bodies across national boundaries identifies them as “bodies out of place.” The United States responds to the “bodies out of place” by enacting legislative responses, such as the DREAM Act and DACA, which neoliberalize the identities of these bodies.
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CHAPTER ONE

HEGEMONIC PRACTICES AND NEOLIBERAL IDEOLOGY: CONJUNCTIONS AND DISJUNCTIONS IN DISCUSSIONS OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Neoliberalism’s disposability machine is relentlessly engaged in the production of an unchecked notion of individualism that both dissolves social bonds and removes any viable notion of agency from the landscape of social responsibility and ethical considerations. Absorbed in privatized orbits of consumption, commodification and display, Americans vicariously participate in the toxic pleasures of a mode of authoritarianism characterized by the reactionary presence of the corporate state, the concentration of power and money in the upper 1% of the population, the ongoing militarization of all aspects of society, and the ongoing, aggressive depoliticization of the citizenry.

Henry A. Giroux

Poor Mexico, so far from God and so close to the United States.

Mexican President Porfirio Diaz (1830-1915)

With its roots in Adam Smith’s ideas of free market capitalism in The Wealth of Nations, neoliberalism served as the springboard for the economic doctrines of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the twentieth century that resulted in the “emergence of a neoliberal model of global capitalism that serves to enrich powerful corporations at the expense of workers and ordinary citizens, while increasing social, political, and economic inequalities between nations” (Aguirre, Volker, and Reese 2006:1). Often overlooked in discussions of neoliberalism is the work of David Ricardo who viewed the market as a self-regulating mechanism focused on maintaining a balance between supply and demand in order to result in an efficient utilization of resources. In sociology, Herbert Spencer’s views that a free market economy was a civilized form of competition in which the “fittest” would rise to the top served to characterize economic neoliberalism as social
Darwinism. Despite neoliberalism’s identification with market forces and economic structures that might result that in one assuming that it eases the task of examining neoliberal ideology, Peck (2001: 446) identifies the difficulty in tying down neoliberalism: “Analytically, neoliberalism presents a problem because in some respects it is everywhere and nowhere at the same time.”

Swept by the trade winds generated by globalization in the 20th century, neoliberalism embedded itself into the economies and quality of life of poor countries so that business interests in rich countries could exploit the availability of cheap labor and raw materials (Harvey, 2005; McChesney 2001). More importantly, neoliberalism promoted a cultural politics that shaped the cultural values and social identities in the global system. The focus of neoliberalism on a model of the isolated, rational individual has reduced boundaries between constructing meaning in private and public life. According to Jimeno (2007), the proximity between the personal body and the political state has resulted in the projection of social identity into the public sphere. Similarly, Spanakos (2008) discusses how “Chavismo” emerged as a populist movement in Latin America antithetical to neoliberalism by promoting politically engaged citizens with populist social identities.

In an effort to examine the association of neoliberalism with the construction of subjective identity I focus in this dissertation on the amalgamation of identities on the U.S.-Mexico border and the displacement of Mexican bodies as commodities across social space. Vila (2000: 21) notes the unique process of identity construction that takes place on the U.S.-Mexico border as follows:
Regarding the use of social categories, we have to remember that Mexicans and Americans belong to national societies that share some aspects of each other’s classification systems – both in terms of positions and their attributes. However, they differ greatly in other aspects that also impinge on the everyday attitudes and behaviors of their inhabitants. On the border, these similarities and differences meet, and the result is an unusually complex common sense, in which people are forced to move from one classification system to another, sometimes on a daily basis. Not only do people move from one system to another, but the proliferation of classification systems within which a single person can be placed means that people constantly mix different systems of classification to make sense of the perceived “other.” On the Mexican side of the border the main classificatory system relies on region, while the American system stresses race and ethnicity… The border offers a unique opportunity to look at the complex process of identity construction and its constant use of arbitrary classification systems to make sense of people’s social identities.

My concept of “subjective identity” follows Popke’s (2011: 253) use of the term migrant subjectivity: “… a migrant subjectivity. I mean by this and foremost the kind of consciousness derived from the transnational subject position of migrant themselves … and a focus on migrant lives and experiences can help to illuminate the contradictions and ethical lapses of neoliberal discourse.” To illustrate the association between hegemonic neoliberalism and migrant subjective identities Morrison (2008) examines narcocorridos (ballads) in Mexico and the U.S. about the drug trade as reflective of the permeable border between the U.S. and Mexico, and transnational identities. By examining narcocorridos she argues that a subtext of the narcocorridos is the subjective identities promoted in the narcocorridos that reflect the operation of hegemonic neoliberalism in the economic dispossession of rural Mexicans.

Similar, Lawson (2000) argues that migrants’ experiences are socially constructed and situated in particular political-economic and cultural contexts. By conducting a discursive analysis of migrants’ stories Lawson is able to show how they
understand their subjective identities, especially in terms of belonging, exclusion, and affiliation. The discursive analysis of the migrants’ stories also provides for observing how their social positionality in society allows them to question dominant narratives of neoliberal development. Also, Alexondrakis (2013) conducted an ethnography of an undocumented migrant from Mauritania and a small group of Roma (Gypsies) as they established an undocumented transportation business. Alexondrakis examines the complex relationship between subjective identity formation and the emergence of new modes of collective political agency in neoliberal contexts. In adapting to work-related techniques of survival members of the transport group and their broader networks created public spaces of multivalent political intensity.

Neoliberalism and The Subjectivity of Immigrant Identity

I have chosen in this dissertation to discuss the influence of neoliberal ideology on the identity of the U.S.-Mexico Border, the construction of hybrid identities on the U.S.-Mexico border, and neoliberal response to “bodies out of place” in the United States. When it comes to a discussion of “bodies” on the U.S.-Mexico border one must recognize the various levels at which Mexican bodies interact with the border. For example, Reineke (2013) and Perera (2006) discuss how dead bodies found along the U.S. Mexico border can inform one about how the movement of bodies defines the danger posed the border. In particular, the bodies document spaces of separation and connection with the border. Similarly, De Leon (2013) discusses how the material culture of the Sonoran Desert of Arizona affects the types of injuries migrant bodies will
experience which, in turn, illustrates the type of being specific to the desert migration process.

The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 by the Reagan administration established a neoliberal response to Mexican immigrants and American corporate interests. (A summary of the IRCA 1986 can be found in Appendix A.) IRCA recognized that the increasing numbers of undocumented immigrants required a governmental response that would portray them as contributors to the economic framework of U.S. society. By offering legal status to undocumented immigrants who could prove that they had lived in the U.S. since January 1, 1982, IRCA created a pool of immigrant surplus labor for agriculture and manufacturing industries in the U.S. As a result, providing undocumented immigrants with legal status benefited American corporate interests. In a twist of irony, IRCA addressed the undocumented immigration “problem” by identifying those immigrants already in the U.S. as “safe”, but identifying those not already here as “unwanted”; or as I argue in the dissertation as “bodies out of place.” The notion of “bodies out of place” increases the chances that persons will be labeled as threats or problems to society. Inda (2013) argues that the IRCA was responsible for criminalizing undocumented immigrant workers in the United States. Accordingly, Chacon (2009) and Coleman (2007) discuss how the IRCA resulted in other legislation aimed at criminalizing undocumented immigrants – the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Criminal Responsibility Act.

Brown (2003: 37) argues that neoliberal ideology has become the dominant mode of governance in the U.S. because it “produces subjects, forms of citizenship and
behavior, and a new organization of the social.” Considering the IRCA as the platform for neoliberal governance in the United States it produced immigrants as subjects that needed governance. The form of that governance came in Congress’ response to enact legislation (IRCA) that created the impression that the government was dealing with immigration in an efficient and effective manner. By granting legal status to undocumented immigrants the IRCA avoided addressing the issue of putting immigrants on a pathway to citizenship. Finally, the IRCA constructed a binary for dealing with immigrant identities in the U.S. – “in place” versus “out of place” bodies. Regarding the creation of binary subjectivity for undocumented immigrants, Allegro (2006: 4) observes: “In the context of ‘illegality’ and ‘deportability’ counter logics are constructed from the margins further fueling the contestations between those who are inside and outside the parameters of access to opportunity, work, indeed livelihood in America.”

While the IRCA managed to normalize the American public’s concern with undocumented immigration, while providing employers with a pool of immigrant labor, it failed to alter subjectivities in the public mind’s regarding undocumented immigrants. On the one hand, the inability of the IRCA to eliminate the disjunctive identity of undocumented immigrants in U.S. society served to promote an immigrant rights movement in the U.S. that advocated for the political legitimacy of the undocumented immigrant’s identity (see: Nicholls 2013). On the other hand, the failure of the IRCA to attack the subjective identification of immigrants as threats to valued resources in U.S. society served as a context for “political action groups”, such as the Minute Men, Oathkeepers, Three Percenters, and Patriots, to use neoliberal values, such as rational
choice, to depict undocumented immigrants as choosing to be threats or terrorists to U.S. society. For a discussion of how U.S.-Mexico border vigilante paramilitary groups through their activities reinforced the subjective identification of undocumented immigrants as undesirables, see: Chacon and Davis (2006), Doty (2007), Ngai (2004), and Riley (2005).

In failing to attack the subjective construction of immigrants as a threat from across the U.S. southern border the U.S. government divided and conquered the Mexican immigrant population. In an effort to legitimate the presence of undocumented immigrants in a hostile social and political environment, the U.S. government utilized legislative actions on immigration matters, such as the DREAM (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) Act and DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), to stress the participatory aspect of citizenship while also stressing the economic right to work. (A summary of the DREAM Act can be found in Appendix B and a summary of DACA can be found in Appendix C.) One result is that immigrant identities have been divided between those seeking resolution to their “out of place” status via citizenship versus those seeking recognition as a class of economic actors. In a discussion of neo-liberal globalization effects on state regimes and citizenship Fudge and Dunkerley (2008: 33) note: “… the last quarter of the 20th century saw an increase in the claims of many different groups and individuals for recognition as citizens besides those representing class interests.” Trujillo-Pagan (2012) illustrates how neoliberal interests constructed post-Katrina Latino immigrant labor as a class of surplus class of vulnerable and low-cost workers. Popke (2011) also illustrates how despite neoliberalism’s effect
on economic policies it has resulted in a new form of governance. Regarding undocumented immigrant workers, this new form of governance promotes an “ethical individualism” that depicts the working subjectivity of Latino immigrant workers as an outcome of rational choice.

A Discursive Study of Neoliberalism

My dissertation examines and discusses neoliberal practices in U.S. civic culture and institutional culture, especially the manner in which neoliberal ideology has manifested itself as a discursive force for the construction and maintenance of social identity. Haugh (2008) proposes that a discursive study of identity conceptualizes identity as an essentialist, pre-existing construct that drives social interaction to a more fluid and hybrid construct that is constituted through discourse.

Following Haugh’s proposal, my research strategy is grounded in discursive practice that addresses the processes by which cultural meanings and social identity are produced and understood (Wetherell 2007). A discursive practice approach is useful for developing theories and techniques for the analysis of meaningful behavior in actual situations (Hepburn and Wiggins 2007). A discursively oriented sociological approach studies the communicative, symbolic, and interactional aspects of culture (Mills 1940). That is, a discursively oriented sociological approach treats the full range of social forms and practices in terms of how they are discursively produced and understood (see: Foucault 1972; Game 1991; Habermas 1984; Reckwitz 2002). Goodman (2008) argues that discursive analytic findings do not compromise generalizability to gain a detailed understanding of the subject or research question being investigated. He argues that
discursive research approaches can result in the same level of generalizability as empirically based research approaches. Potapenko (2013), Ramirez and Tiplic (2014) illustrate how discursive research strategies can be used to study large-scale social processes and institutions.

The discursive practice approach is grounded in four perspectives regarding the association between language, identity, and cultural values. First, social reality is linguistically/discursively constructed; in particular, social reality is nested within discourses that shape identity. Second, discourse is bounded by the cultural values and social perceptions associated with the production of identity. Third, is the notion that discourse is social action; as such, social acts by persons collectively form social processes, such as legislation or news making, which communicate social action. Fourth, meaning is negotiated in interaction, rather than being a derivative once-and-for-all in our utterances. The preceding four perspectives are derived from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School before the Second World War (Agger 1992; Rasmussen 1996).

For the purpose of the dissertation, I conceptualize neoliberalism as “a discursive structure that constitutes a powerful and pervasive contemporary model of economic development, resting on assumptions of economic growth and stability, financial transactions and human behaviour that are deeply gendered whilst presented as universal and neutral” (Griffin 2007: 226). Also, I treat neoliberal discourse as nested in power relations that discursively regulate a framework for the construction and negotiation of social identity (Davidson-Harden 2010; Griffin 2005). As a result, neoliberal discourse reproduces a social reality that corresponds with the meanings, behaviors and social
identities promoted by neoliberal ideology. For example, neoliberalism serves as a framework for nesting the social identities of brokers and bankers on a system of economic exchange, namely, the Wall Street stock exchange (Griffin 2007).

In my dissertation I argue that neoliberalism has commodified the social identity formation process. While neoliberalism emerged as an economic framework for raising accountability for the economic costs and benefits of social system transactions it has materialized into social practices and policies that subjugate civic and institutional culture to conservative political actions. For example, Giroux (2002) argues that under the influence of neoliberalism and its conservative political values civic discourse has given way to the language of commercialization, privatization, and deregulation; that is, the language and images of corporate culture. Giroux also argues that corporate culture values in civic society promote social identities in society nested in the workings of market relations. In particular, social identities that seek to legitimate the prevailing beliefs of the neoliberal political state. In the neoliberal state, persons are transformed into data, consumers and commodities performing identities that “become unknowables, with no human rights and with no one accountable for their condition” (Biehl 2005: 4).

_Dissertation Outline_

My dissertation examines the entanglements between neoliberalism and social identity building. I focus on how neoliberal practices operate in the manufacture of social identities that are perceived by the public as problematic; that is, as threats to the economic and political practices of the neoliberal state. In practical terms, I will use the dissertation as a discursive research strategy for studying the operation of social
structures linking neoliberalism with social identity formation, and collective and individual expression of identity.

Chapter Two provides a review and summary of neoliberal practices in order to identify general themes that shape the discursive approach in this dissertation. How is neoliberal practice associated with the construction and negotiation of social identity? What is the separation between private and public social identities? In particular, I discuss how neoliberalism treats identity as a commodity in order for a population to associate with global and/or group characteristics.

Chapter Three is a discussion of hegemonic practices in the micro and macro level processes associated with social identity formation. This chapter addresses the themes of globalization and identity formation, global processes that shape identity formation, and a synthesis of micro and macro issues in the construction of social identity.

Chapter Four is a discussion of how the US-Mexico border serves as a discursive vehicle for examining “problematic identities”, namely undocumented immigrants, as perceived by the neoliberal political state. I argue in the chapter that neoliberal practices construct a social identity for Mexican bodies that communicates a sense of threat to the public. As a result, the Mexican body is constructed as a cultural representation of the US-Mexico border.

Chapter Five examines the DREAM Act as a neoliberal practice that seeks to lure undocumented alien immigrant youth into an economic relationship in American society that exploits their social identity. What is the DREAM Act? How does the DREAM Act
promote neoliberal ideology? How does the DREAM Act construct social identities for Latino immigrants?

**Theoretical Significance of the Dissertation**

The influence of neoliberal values on identity formation has materialized into practices that subjugate individual agency to hegemonic practices of the neoliberal political state (Smith, Stenning and Willis 2008). The neoliberal argument that free markets are to be created for everything, even if by force, constrains social life and the construction of social identity to conservative political practices by the political state. It also mechanizes and standardizes the formation of social identities by placing individuals in an awkward position; forcing them to use their identities as commodities in order to participate in civic culture. Unfortunately, the only avenues available for the presentation of a social identity are those linked with market principles that bundle the commodification of identity with neoliberal practice. As a result, the neoliberal emphasis on market *efficiency* and *commodification* has moved into the social sphere, especially as it pertains to identity formation, in the United States. Whereas the notions of *efficiency* and *commodification* are applied to market constructs, they change to *individual choice* and *responsibility* when applied to the constructs of social identity.

The primary focus of my dissertation is on the entanglement between neoliberalism and identity formation, principally the symbiotic relationship between neoliberalism and the construction, management, and negotiation of social identity (McRuer 2006). For example, Suler (2002), argues that cyberspace serves as a quasi-social environment that has a number of distinct features that allow for a great deal of
flexibility in social identity construction and representation. This flexibility provides the individual with the “freedom” to choose who to be and how to present that choice; similar to the manner in which neoliberalism provides individuals with the option of accessorizing their social identity with features available in the marketplace. A casual search of the world-wide-web will produce literally thousands of sites that market themselves to persons interested in linking personal identity with product marketability.

The traditional sociological literature that traces its roots to Cooley and Mead presents the identity formation process as the outcome of social interaction processes. The person is depicted as having the agency to choose persons with whom to interact and calculating which social contexts for participation. The possibility that the identity formation process may be subject to external social factors or forces has been ignored in the sociological literature. This is not to say that the possibility has not been noted, but that it has not been systematically examined discursively. To this end, my dissertation will illustrate how neoliberal practices serve as external agents in the social identity formation process.

The emergence of new computer technologies, especially the merge of social activity with social media devices in everyday life, increases the likelihood that social identities can be constructed along neoliberal practices that promote conservative values and ideologies. In a certain sense, social identities in society run the risk of serving as a playground for neoliberal practices. A cornerstone of neoliberal thinking is the emphasis on homogenizing social identities in order to promote principles based on market efficiency and choice. By using neoliberalism as a platform my dissertation will
contribute to a sociological understanding of how market-based and politically conservative principles manage the social identity formation process in society.
Neoliberal democracy. Instead of citizens, it produces consumers. Instead of communities, it produces shopping malls. The net result is an atomized society of disengaged individuals who feel demoralized and socially powerless. In sum, neoliberalism is the immediate and foremost enemy of genuine participatory democracy, not just in the United States but across the planet, and will be for the foreseeable future.

Noam Chomsky

A neoliberal economy tends to promote “identity politics”, which keeps the people fractured, disunited and engaged in a mutual struggle over the ever-shrinking means of livelihood available to them as a consequence of aggrandisement by international capital, rather than in a common struggle to recover their democratic rights and pursue an alternative economic trajectory.

Prabhat Patnaik

The nexus between neoliberalism and the social identity process is evasive, often concealing itself in exchanges regarding the application of macro social processes to the micro level of social behavior, namely social identity. The term “cyberspace” was first coined by William Gibson in his 1982 short story, “Burning Chrome”, in reference to a computer generated virtual reality. It later became popularized in 1984 after its use in his first novel *Necromancer*. In *Necromancer*, Gibson saw a cyberworld that was very real despite the “non-space” it occupied. It was characterized by the virtual presence of people and their interactions via ‘icons, waypoints and artificial realities’ (Gibson 1996). His description of the protagonist’s social identity within this realm is quite apt when discussing identity formation under the auspices of neoliberal ideology (Gibson 1986: 169-170):
Bobby was a cowboy, and ice was the nature of his game, *ice* from ICE, Intrusion Countermeasures Electronics. The matrix is an abstract representation of the relationships between data systems. Legitimate programmers jack into their employers’ sector of the matrix and find themselves surrounded by bright geometries representing the corporate data.

Towers and fields of it ranged in the colorless non-space of the simulation matrix, the electronic consensus-hallucination that facilitates the handling and exchange of massive quantities of data. Legitimate programmers never see the walls of ice they work behind, the walls of shadow that screen their operations from others, from industrial-espionage artists and hustlers like Bobby Quine.

Bobby was a cowboy. Bobby was a cracksman, a burglar, casing mankind’s extended electronic nervous system, rustling data and credit in the crowded matrix, monochrome nonspace where the only stars are dense concentrations of information, and high above it all burn corporate galaxies and the cold spiral arms of military systems.

While Gibson may have been the first to conceptualize the existence of “cyberspace”, his conceptualization opened the door for discussions of neoliberal principles in the construction of social identity. For example, neoliberalism’s presence in this “cyberspace” can be seen in the spatial metaphors used to symbolize real social world operations in virtual space. One such metaphor is that of the “information superhighway.” The phrase brings to mind an expanse of highway extending far into the distance, used to transport large amounts of information from one point to another.

Vinton Cerf (1997), one of the inventors of the Internet, states that the metaphor explains very little about the reality of cyberspace. Mark Stefik (1997) explains that American politicians use the “highway metaphor” in an attempt to persuade people that investments on the Internet will benefit the common good, much the way investment in a highway system might. This is very reminiscent of the neoliberal themes of private investment and the public good. Stefik also examines the electronic market metaphor and notions of
digital commerce, digital money and digital property. In this way, these metaphors allow for the operationalization of neoliberal agendas in spaces that were previously non-existent. The creation of free-markets does not end with the tangible. In fact, cyberspace has allowed for what may prove to be an infinite expansion of market niches in realms that have yet to be created.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the major features of neoliberalism. I do not intend to provide an exhaustive review of neoliberalism because that would require another dissertation in order to do justice to the topic. My purpose is much more designed to identity aspects of neoliberalism that serve as a platform for discussing its engagement with the construction of social identity. In this chapter I will also outline the general macro and micro features of the social identity process. Bundled together, the discussion of neoliberalism and social identity will provide the necessary guideposts for the forthcoming chapters in this dissertation.

A Brief Primer on Neoliberalism

An examination of the literature on neoliberalism results in a large number of definitions for neoliberalism. Contentions for the term vary greatly, though all seem to use a sort of improvised nomenclature by referring to it as a theory, a set of political beliefs, or a philosophy. Harvey (2005: 2) interfaces political values and economic practices in his definition of economic liberalism: “a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade.” Kermath
(2005: 1) defines neoliberalism “as a political-economic philosophy and set of policies that established development priorities along austere capitalist paths of free trade, market expansion, and privatization, and free of governmental intervention and regulation and the concept of the public good.” Martinez and Garcia (2011: 3) define neoliberalism as:

… a set of economic policies that have become widespread during the last 25 years or so. Although the word is rarely heard in the United States, you can clearly see the effects of neo-liberalism here as the rich grow richer and the poor grow poorer .... Around the world, neo-liberalism has been imposed by powerful financial institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank .... the capitalist crisis over the last 25 years, with its shrinking profit rates, inspired the corporate elite to revive economic liberalism. That's what makes it 'neo' or new.

The preceding definitions illustrate the range of economic and political factors that underlie neoliberalism. In an attempt to identify the specific features of neoliberalism Martinez and Garcia (2011) propose the following features of economic neoliberalism: 1) The rule of the market; 2) Cutting public expenditure for social services; 3) Deregulation; 4) Privatization; and 5) Eliminating the concept of “the public good” or “community.” Accordingly, Treanor (2005: 2) identifies one feature unique to neoliberalism as, “the desire to intensify and expand the market, by increasing the number, frequency, repeatability, and formalisation of transactions.”

For the purpose of discussion, I propose a working definition of neoliberalism (for background see: Dumenil and Levy 2004; Peck 2011; Rowden 2009) as: a set of political and economic beliefs and practices that promote the beliefs that (a) markets should be privatized and free in order to serve the public good; and (b) state intervention is only acceptable insofar as it is used to defend individual or private monetary interests. Under conditions of neoliberalism, markets are created and encouraged to expand of their own
volition. In addition, the cornerstone of neoliberalism is that control over the economy from the public to the private sector will result in more efficient government and improved economic health of a country (Larner 2000; Prasad 2006).

In the United States, for example, neoliberal principles have been implemented in the administration of social and welfare services in order to demonstrate that the private sector is more efficient and less costly in delivering services (McClusky 2003). However, some of the literature shows that it doesn’t really work. Reese, Giedraitis, and Vega (2006) review the U.S. Congress’ intent to increase the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of welfare services by privatizing them via passage of the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Unsurprisingly, multi-billion dollar companies, such as Lockheed Martin, actively bid to become contractors for delivering welfare services. In an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of privatizing welfare service, they studied private service agencies in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin. In general, they found that the service agencies were not effective in delivering services, especially the agencies failed to adequately address the needs of poor people and low-income women of color. However, they found that in the pursuit of making profits and lax governmental oversight, the agencies misused public funds and unfairly denied welfare services to needy families.

For the purpose of the dissertation, neoliberalism is a synthesis of liberal political principles and free market economics. Its purpose is to promote beliefs that (a) free enterprise is efficient, (b) liberalized trade is necessary for profitability, and (c) free markets are vital to economic competition. The observation can be made that
neoliberalism pushes the role of the private sector in shaping a country’s economic and political policies. The example provided in the preceding paragraph illustrates how neoliberal principles may not necessarily offer the public sector the cost-savings and efficient service delivery they promise.

*Developments in Neoliberalism*

It was noted in the preceding section that neoliberalism promotes a set of political beliefs and practices subscribing to the belief that markets should be privatized and free in order to promote the public good. Its economic principles require the expansion of free markets and democracy as a prerequisite to develop a free and prosperous state. This is done by means of transformations in a country’s social, political and economic systems. Countries are required to engage in privatization of state owned entities, reform the labor sector, eliminate or cut funds allocated for social programs, and most of all value healthy competition to increase economic growth. Engaging in these processes is believed to result in lifting the economies of developing countries while simultaneously opening them up to foreign investment through aid and trade. In the following pages I will outline key developments in the implementation of neoliberal economic policies, especially those after 1970.

*Bretton Woods.* Early in his presidency, Richard Nixon collapsed the Bretton Woods system designed to address global ills after WWII. The Bretton Woods system was an international agreement in which member states agreed to fix their exchange rates by tying their currencies to the U.S. dollar; in turn the U.S. dollar would be linked to gold, e.g. $1 (US) equaled 35 oz. of gold bullion. This was done to prevent countries
from pursuing selfish policies, such as competitive devaluation, protectionism and forming trade blocks, so as not to damage the world economies (van Dormael 1978). In 1971, Nixon went on national television to declare that the U.S. would no longer sell gold to foreign central banks against the dollar. In other words, the linkage between the U.S. dollar and other currencies was severed. This was a direct result of the dollar being in too many foreign hands. Nixon also imposed temporary price controls and stiff import surcharges as a way to stimulate the U.S. economy.

Reaganomics. In the 1970s, economist Milton Friedman promoted proposals that advocated for less government intervention in the economy and greater reliance on individual responsibility (Friedman 1972a, 1972b). Friedman believed that the government should keep its hands off the economy and let the free market do its work. President Ronald Reagan applied Friedman’s less government intervention in the economy proposal by calling for widespread tax cuts, decreased social spending, increased military spending, and the deregulation of domestic markets (Blanchard 1987). He argued that decreases in taxes would be the best way to stimulate economic growth because the decreases would boost productivity and growth in the U.S. economy. He also initiated elaborate revisions to the tax code to allow corporations to get away without paying any taxes. Tax relief for corporations was based on the belief that tax breaks for corporations would create a “trickle down effect” to the rest of the economy, spurring growth.

In Britain, following Reagan’s lead, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher promoted economic neoliberal policies based on competition between nations, regions, firms, and
individuals. She believed that curbing trade union power against large firms would put an end to the inflationary stagnation that plagued her country, the same one inflicting the United States. Thatcher opened the traditional British industry to foreign competition and foreign investment. She privatized all sectors of the economy that were in public ownership - aerospace, telecommunications, steel, electricity and gas, oil, coal, water, bus services, railways, and other smaller state enterprises. The dismantling of social welfare programs by Thatcher faced tremendous opposition from her upper-middle class supporters who believed that social welfare programs were not subject to neoliberal reforms (Harvey 2005).

**Washington Consensus.** *The Washington Consensus* referred to a set of ten economic policy recommendations proposed in 1989 by John Williamson (Serra and Stiglitz 2008). The policy recommendations provided a blueprint to global economic institutions – such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank – for their intervention in the economies of countries undergoing social, economic, or political crises. In particular, the IMF and the World Bank employed the blueprint to privatize economic policies in developing countries to reduce government deficits, deregulate international trade, and promote export-based growth (Kuczyaski and Williamson 2003). The Washington Consensus consisted of the following economic policy recommendations:

1. Governments should avoid large deficits that depend on their payback by citizens in the future. Large government deficits should also be avoided because they result in high inflation and lowered productivity.
2. Invest public spending in “pro-growth” services such as primary education and primary health care.

3. Broaden the tax base by adopting moderate tax rates to encourage innovation and efficiency.

4. Let interest rates be determined by the market.

5. Promote floating exchange rates.

6. Liberalize imports by eliminating licensing restrictions and tariffs in order to encourage competition and long-term growth.

7. Liberalize foreign investment restrictions to allow persons to invest in foreign funds and to allow the investment of foreign funds in the home country.

8. Allow for the privatization of state services, such as telecommunications and social welfare, to promote efficiency and effectiveness.

9. Deregulation of rules that restrict market entry or competition, except for rules justified on safety, environmental, and consumer protection.

10. Legal security for property rights and capital.

The Washington Consensus has been accused of serving as a platform that allows the IMF and World Bank to lower the standard of living for people in poor countries in order to increase the countries’ dependence on rich countries.

According to George (1990: 143):

Debt is an efficient tool. It ensures access to other peoples’ raw materials and infrastructure on the cheapest possible terms. Dozens of countries must compete for shrinking export markets and can export only a limited range of products because of Northern protectionism and their lack of cash to invest in diversification. Market saturation ensues, reducing exporters’ income to a bare minimum while the North enjoys huge savings. The IMF does not advance the
idea that investing in a healthy, well-fed, literate population is the most intelligent economic choice a country can make. To ensure that poor countries will repay their debts, the IMF and World Bank developed Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) that required poor countries to reduce spending on things like health, education and development. In effect, the IMF and World Bank have demanded that poor nations lower the standard of living of their people.

Specifically, the application of SAPs require countries to:

- prescribe cutbacks, liberalize the economy and resource extraction/export-oriented open markets.
- Minimize the role of the state.
- Privatization is encouraged as well as reduced protection of domestic industries.
- Devalue currency, increased interest rates, and the elimination of subsidies, such as food subsidies.
- attract foreign investment by reducing or eliminating regulations and standards.

However, critics of SAPs note that they increase the dependency of poor countries on richer ones by (George 1990; Harvey 2005):

a) forcing poor countries to export more in order to raise money to pay their debts.

b) the competition between poor countries to export products makes their products even cheaper on the world market which favors the West.

c) poor countries’ currencies are tied to the U.S. dollar, making them susceptible to high interest rates.
Thus, IMF and World Bank policies place poor countries in a “race to the bottom”.

According to Madeley (1999: 103):

> Competition between companies involved in manufacturing in developing countries is often ruthless. We are seeing what Korten described as ‘a race to the bottom’. With each passing day it becomes more difficult to obtain contracts from one of the mega-retailers without hiring child labor, cheating workers on overtime pay, imposing merciless quotas, and operating unsafe practices.

In summary, Neoliberal policies were designed to free markets in order to encourage free market competition and foreign investment. Given the power differential between rich and poor countries, it was not unexpected that neoliberal economics became a vehicle by which rich nations would take advantage of poor economies in non-Western countries. At a micro-level of analysis, neoliberal policies allow for the exploitation of cheap labor and rampant extraction of raw materials via reduced market rules or restrictions. At a macro-level of analysis, neoliberal policies allow for the establishment of dependency relations for poor countries with rich countries. The IMF and World Bank have played a significant role in making poor countries dependent on rich countries.

*Neoliberalism and the Global South*

The globe is divided into two socio-economic and political divisions: wealthy developed countries in the *North*, and poor developing countries in the *South* (Kacowicz 2007; Reuveny 2007). With the exception of Australia and New Zealand, countries that comprise the *North* are located in the Northern Hemisphere. Nations in the *South* are those that are not as developed as those in the *North*. However, the terms *North* and *South* are not mutually exclusive because as nations become economically developed
they may become part of the North. How do neoliberal economic policies affect nations in the Global South?

Emery (2006: 6) examines the application of neoliberal policies in South Africa. According to Emery, “Neoliberal economic policies led the state to attempt privatization of state-owned corporations, while the private sector has downsized under pressures to increase its global competitiveness.” However, the application of the policies resulted in job losses, and frustrated black workers interested in substantive equality and social rights. Worker unions became ineffective in bargaining for worker rights and improvements in their quality of life.

In many ways, Mexico has also become part of the neoliberal economic enterprise (Delong 2006). Though most of the literature cites the Latin American debt crisis in the 1980s as a failure of neoliberal policies (see: Grimson and Kessler 2005; Taylor 2006), neoliberal economic policies began in Mexico in 1965 with the institution of free trade zones and maquiladoras under the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) (Almeida and Walker 2006). This effectively changed the relationship between labor markets and production by moving factories to the labor, rather than the other way around. A chain reaction began, leaving Mexico with increased unemployment and poverty. It is possible that economic recessions in the United States may raise concerns that neoliberal principles could place the United States at risk of developing countries, such as Mexico, it initially sought to exploit economically. It might appear that neoliberal policies may serve to keep nations in the South at the beck and call of the North. One thing is clear: as
long as nations in the North are able to push neoliberal policies on the South, the South will be unable to develop in order to move into the North.

*Dimensions in Identity Formation*

The classical sociological approach to the study of identity and identity formation incorporates the role of language in mediating the construction of social identity by persons. That is, language is an integral aspect in the process by which persons initiate and maintain social identities in society and in their social interaction with other persons (Thornborrow 2004). At the individual level, social interaction between persons serves as a vehicle that facilitates the formation and expression of social identity (Mead 1934; Mills 1940). According to Goffman (1974), persons involved in social interaction are performing an identity; that is, persons negotiate a social identity with other persons in everyday social discourse. To this end, Goffman (1974: 2) notes that once persons negotiate an acceptable identity in social interaction then they can proceed as if social activity is following a prescribed path: “True, we personally negotiate aspects of all the arrangements under which we live, but often once these are negotiated, we continue on mechanically as though the matter had always been settled.” In addition, according to Cooley (1907), the role of the other in social interaction increases the likelihood that a person’s identity will be socially congruent with the expectations of the social context. As a result, social identity at the individual level is an outcome of a formation process nested in social interaction and in the transaction of negotiating the presentation of one’s self; an identity formation process crucial to maintaining order for persons seeking to express themselves.
Conceptually, the identity formation process at the individual level (micro) also integrates via the social interaction process a person’s association with broader (macro) social institutions and processes. For example, *ethnic identity* is one kind of an identity that both individuals and groups display. At the group (macro) level, Nicholas (2010) illustrates how the learning of English by Hopi youth separates them from an identity formation process that is structured by tradition, family, and religious values. According to Nicholas, Hopi youth may subscribe to a “cultural identity” labeled “Hopi,” however, their inability to participate in a Hopi oral tradition based on song words and phrases, prayer teachings and symbolism isolates them from the Hopi identity formation process. As a result, Nicholas (2010: 142) observes:

In Hopi society, through inclusion, active participation, involvement, and interrelations with others in the myriad cultural practices – the Hopi identity-formation process conveyed through various communicative forms of the Hopi oral tradition – Hopi youth acquire the implicit messages about cultural standards of behavior and cultural knowledge embedded in these practices.

Another example of identity formation at the macro level is the association of consciousness and identity raising. This association is often observed in the advocacy activities of political, religious, economic, and special interest groups. For example, using social movement theories Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003: 205) study how stakeholder groups mobilize in order to influence corporate actions:

…stakeholder groups are compelled by the identity conferred on those participating in the group’s activities…such that group action becomes the ends (the expression of an identity)”…thus motivating… “members of a stakeholder group to take action collectively to protect their interests or express their identity…”

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Also, Linder (2011) illustrates the operation of neoliberal principles in educational practices that seek to incorporate students from diverse populations into identities that hide powerful and hidden hegemonies. These educational practices serve to motivate students to support and express interests nested in American identity and privilege.

In other words, the identity formation process for stakeholder group members is nested in their shared interests and serves to raise the group’s consciousness about itself. In turn, consciousness raising enables a stakeholder group to express its special interest or its discontent with existing social arrangements in order to promote the common interests associated with its identity. In an ironic twist, consciousness raising is identity raising. Following this line of thinking, consider that a person with a strong association with an environmental activist group, such as Greenpeace, will affirm their identity as environmentally conscious by participation in the group’s activities. At the micro level, the person’s participation in Greenpeace activities will affirm his identity to other persons as environmentally conscious. At the macro level, the person’s affiliation with Greenpeace will enable them to express a group-based identity for raising consciousness vial collective behavior about environmental issues. For other examples of how neoliberal principles are embedded within consciousness raising social movements, see: Inoue (2007), Hulsether (2013), and Rottenberg (2013).

Finally, another example at the macro level regarding identity formation focuses around the notion of class identification. In general, and very briefly, the argument is advanced that a person’s relationship to a society’s economic mode of production or means of production for generating capital serves to define a person’s identity. In the
classic Marxian framework, capitalist society is divided into two classes involved in a constant struggle: the bourgeoisie who own the means of production by which they exploit the working class, and the proletariat who are workers without capital or ownership of the means of production that sell their labor to the bourgeoisie in order to earn wages (Marx and Engels 1998). As a result, the identity formation process for persons was defined by the position as either owners or workers. Ironically, in the United States, class identity has served to align persons with political parties in the United States, the Federalists and anti-Federalists, resulted from a compromise of the three leading classes that had opposed the British government: Southern slave holders, the Northern commercial bourgeoisie, and small business owners (Kennedy, Cohen, and Bailey 2001). One result was that classes came into existence based on their relationship to property. Very early then political parties in the United States emerged to identify persons based on their relationship to property. From another view, the identity formation process for persons was an outcome of the political interests (parties) with which they identified.

At the micro level, identity is the product of social interaction and negotiation between persons. In the process of social interaction, a person negotiates their perception of self with the other’s perception of self. At the macro level, the identity formation process is rooted in the interfacing of a person’s institutional affiliations – religious, political, family, etc. As such, a person’s identity represents the bundling, the values, beliefs, and practices that are derived from a person’s institutional integration in society. While at the micro level a person’s identity serves to establish their legitimacy for being within certain situations and interactions, at the macro level a person’s identity serves to
associate them with group characteristics, e.g. social class, church, political party, that, in turn, identifies the person’s right to belong in society. Perceived and imputed identities at both the micro and macro levels are crucial to defining “outsiders” and “insiders” in society.

Concluding Remarks

In the next chapter I focus on the U.S.-Mexico border as cultural hybridity in order to discuss neoliberal hegemony as the bridge between neoliberalism and identity. In this chapter I focused on neoliberal ideology and its effect on transforming social processes and identities into economic principles. I follow Phelan’s (2007) argument that neoliberalism is a restitution of the state that constructs the “othering” of land and people in order to promote market principles. The discussion in this chapter opens a theoretical window for illustrating the operation of neoliberal political identity when applied to an examination of the U.S.-Mexico border. To that end, I borrow Fairclough’s (2003) concept of “interdiscursivity” to discuss the cultural hegemonic neoliberal identity of the U.S.-Mexico border. According to Fairclough (2003: 2):

“interdiscursivity” “foregrounds the fact that any structured totality is also a dynamic, open-ended, and contaminable construction. It focuses analytical attention on the dialectical interplay between ways of (inter) acting (genres), ways of representing (discourses), and ways of identifying (styles).

Thus, I propose that the exchange between neoliberalism and identity creates the opportunity to conceptualize an imaginary construct, the U.S.-Mexico
border, as necessary for a discussion of the objectification, commodification and marketization of the U.S.-Mexico border.

The closeness of Mexico to the largest market-based economy in the world facilitated the invasion of neoliberal ideology that resulted in the production of new social processes and cultural identities. One result was the construction of border identities that reproduced market practices that mirrored the neoliberal values of efficiency and marketability. The border identities represented the homogenization of identities with globalized identities promoted by neoliberalism (Meyer 1999). In contrast to border identities, hybrid identities were constructed that reflected their resistance to neoliberalism (Spener and Staudt 1999). The hybrid identities moved across the porous U.S.-Mexico border into the United States in their search for recognition. In the next chapter I examine and discuss the U.S.-Mexico border as not simply a line separating two countries but as the localization of contested identities produced by neoliberal practices.
CHAPTER THREE

HEGEMONIC PRACTICES, GLOBALIZATION, AND NEOLIBERAL
IDEOLOGY: CUNJUNCTIONS AND DISJUNCTIONS IN THE IDENTITY
PROCESS

We do not want to condemn the word. It is, after all, a mighty
instrument; it is the means by which we tell each other of our emotions, the
way in which we influence others. Words can do immeasurable good and also
terrible injuries. It is true that at first there was the deed; the word
came later. It was in some respects cultural progress when the deed became
word. But the word was originally a spell, a magical act, and it has retained much
of its power.

Sigmund Freud

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed.
I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.
But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any.

Mahatma Gandhi

On a cold, rainy Saturday morning I stopped at the neighborhood doughnut shop. The place
was crowded with people talking waiting to be served. After a few moments, I noticed that a
majority of the customers were speaking Spanish. I noticed a white male among the
customers with a frown on his face as he stared at the Spanish-speaking customers. The
white customer’s rigid body language and piercing eye contact suggested that he was
uncomfortable. After several minutes, the white customer muttered out loud, “Doesn’t
anybody speak English in the United States anymore? I didn’t know this was Mexico!” (The
preceding example was presented in a graduate seminar by Professor Aguirre. I am using it
with his permission.)
On the surface, the white customer’s statement implies an association between language (Spanish) and identity (Mexican origin). At a deeper level, the white customer’s statement implies that the Spanish speakers’ identity was incongruent with his perception of social order, e.g. English language and American identity. (The Spanish-speaking customer may be perceived by the English speaker as “deviant”, and as such, a threat to the English speaker’s perception of American culture and identity.)

The doughnut shop illustrates the precarious position of social identity in social interaction contexts when it is perceived as a disjunction with a set of expectations embedded within hegemonic practices that situate a person’s membership in society. My use of the term “hegemonic practices” refers to processes by which the dominant culture maintains its dominance over a population by eliminating opposition to the structuration of social identity. I follow Foucault’s (2008) argument that neoliberalism uses strategies of governance to ensure a population’s compliance with dominant class ideologies of culture and identity.

For example, the white customer’s comment reflects a hegemonic practice of associating “difference” (Spanish speakers) with an “identity” (Mexican) incongruent with American culture and identity. One could say that the white customer’s comment also reflects a concern with broader social and political issues associated with undocumented immigration and its perceived threat to hegemonic interests in the United States. The doughnut shop example thus illustrates how hegemonic practices can link language with identity to determine a person’s membership in society and can label a social identity as incongruent with a society’s social institutions and civic culture.

In this chapter I use a discursive approach to the study of micro and macro features in the structuration of identity. My purpose in this chapter is to offer a conceptualization of identity as an
exchange of individual, social, and political dimensions that constructs a shared sense of belonging among a group of people. In many cases, a shared sense of belonging has been used as an exclusionary tool. For example, the decision by the town council of Hazelton, Pennsylvania, to pass an ordinance prohibiting undocumented immigrants from working and living within the town’s city limits was designed to identify immigrants as “outsiders” – as those who did not share an identity with the residents of Hazelton (see: Varsanyi 2011).

Globalization and Identity Formation

Globalization is a term used to refer to the movement of people and ideas that results in encounters and exchanges - economic, cultural, and political activities - all over the world (Friedman 2000; Stiglitz 2002; Tomlinson 1999). Globalization connects more people around the globe, moves information and capital across the globe more quickly than ever, and makes goods available from one part of the globe available to the rest. While globalization may be seen as limited only to global business and trade, the social, political, and economic forces that allow businesses to operate as if national borders did not exist also allow for the flow of information and connectivity between social activists, labor organizers, journalists, academics, and many others (see: Castells 1996; Stiglitz 2002). As a result from the circulation of technologies, ideas, and people, globalization has made possible the introduction of new cultural practices and ideas about the world. Stegar (2009) discusses how after 9/11 neoliberal globalization produced such ideologies as “jihadist globalization” promoted by radical Islamists, “market globalization” driven by a neoliberal economics, and “justice globalism” advocated by the global justice movement. Similarly, Krishna (2009) discusses how after 9/11 globalization provided a vehicle for the “War on Terror”
spawning forms of resistance against Western dominance. Schaeffer (2009) argues that globalization has different meanings for people in diverse social and economic settings.

Some scholars, however, acknowledge that the effects of globalization are uneven (Appadurai 1990; Tomlinson 1999). These scholars suggest that differential power underlies globalization resulting in some people being more “in charge” than others; thus, allowing them to have more control over the flow and movement of technology, information, and labor. “Who is in charge” will determine the effects of globalization on people, cultures, and societies. According to Rantanen (2005), the outcomes of globalization may be identified as a duality - homogenization and heterogenization.

On the one hand, globalization homogenizes people of the world into a single global society via exposure to similar experiences and practices. According to Greig (2002), globalization and the expansion of communications carry important consequences for culture in the international system. The expansion of communications increases the rate at which cultures change and the level of cultural homogeneity in the system. On the other hand, the enhanced connectivity between people and cultures via globalization results in heterogenization; that is, diverse, heterogeneous cultural practices that modify established sectors of social, political, and cultural power.

Van Der Bly (2007) argues that globalization does not lead to homogeneity of culture, but to heterogeneity. By studying a globalized village in the Republic of Ireland, Van Der Bly notes that globalization results in a resurgence of local identity, a reinvention of local history and a revival of the indigenous language. However, she notes that globalization of culture creates heterogeneity, but within the context of one world
culture, namely as local adaptations of world cultural forms. The implications for identity formation would be: homogenization promotes a single identity that supersedes local customs and practices, while heterogenization promotes diverse identities that link local customs and practices with global society (see: Featherstone 1995).

An advocate of the heterogenization view, Lull (2000) argues that while globalization may be shrinking the globe by bringing people and societies into closer contact, globalization is not producing a super-society that destroys local customs and social systems. In support of his argument, Lull provides some examples:

- A Peruvian band playing traditional Andes folk music at a tourist restaurant in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, suddenly breaks into the English band Queen’s “We will rock you” to the delight of German and Canadian girls in the audience.
- The Milan collection of lamps sold in the United States are made in Taiwan and distributed by a French wholesaler.
- More than 400 million people worldwide, in countries including Russia, Tunisia, Zimbabwe, and Switzerland, regularly watch TV soap operas that originate in Spanish-language nations.
- A German pop music band that travels to Vietnamese-American communities in the United States who use the music to unite their community.

Scholars critical of the homogenization effects of globalization argue that it displaces local customs and practices by importing, via communication media, foreign values, beliefs, and interests. In particular, values, beliefs, and ideas that originate in the West, principally the United States, are accused of deliberately displacing local customs and practices (Boyd-Barrett 1997). Media imperialism is often used as a term to describe the homogenizing effects of globalization (Schiller
1997). Some of the examples one can gloss from the research literature that illustrate the homogenizing effects of globalization are (see: Hamelink 1994; Hannerz 1996; Hutnyk 2005; Rothkopf 1997; Said 1993):

- Traditional dance rituals that often precede soccer matches in Mexican villages feature gigantic Coca-Cola bottles.
- In Singapore, a local band dressed in traditional Malay costume offers an imitation of Fats Domino.
- In some parts of Saudi Arabia local television stations perform only one function, the call for the Moslem prayer.
- In one of its advertising campaigns, IBM assured Navajo Indians that their cultural identity would be preserved if they used IBM typewriters equipped with the Navajo alphabet.

Globalization and the Identity Formation Process

Since globalization enhances the engagement of people in economic, cultural, and political activities, one may propose that the engagement results in new identities. Postmodern and poststructuralist scholars have proposed the use of terms, such as hybridity and reflexivity, to identify a discursive process by which globalization affects identity formation (Bhabha 1990). Because critics of globalization argue that it promotes unequal power relations between people and societies, globalization has been criticized for enabling politically powerful and resource rich countries to promote the use of colonization strategies in the identity formation process.

Let us consider the following: (a) politically powerful and resource rich countries are more likely than receiver countries to benefit from globalization; (b) historically, globalization has brought people closer to each other because powerful and rich countries were able to export their customs and
practices that resulted in the increased dependence of receiver countries; and (c) to maintain receiver countries in a dependent position, powerful and rich countries implemented colonizer practices (see: Appadurai 1996; Krishna 2009; Robertson 1992; Williams & Chrisman 1994). Using Franz Fanon’s (1965, 1967) observations of French colonization in Algeria and the Caribbean as a platform, Bhabha (1994: 40-65) examined the British colonization of India. An implicit assumption in Bhabha’s view of globalization is that it promotes the expression of colonization ideologies by countries that perceive themselves as “being in charge.” That is, one must examine how globalization serves as a guise for a colonization process that seeks to create cultural differences based on the colonizers’ territorial ambitions. This is relevant to the identity formation process because social scientists are often used by corporate or capitalist interests to explore the culture and practices of a country before they export their products and services into the country (Prasard 2003).

Based on his examination of the British colonization of India, Bhabha observed how culture differences were used by the colonizer to promote an identity formation process based on the superiority of one culture over the other culture. Embedded in the identity formation process was the application of power and authority by the colonizer. As a result, for Bhabha the association of cultural differences with an identity formation process nested in power differences is a subtext for a multi-layered expression of domination, i.e., territorial, religious, social, cultural, political, and economic. Following Bhabha’s observations on colonization, globalization has the potential to construct new identities based on differential expressions of power and authority.

While Bhabha helps one understand how colonization as an outgrowth of globalization affects general features of the identity formation process it is limited in identifying specific globalization effects on identity formation. Any attempt to identify specific globalization effects on
identity formation will be hampered by the way in which identity is defined. For example, there are two general contrastive approaches to the question of what identity means and how it is constituted (Hall 1994, 1996a). On the one hand, identity is based on shared similarities – such as linguistic, religious, territorial, and cultural – between people. This perspective of identity is dependent on the meaning of sameness, belongingness and unity. In contrast, identity is perceived as constantly changing and transforming as a result of cultural practices, such as globalization and colonization. As such, in the former perspective, identity is treated as stable or fixed, while in the latter perspective, identity is treated as fluid. Bauman (1996: 18) describes the conundrum faced by students of globalization seeking to define identity as: “If the modern problem of identity was how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable, the postmodern problem of identity is primarily how to avoid fixation and keep the options open. In the case of identity, as in other cases, the catchword of modernity was creation; the catchword of postmodernity is recycling.” How then can one attempt to identify or describe globalization effects on identity formation?

Some scholars have suggested that globalization effects on identity formation can be observed by focusing on the spread of information technologies (Castells 1997; Poster 2001; Turkle 1997). Globalization facilitates the importation into a country of new information technologies developed in external countries. These new information technologies may be adopted by members of the host country because they are seen as “cool,” “trendy,” or “popular.” In adopting the new technologies, persons increase their exposure to external or foreign cultural practices. For example, while the Sony Walkman was produced in Japan, the advertisements for the Walkman associated it with Westernized social identities- e.g. youth, entertainment, and recorded music and sound. Owning a Walkman represented a modern, sophisticated identity linked to notions of material cultural that
originated in the West (e.g. the United States). Based on their study of the Sony Walkman, du Gay et al. (1997: 16) observed that technological innovation embodies social and cultural dimensions that shape identity and society:

… the idea of the Walkman as ‘modern’ carries another, related set of semantic associations. It signifies the Walkman as something up-to-date – the latest in leisure consumer goods, meant for fast urban living rather than reflective repose. Its ‘private-listening-in-public-places’ aspect triggers off many themes associated with late-modernity as a distinctive way of life: the lonely figure in the crowd, using the media to screen out the routines of boring, everyday life; the emphasis on mobility and choice. The self-sufficient individual wandering alone through the city landscape – the classic Walkman person seen so often in its advertisements, the urban nomad.

A Synthetic Framework

The discussion in the preceding pages has illustrated the micro and macro facets of identity formation, the association of globalization with identity formation and hegemonic practices, and globalization’s effects on the identity formation process. Implicit in the preceding discussion is the observation that identity is a synergistic artifact in society that is layered with competing identity sources – e.g. family, race, class, religion, etc. One implication for a synthesis of micro and macro features of identity formation is to acknowledge that “what is happening at the micro level” might be a precursor for identity formation at the macro level. That is, the formation of identities at the micro or macro level will determine “how” they are perceived and allocated “space” for presentation.

Using the discussion in the preceding pages as a foundation I propose a conceptual framework for a research agenda that is a synthesis of micro and macro facets of the association between globalization and identity formation. While globalization has different facets – political, economic, and economic – it is the economic facet that globalization is most often linked with. Specifically, globalization is linked to the movement of capital, technology and raw materials by multinational corporations. In a
sense, globalization is perceived as an epiphenomenon of liberal capitalism and materialistic modernity (see: Giddens 1990). I have selected the following case study as an example of the micro-macro link in the discourse on globalization, identity formation, and business organizations.

Ahmed et al. (2005) examined the historical development of Malay entrepreneurship by considering customs and values developed in the West. They constructed a portrait of Malay entrepreneurs based on the interaction between Malay and Western culture and values. Malay entrepreneurs were more likely to identify (e.g. “see their self”) with culture and values emanating from the West. According to the authors, the culture and values that are used to identify an “entrepreneurial self” in the West became the basis for producing an “international Malay entrepreneur.” Interestingly, the globalization effects on identity formation among Malay entrepreneurs resulted in a bicultural identity. For example, the Malay entrepreneur exhibits cultural characteristics that identify her or him as a Malay entrepreneur, and which allow her or him to be “identified as different” from other cultures. However, the adoption of Western culture and values in the acquisition of an “international Malay entrepreneur identity” allows her or him to speak in the “voice of the West.”

Following Ozkazanc-Pan’s (2008) argument that studies of International Management (IM) offer the best research venue for examining the effects of globalization on identity formation I propose an examination of international business entrepreneurship and management in order to observe how Western management discourse via globalization colonizes the identities of non-Western people. The social, political, and economic forces that propel globalization across the globe facilitate seeding of non-Western cultures with values and practices from the West. Much like the study of Malay entrepreneurship, in order to understand the hybridity and reflexivity factors embedded in the
association between globalization and identity formation, one must study how non-Western societies are transformed into the “other” in management discourses. Only by following a synthetic approach that incorporates micro and macro dimensions into the study of globalization effects on identity formation can one “draw attention to the hegemony of Western epistemology and critique representations about the ‘other’ in management discourses” (Ozkazanc-Pan 2008: 965).

A synthetic approach to studying the micro and macro facets of the association between globalization and identity requires that a specified area or research venue, such as International Management (IM), be the focus. IM offers the most promise because it serves as a laboratory for studying the importation of values and practices from the West into non-Western societies. Also, IM is a medium for the representation of business and management practices linked to globalization activities focused on market and capital expansion from the West. The expansion of business organizations based on Western management principles is done with the purpose of opening and exploiting markets for their products and services in undeveloped parts of the globe. Finally, one must conceptualize identity as a process that mirrors the effects of globalization on a society’s culture and values allows for an isolation of values and practices from the West that transform non-Western societies into receptive incubators of Westernized identities. The injection of business practices and economic values from the West into non-Western societies is not a transitional process; it is a transformational outcome.

*Engaging and Transforming Identities*

The events of 9/11 have been embedded into the U.S. public’s mindset because they revealed cracks in the U.S. safety net for protecting civic culture and social institutions from outsider intrusions. The events of 9/11 also illustrated the political power of the United States to legitimate its
intrusion into the Middle East by portraying Middle-Eastern identity as a terrorist threat. The intrusion of the United States was more than an attempt to rid the global system of terrorists intent on destroying democratic societies. The U.S.’s intrusion into the Middle East was a guise for transposing white hegemonic practices, liberal democratic values, and capitalistic marketplace values into the Middle East’s civic culture, religious beliefs, and political practices. As such, the U.S.’s intrusion into the Middle East was an act of cultural imperialism; an act that clearly exhibited how the United States regarded the global system as a playground for legitimating its values and practices.

Concluding Remarks

My purpose in this chapter was to discuss the engagement between neoliberalism, globalization, and identity building. I argued in this chapter that the identity building process must not be overlooked in the study of globalization because neoliberalism is rooted in a system of hegemonic practices that have the power to alter and replace social identities with those more supportive of liberal democratic values and capitalist marketplace ideologies. Discussions of citizenship are often focused on the identities created by acquiring citizenship because it illustrates the use of market practices to determine the conferring of citizenship status by the state. For example, Haque (2008) argues that the dimensions of citizenship – rights, entitlements, and obligations – are determined by the state; in neoliberal states, those dimensions are linked to persons as “individual determinists.” Galvez (2013) argues that in the neoliberal state citizenship reinforces neoliberal notions of the relationship between citizen and subject. Del Casino and Jocoy (2008) discusses between homelessness and neoliberal representations of citizenship in terms of productivity and accountability in the United States. Further discussion of notions of citizenship and neoliberal practices, see.

Leonardo (2002: 32) proposes the term *multinational whiteness* to discuss how the economic and political power of the United States in globalization facilitates its spread of white hegemonic practices: “As whiteness becomes globalized, white domination begins to transcend national boundaries. … multinational whiteness has developed into a formidable global force in its attempt to control and transform into its own image almost every nook and cranny of the earth.” Following Leonardo’s observation, the events of 9/11 illustrate the U.S.’s power to label other identities as threats, especially non-white identities that were depicted as threats to white hegemonic values and white identity in the United States. Ironically, in discussions of terrorist acts on U.S. soil the American public overlooks that the bombings in Oklahoma City were a terrorist act. However, the bombings were carried out by a white person regarded by the public as mentally unstable (e.g. PTSD) but not as a terrorist. In contrast, the Middle Eastern persons who piloted the airplanes on 9/11 were regarded as cold and calculating – descriptors of sinister identities associated with death and destruction.

In this chapter, I have discussed how at the micro level identity is the product of social interaction and negotiation between persons. In the process of social interaction, a person negotiates their perception of self with the other’s perception of self. At the macro level, the identity formation process is rooted in the interfacing of a person’s institutional affiliations – religious, political, family, etc. As such, a person’s identity represents the bundling the values, beliefs, and practices that are derived from a person’s institutional integration in society. While at the micro level a person’s identity serves to establish their legitimacy for being within certain situations and interactions, at the
macro level a person’s identity serves to associate them with group characteristics, e.g. social class, church, political party, that, in turn, identifies the person’s right to belong in society.

If we return to the doughnut shop example at the beginning of the chapter we can make some inferences about white hegemonic practices in particular and identity formation. The white customer’s comment is appositional because it guises his expression of privilege and power relative to the Spanish-speaking customers; that is, he associates speaking Spanish with outsiders in society. As a result, only whiteness is associated with insiders in society. According to Tatum (1997: 95): “Whites pay little attention to the significance of their own racial identity [they] simply think of themselves as being part of the racial norm and take this for granted without conscious consideration of their White privilege, the systematically conferred advantages they receive simply because they are White.” As such, the white customer’s position of privilege is reflected in the comment, “Doesn’t anybody speak English in the United States anymore? I didn’t know this was Mexico!”

While the white customer was not interacting with the Spanish-speaking customers in the doughnut shop, the privilege embedded in whiteness positioned him to be a defining other in the social context. That is, the white customer’s comment regarding the Spanish-speakers in the doughnut shop identified him as the significant other in the shop; that is, since he was not a Spanish-speaker he was, as a result, privileged by whiteness to identify himself as the only legitimate presence in the doughnut shop. In privileging himself as the only legitimate presence in the doughnut shop, the white customer was exhibiting power in the identification of Spanish-speakers and in defining the social context. According to Gillborn (2006: 319), the white customer’s behavior, “is an exercise of power that goes beyond notions of ‘white privilege’ and can only be adequately understood through a language of power and domination: the issue goes beyond privilege, it is about supremacy.”
There is no doubt that globalization affects the identity formation process. The movement of ideas, technologies, and customs around the globe is reflective of the power some countries possess to do so and of countries not able to do so. In the process of globalization some countries are producers and some are receivers. The question thus arises: does globalization promote a homogeneous or heterogeneous framework for identity formation? On the one hand, a homogeneous framework would allow those countries with a strong power base to export customs and practices to receiver countries that increases their exposure to external values and beliefs. For example, does selling Pizza Hut pizza or Burger King french fries in the highlands of Chiapas promote an identity formation process in which people in Chiapas are subservient to material culture in the United States? On the other hand, a heterogeneous framework suggests that globalization brings technological innovation and new media technologies to receiver countries so that they can benefit from the economic and political developments in those countries capable of sustained development. For example, does the association of pizza and french fries with U.S. material culture enhance a person’s identification in Chiapas with a bigger part of the globe?

If one assumes that the world’s leading proponent of globalization is the United States then one can observe that the United States will lead the global system in exporting its material culture, beliefs, and values. Also, given the dominance of white hegemonic practices in the U. S.’s material culture then one might expect for the beliefs and values exported by the United States via globalization to be embedded with white hegemonic practices (see: Daniels 2009). For example, as Leonardo (2002: 32) has noted, “As whiteness becomes globalized, white domination begins to transcend national boundaries”. Not only then does U.S. material culture transcend national boundaries but it is capable of introducing competing identities for persons nested in white hegemonic
practices regardless of heterogeneous or homogeneous effects. For example, countries with social
and political values rooted in socialistic or communitarian values would be under attack by the global
liberalism exported by the United States. One result is that people’s identities would re-orient toward
a consumer marketplace more supportive of utilitarian capitalism (see: Moon 2004).

Postmodern and poststructuralist scholars argue that globalization’s effects on identity
formation can be observed in the incorporation of external customs and practices into a host (receiver)
country (see: Brah 2000; Canclini 1995; Hall 1996b; Pieterse 1995). The expansion of new
information technologies by politically powerful and resource rich countries across the globe,
increases the chances that they will displace the customs and practices in receiver countries; which, in
turn, introduce competing social identities into a country’s social and cultural fabric. New
information technologies allow powerful and rich countries to ignore national boundaries in their
pursuit of capital accumulation by creating dependent markets for their products and services. As a
result, the identity formation process in receiver countries is focused on constructing identities that
are dependent on external values, beliefs, and customs.

From a socio-cultural perspective, the new information technologies exported from the West
into undeveloped parts of the globe are infused with symbols and artifacts that promote a visual
culture rooted in Western society. The use of television advertisements, for example, for promoting
Western products results in an identity formation process that is externally rooted. As the postmodern
and poststructuralist scholar might observe - persons identify with images and behaviors that emerge
from a foreign culture. In this sense, globalization results in an identity-formation process in
undeveloped parts of the globe that (dis)locates persons from their own culture and society; thus,
making them strangers in their own land.
The Government Accountability Office recently reported that less than half of the U.S.-Mexico border is under the 'operational control' of the Border Patrol. At the same time, the Administration has prevented the Border Patrol from accessing federal lands in the name of environmental preservation. This misguided decision has a two-fold effect. Because the Border Patrol is prohibited from securing federal lands, drug smugglers and human traffickers trample the earth and terrorize communities. And because the border remains porous, illegal immigrants continue to come to the United States. This doesn’t make sense, but our bill does. The American people – not the plants – need to be protected now. And by stopping the illegal activity along the border, we will preserve wilderness areas for future generations to enjoy.

Lamar Smith

We need to know who's in the United States. We need to know everyone who's in the United States that comes in here from a foreign country. And we have to separate the ones who are dangerous from the ones who aren't. To accomplish that, we need a fence. We need a technological fence. We need a border patrol.

Rudy Giuliani

The United States and Mexico share a border that extends nearly 2,000 miles along the southern borders of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. In most areas, the border is located in remote and sparsely populated areas of vast desert and rugged mountain terrain. The American side of the border has served as a staging arena for U.S. military forays into Mexico. After Pancho Villa’s excursion into Columbus, New Mexico on the evening of March 9, 1916, General John “Black Jack” Pershing launched a military invasion into Mexico (Welsum 2006). The border has also served as a burying ground for Mexicans crossing into the United States who get lost in the desert.
and die of thirst. The likelihood of finding dead Mexican bodies along the border joining Arizona and Mexico is so high that the area is known as “The Devil’s Highway” among Mexicans crossing into the United States (Urrea 2004: 20):

You’d be hard pressed to meet a Border Patrol agent in either southern Arizona sector who had not encountered death. It would be safe to say that every one of them, except for the rankest probie just out of the academy, had handled at least one dead body. And they all knew the locations of unidentified skeletons and skulls. Bones peppered the entire region.

The border shared by the United States and Mexico, however, is more than just a line on a map demarcating the area between the two countries. The border is more than just a demarcation; the border identifies a sharing of geographical and social space between neighbors – the border identifies “place”. The two neighbors are joined together by it; almost like a seam between two pieces of cloth on a quilt. The US-Mexico border engenders a discourse that encompasses the social, economic, political, and physical confines of social and geographical space. According to DeChaine (2012: 1), the border “operates as a bounding, ordering apparatus, whose primary function is to designate, produce, and regulate the space of difference, which is always invested in power.”

Regarding the cultural and political complexities of the border separating the United States and Mexico, Fox (1999: 122) has observed that “the border was always much more than a line demarcating national space. Emphasizing the social and cultural dimensions of the U.S.-Mexico border over topographical ones immediately gave ‘border consciousness’ a certain mobility.” As a result, the US-Mexico border, la frontera, is synergistic – it identifies social and cultural representations of the border. Regarding the
synergism of the border, Ono (2012: 30) discusses how borders as figural objects are assigned to bodies:

From the wink of an eye to the tilt of one’s head to the lilt in one’s voice, bodies may unknowingly reveal bordered identities. The body itself is a readable text, is discursive, and therefore may be understood to have meanings that need to be controlled, disciplined, deported, imprisoned, or discarded.

In Chapter Three I discussed the interfacing of neoliberalism and globalization with social and cultural identity. My purpose in this chapter is to use the discursive framework discussed in Chapter Two to examine and discuss the social and cultural representations of the US-Mexico border. There is no question that the US-Mexico border has generated numerous social and public policy concerns, from immigration issues to terrorist threats (House Committee on Homeland Security 2006; Ramos 2005). However, these concerns focus on only one aspect of the border – its use as a demarcation, as a line separating “us” from “them”. For instance, Rodriguez (2010: A1) looks at the wall separating the US-Mexico border as an artificial barrier that ignores the bicultural space occupied by the border:

Between cynicism and hypocrisy lies the 2,000-mile U.S.-Mexico border. America is raising a wall in the desert to separate Mexican drug exporters from American drug consumers, to separate Latin American peasants who will work for low wages from the Americans who would hire them.

The Great Wall of America, straddling less than half the length of the border, descends into canyons and across the desert floor. For the Mexican, it represents a high hurdle. For the American, it is an attempt to stop the Roadrunner’s progress with an Acme Border Sealing Kit.

Great empires expand beyond their own borders. Empires in decline build walls.
However, very little attention has been placed on the representativeness of the US-Mexico border for a discussion of identity and place. Contrary to conventional perceptions that the border is fixed in its meaning as something that demarcates “us” from “them,” I argue that the border is synergistic – constantly changing in form and meaning. From this perspective, the border merges identity and place together into a shared body of social and cultural representations. For Anzaldua (1987) the border is an “open wound” that signifies the resistance of Mexican communities to post-colonial identities and the possible reconciliation of those identities with the hybridity and multicultural landscape of the border. According to Bandy (2000: 235) the U.S.-Mexico border has been the subject of neoliberal experimentation:

As the only border in the world between a developed post-industrial nation and a developing country, *la frontera* has been a space defined by successive imperial wars and economic transgressions; and by a process of gatekeeping that selectively regulates the flows of people, culture, and capital between members of the core and periphery of the world system.

This chapter is organized into the following sections. The first section is a discussion and examination of critical perspectives on the notion of “border”. Nail (2013) suggests that an examination of the US-Mexico border must discuss the exchange of power relations that characterize the border. Following Nail’s suggestion I examine the U.S-Mexico border as a nexus for power relations nested in neoliberal ideology. The purpose of this section is to illustrate the synergistic nature of border, especially a border’s ability to have movement and form that allows for permeability (e.g. the movement of bodies across social space).
The second section is a discussion of *hybridity* and the multicultural landscape of the border. For a review of the notion and uses of *hybridity*, see: Mitchell 1997; Papastergiadis 1997; Werbner 1997; Young 1995). The purpose of this section is to use the concept of *hybridity* to portray the border as “in-between” social space where cultural differences and identities are negotiated. The last section is an examination of cultural hybridity in practice via the city of Hazelton’s passage of a city ordinance that portrayed Mexican immigrants as carriers of the U.S.-Mexico border across social and cultural space.

**The Notion of Border: Critical Viewpoints**

Sociologically, borders are partitions that divide raced, gendered, and classed bodies. In this sense the border shifts in form and meaning from a physical notion of geographical and social space to a discursive notion of the border as a standpoint one adopts to counter hegemonic cultural practices. For example, according to bell hooks, the idea of the border is implicitly synonymous with a positionality of marginality. hooks (2000: 207) perceives the border as a cerebral place of existence, a productive site of “radical possibility, a space of resistance.” For hooks, the border is a mindset that ignites via words, habits of being, lifestyles, and resistive actions against the dominant culture. Resistance is localized at the border where hybrid identities fuel the movement of cultural practices across connected spaces. The hybridization of border identities and the neoliberal development of the border results in contradictions essential to resisting the homogenization of “low costs” with “high profits.” As a result, the border is a nexus for the conflicting identities of border residents: an identity localized to the and only
articulated by the manufactory apparatus of global capital expansion, and an identity seeking expression by using the border was an expansion of its desire to communicate both resistance and production of hybrid space.

According to Bhabha (1994: 170) a border serves as a metaphor for identity formation in in-between-space: “for it is living on the borderlines of history and language, on the limits of race and gender, that we are in a position to translate the differences between them into a kind of solidarity.” Applying Bhabha’s observation to the U.S.-Mexico border one can observe that, “The borderlands represent a hybrid economic zone as well, half way between a disenchantment with unrealized modernity and a postmodern arena of hyperactive commodity and investment cycles” (Bandy 2000: 235). The border, or borderlands, is an in-between space for the contact of modernity and postmodernism ideologies. In this sense, the border acquires liminality – that is, a synergistic state of productive identities between two countries that seeks both connectivity and separation (see: Schechter 2006; Turner).

The perspective of a border discussed by hooks and Bhabha is useful for an examination of identity construction and cultural reproduction on the U.S.-Mexico border. Regarding the construction of border identities Sandoval (2008: 593) observes:

The Mexican illegal immigrant body is constructed in this space, where capitalism meets nationalism, a borderland of contradiction. In the process, the body is simultaneously regarded as a threat, as a social and economic parasite, as a commodity, as a wonder that is biologically suited to stoop labor, as a casualty, as a victim, as a criminal, but rarely as a human being.

Regarding cultural production, the body is a performing agent that illustrates the association between “place” and identity (see: Dear and Leclerc 2003). That is, the
“performativity” of border identities is a negotiation of multiple identities and contradictory discourses between self and place (see: Nelson 1999). Following Smith’s (1988) argument that agency is not necessarily a discrete and internalized quality, the performance of border identities is actualized as a disturbance between “having a place” and “being out of place”. For example, Smith (1999: 5) notes:

What is at stake here is a sense of how and under what conditions subject/individuals simultaneously exist within and make purposive intervention into social formations. Such intervention can and does take place, actively or passively, through single people or collectives, privately or publicly. It can take the form of a refusal as much as an intervention; it can be in the service of conservatism as much as disruption. … Oppositional or conservative activity on the part of any person is primarily a mark of a certain engagement with meanings as they exist, circulate, and become fixed within the practices of any given social formation. These meanings have a history which is, in every case, constitutive of the histories of subject/individuals.

The U.S.-Mexico is not just a demarcation line, but its performative quality is reflected in the hybrid identities and multicultural practices produced on the border. One might say that the movement of border bodies and performance of multicultural practices serves as a form of artistic expression. For example, Miller (2012: 216) examines media industries and the environmental and health impacts for those who work as “maquiladora workers and ragpickers or recicladores as border subjects, liminal figures in terms of social legitimacy and conventional citizenship.” The maquiladora workers and those who sort through trash to salvage electronics are especially susceptible to the effects of neoliberal trade policies because they have no legal protections or formal organized rights. Miller suggests that a shift classifying such workers as entrepreneurs, as has happened in Colombia, could move these individuals from abjection to socially respected citizenship.
Bundling Identity and Place

By ascribing social and cultural expression to the border as a tangible geographic space and as a visible element in the built environment, the U.S.-Mexico border is accessed and addressed in discourse. As Fox (1999: 1-2) points out,

While the border has received a great deal of attention in recent literature and art, this body of work has not yet been fully acknowledged by scholars and critics. Meanwhile, an abstract, metaphorical “border” has gained widespread currency in academic writing… but this usage is rarely tied to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Following Fox’ assertion that we fail to address the site-specifics of the border, any inquiry of the border’s site-specific quality must conceptualize the border as “a place where urban and rural, national and international spaces simultaneously co-exist, often in complex and complicated ways” (Fox 1999: 1-2). Such a conceptualization of the border needs to acknowledge the performance of hybrid identities at and away from the border, as well as the movement of bodies across and between transcultural social space.

A caveat is in order regarding the bundling of border identity and space with the U.S.-Mexico border. The events of 9/11 resulted in U.S. policies that promoted a hardening of the US-Mexico border. The movement of people across and between the border was seen as suspect, and the border itself was regarded as a sieve for encroaching terrorists onto U.S. soil. However, at the same time American companies were pushing for a softening of the border in order to promote the economic development of border regions. Unsurprisingly, corporate capital continued to flow to border regions in order to access workers. In particular, border-crossing was encouraged as a means for meeting the labor needs for low-wage laborers by agricultural and manufacturing interests in the
United States. On the one hand, the American public perceived border crossers as threats to American society and its valued resources. On the other hand, U.S. economic interests regarded border crossers as an efficient means for productive efficiency. For example, Bandy (2000: 236) notes how the U.S.-Mexico became a laboratory for neoliberal development:

In this experiment with liberalization, the border has become an arbitrary but profound dividing line in the global division of labor, defining a difference in legal entitlements for workers and investors, levels of regulatory oversight, and the value of labor and currency – a difference that enables high profitability, rapid industrialization, and uneven distribution. In this way, the border continues to serve as a staging ground for U.S. capital interests in Latin America and the Pacific Rim, and a pivotal economic axis between North and South.

The apparent contradiction in attracting and removing border crossers is nested within the emergence of neoliberal norms of citizenship that depend on new forms of class-based inclusion and exclusion that have intensified in terms of border practices (Baker-Cristales 2009; Nunez and Hayman 2007). Before the events of 9/11 the US-Mexico border was fluid and very accessible in order to encourage border crossers as “business traffic” for American businesses. US-Mexico border development was regarded as an intense amalgamation of neoliberal ideology with globalization expansion.

The US-Mexico border serves as a neoliberal utopia because it offers the potential for economic growth and prosperity via border commerce and the establishment of business elites. The neoliberalization of the border requires economic development policies that are aligned with government policies that regulate movement on the border. In particular, the neoliberalization of the border must result in a reimagining of the border that blends land and place so that cross borders are perceived as potential economic
capital. As a result, the border becomes a space where labor is not confused with criminal activity. That is, a neoliberal approach to both regulating the border and encouraging economic development would portray border crossers as “economic security” and not as a threat to “political security.” Thus, from a neoliberal perspective the U.S.-Mexico border offers unparalleled economic opportunities for Americans living on the border and for workers and their employers in the United States. In the end, the border promotes economic competitiveness that results in prosperity for U.S. communities (Lee and Wilson 2012).

Hybridity, Meaning and Production

The preceding discussion suggests that the border must not be looked as just a characterization of oppositional cultural meaning and production. Rather, the border must be bound synergistically to the bodies inhabiting “place” or temporarily crossing it. While the body’s performative power is tied to perceptions and representations of its identity, the body also exists (and performs) within specific time and space. Thus, corporeal activity (along the border) acts as a hologram, enunciating the space it occupies. According to Dear and Leclerc (2003: 19), bodies and space intertwine: “bodies are always emplaced. Individual performativities occur in space, and thereby create the places of human (as well as nonhuman imprint).” The corporeal cartographies of border residents, tourists, and immigrants map out how, where, and for whom the border exists, transforming the reality of the U.S.-Mexico border into a subjective one. From a neoliberal perspective, border residents, tourists, and immigrants are the commodities in a production process that provides the border its economic identity.
The difficulty in situating a border discourse about neoliberalizing identities in space and time is that “border” refers to a place in transition based on shifting political winds. That is, the border cannot be grasped and held down. For example, according to Canclini (2003: 277): “… even though we focus on the United States-Mexico border, we do not tread in a securely and clearly defined theoretical space.” Following Canclini, I would like to forewarn the reader that my investigation of the border faces interpretive obstacles because it occupies a space of complex negotiation between hybrid identities and separatist cultural practices. To examine the U.S.-Mexico one must also accept the challenge of perspective – on which side does one stand? The challenge becomes even more formidable if one considers that the border is constantly changing directions in its search for place. As Dell’Agnese (2005: 205) observes:

… the border is, above all, a politically charged place … the same signifier (the ‘border’) can have different meanings … it implies both the line demarcating the end of sovereignty and the zone of interchange between one state and the other. It can also mean a barrier limiting the free movement of people and goods, a symbolic end of the nation-Self and/or an open frontier.

Within a neoliberal political context, the presence of a border between the United States and Mexico is very real. On October 26, 2006, the Senate passed into law House Bill 6061 (The Secure Fence Act of 2006). House Bill 6061 sanctioned the construction of a seven hundred mile border fence to run along the southern border between the U.S. and Mexico (Hew 2007; Hurt 2000). Politically, the function of a “border wall” is to reduce the number of Mexican bodies that successfully wend their way onto American territory. Sociologically, a border fence says, “This is ours and you can’t have it.” Stopping the movement of Mexican bodies across the border robs the border of cultural
expression; that is, it robs the border of the opportunity to perform as a transcultural zone for crossers and residents. The visual impact of such a border fence would subsume the space that is the border. What must be acknowledged is that such a gesture, a “border wall,” seems to forcefully confront the notion of the border as a space of hybridity. For example, Dear and Leclerc (2003: 4-5) posit the border as a metropolis composed of “border cities”. In fact, they propose the conflation of these separate cities into “a single, integrated urban system of global significance”, a post-border city in effect.

The imposition of a wall onto the built environment of this hypothetical post-border city seems to recover the border as a physically tangible entity. The notion of the border as a tangible entity seems to work against the construction of hybrid subjectivities, such as raced bodies, by sheltering the seeds of heterogeneous cultures from infiltrating American cultural practices. In contrast, the border as hybridity “rethinks our assumptions about culture and identity from an ‘us-them’ dualism to a mutual sense of ‘both/and’ (Meredith 1998: 1). Thus, one must acknowledge and negotiate not only difference but also affinity.

Ironically, in his testimony before the Committee on House Government Reform, T.J. Bonner, National President of the AFL-CIO, pointed to the inefficacy of building a border fence: “… neither barriers nor increased staffing will discourage millions of impoverished people from illegally crossing our borders annually. At best, such measures will only serve to push the problem from one location to another” (Bonner 2006: 26). From this perspective, the border fence neither works as a “border,” reflecting the structure’s incapacity to enact separatism nor does it seem to halt the intermixing of
bodies and cultures. What then is this wall that seems to pose as a border? Perhaps one can perceive the American border fence as an unintentional artistic endeavor.

Accordingly, Yudice (2003: 298) observes that:

The border, its steel fence in particular, exerts such a potent magnetic force that it is almost impossible for many of the artworks sited there to project energetically enough to break away from its pull. Indeed, extending along the border for miles and leading right into the ocean, the fence is a de facto installation that might make Christo envious.

Could a border fence serve as a new neoliberal art project? An art project that identifies border residents and tourists as consumers, those crossing the border to be purchase goods and services, and producers, those working in border industries.

In an examination of the ways in which culture itself represents a form of capital, Yudice argues that economy and culture are inseparable entities in the process of identifying the border. Consider the border wall as a primary engine for generating culture capital along the border. In this sense, the “production” of a border fence as neoliberal art, not only adds to the culture capital of the borderlands, but its primary purpose, tinged with implications for the U.S. and Mexico economy, also performs the process of commodification. This is reflected by the capitalization of the border via the monetary investments injected into constructing the border itself, which mirrors corporate capitalists who support border art events for public relation campaigns. The border fence can be read as a “strategic” public relations art event in its own right. While the proposed seven hundred mile wall will not detract Mexican bodies from breaching the border, it does serve as a visual statement, sponsored by corporate capitalists in the guise of the
American government, to strategically mark out social issues of economy, immigration, identity, and nationalism.

Cultural production on the border often signals an imbalance in the region that is shouldered by an “othered” body. The production of culture on the border translates into artistic, social, political, or commercial value and is represented by bodies that are already enriched with capital. Within a neoliberal context, those bodies represent the exchange of cheap labor for commercial culture. While “border culture” is a localized concept, it is important for the transnational accumulation of capital. As such, the bodies situated on the border transform capital and its production into a localized art form. From a discursive approach one can ask, “For whom does the border actually exist?” While a border wall “others” the Mexican side, it also legitimates the “presence” of an “other” on the American side. As a result, the border amasses itself as “gathering of transnational otherness.”

As much as border culture is exposed to neoliberal poaching, the capitalization of border identity is an obstruction to cultural and economic autonomy. The absorption of border identities into a set of neoliberal practices results in efficient and productive capital accumulation. The building of maquiladoras on the Mexican border side exploits border identities that are mired in a border ideology that convinces Mexican labor that it can only find identity via capital production for American interests. After all, the “otherness” of American interests identifies the “otherness” of Mexican labor. The border then is crossed not necessarily by bodies but by a neoliberal pragmatism that scales border fences to demonstrate the permeability of the border. Thus, much like the
emperor’s new clothes, the border is exposed as obstacle and porous entrance; a tension between hybridity and cultural identity.

*Border Discourse and Identity*

The concept of hybridity impregnates all forms of border discourse; it inflects metaphorical constructions of the border as well as perceptions of physical border sites. As such, border discourse, is engendered by theory making. When we locate ourselves at a physical border, the opposite seems to arise. The border produces its own set of theories. Central to the theoretical discourse emerging from the U.S-Mexico border is a version of hybridity that insists on defining itself as the “hard border,” - the built environments of the cities situated along the borderline where global, national, and local forces construct maquiladoras to fortify border crossing and identify a nexus for border economic development. Urban development along each side of the border inextricably links the two countries together, and unsurprisingly, results in a “hybrid or binational” solution to waste disposal and pollution concerns associated with intensifying border industrial production.

Because the U.S.-Mexico border generates its own version of hybrid culture it also generates a hybrid identity. I’m not implying that it’s a causal relationship, but an artifact of a place generated by neoliberal and globalization practices. I think that one can locate the exchange between neoliberalism and globalization on the border in the situating of border identities and border cultures present in the hybridization of communities. The process of hybridity transforms the U.S.-Mexico border into something real and legitimate via its identification as a symbiotic organism of place as
border. As a result, the symbiosis fuels the trans-flux of people, knowledge and technology. The notion of the “border” is more than a representation of two countries; it is both a border culture and identity. In this sense, the U.S.-Mexico is an idealized neoliberal project because it fuses identity and culture into a working relationship of economic practices for capital accumulation.

Alan Dean Foster refers to the U.S.-Mexico border as the *Montezuma Strip* because it has been transformed into a giant maquiladora. The *Strip* gives birth to hybrid identities performed by gang members, or *locos*, and wealthy owners intent on exploiting third world labor. Foster (1995: 11-12) narrates the *Strip* as:

> It followed the old and frayed USA-Mehico border with less regard for actual national boundaries than the Rio Grande. Every multinational that wanted a piece of the Namerica market had plants there and most had several. In between were kilometers of upstarts, some true independents, others entrepreneurs spun off by the electronic gargantucas. Down amid the frenzy of innovation, where bright new developments could be outdated before they could be brought to market, fortunes were risked and lost. If you were a machinist, a mask sculptor, a programmer, you could make six figures a year. If you were a peon from Zacatecas or Tamulipas, a dirt farmer of Mexico City, you could always find work on the assembly lines. Someday if you worked hard and didn’t lose your eyesight to overstrain they might give you a white lab coat and hat and promote you to a clean room. Kids, women, anybody who could control their fingers and their eyes, could make hard currency in the Montezuma Strip, where First World technology locked hands with Third World cheap labor.

Spinoffs from the Strip extended north to Phoenix, south to Guyamas. Money brought in subcultures, undercultures, agricultures. Some of the sociologists who delved into the underpinnings of the Strip didn’t come out. The engineers and technocrats forced to live in proximity to their labor and produce lived in fortified suburbs and traveled to work in armored transports. Cops in transit didn’t rate private vehicles.

Foster’s depiction of the *Montezuma Strip* identifies a U.S.-Mexico border that reflects identities that are class based and which are based on a person’s proximity to the
production process. Foster’s depiction of the border asks for a reconceptualization of the border beyond the separation of two identities – Mexicans as outsiders and American as insiders. Such thinking promotes a binary paradigm of identity and culture rooted in the use of a border for maintain separate social and cultural boundaries. As a synergistic construct, the border’s identity changes over time, sometimes as dictated by the changing course of a river or transportation highway. One result is that the identities exhibited by border residents are as fluid as the hybridity that affects the nature of the border. As Benhabib (2002: 25) notes, “… cultures themselves, as well as societies, are not holistic but polyvocal, multilayered, decentered, and fractured systems of action and signification.”

Rather than regard border identities as signifying the existence of a layered cultural reproduction process at the border, neoliberal ideology utilizes border identities as a competing ground for manufacturing interests driven by efficiency in the accumulation of capital. As such, it is vital for the promulgation of neoliberal practices that the border be seen as pregnant with conflict and instability; thus, neoliberal practices become the vehicle for calm and security. The construction of a border fence and the installment of the National Guard (“Operation Jump Start”) along the U.S.-Mexico border inform the sort of violence imbedded in the performance of cultural separation (Cannata 2006; Moreno 2007). The militarization of the border clearly redirects conflict into the zone of cultural separatism (Vandehei and Weisman 2006). Moreover, the U.S-Mexico border has served historically as the site of violent clashes between two cultures (Gregg 1937; Henderson 1979). In particular, concern in the United States that the
Mexican Revolution would result in the crossing of Mexican “terrorists” into the U.S. was the catalyst for the creation of a “border air patrol” to monitor the US-Mexico border (Hinkle 1970; Ragsdale 1984). Think of it as maintain a border “from the air.”

Since the inception of a metaphorical and physical U.S.-Mexico border after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848), skirmishes over territory, which is inextricably linked to the battle for cultural assertion, have consistently taken place across the borderlands (Lorey 1999; Sandos 1992). Current corporeal “conflicts” between border patrol officers and furtive “illegal” border crossers also undermine the case for border as layering of social and cultural identities. Contrary to popular thinking in the United States, shooting and killing border crossers from Mexico does prevent the border as a place for crossing between two countries. The militarization of the border will only serve to make the border more volatile because border identities will fuel a resistance to losing their place on the border. The border then is transformed into a theatre of political struggle and cultural expression. Following Habermas (1994) then, the border becomes the exchange between political conflict nested in the communication of identity and social movements seeking space.

The struggle for identity and space is necessary for neoliberal ideology to flourish on the border. The border communities can be regarded as discursive forms that “emerge whenever and wherever human beings can affect one another’s actions and well being, interests, and identity” (Benhabib 2002: 147). Because the border is conceived as a gateway for crossers, tourists and workers it becomes necessary to utilize the border to count who belongs where on the border. That is, the border becomes a tool for
determining membership based on where one occupies space. The border becomes contested terrain for employing political practices to determine where one belongs, especially as “belonging” is tied to structures of inequality (for further discussion, see: Thomas and Clarke 2013). Border crossing thus becomes an arrangement of neoliberal principles – entrepreneurialism and transnational mobility (Berg and Rodriguez 2013).

One summarize the key exchanges between border identity and place as follows:

- The neoliberalization of the border produces identity, e.g. citizenship, that signifies membership – who is or is not a member.
- The layering of social and cultural identities on the border results in hybrid border communities.
- Hybrid border communities transform the border from a fixed barrier to a fluid thruway for the movement of bodies.
- The globalization of the border translates territoriality into an expansion of networks independent of nation states.
- Neoliberal practices on the border result in a hegemonic framework between political conflict and cultural expression.
- Despite border hybridity, border identity serves neoliberalism by constructing social citizenship based on the territoriality of its inhabitants.
- Social citizenship is characterized by the neoliberal principles of commodification and efficient production.
- Identity making on the border via principles of commodification and efficient production is heterogeneous and deterritorialized.
• Neoliberalism and globalization work to reposition and reorganize the border into a hybrid space that serves as subversive culture production.

**Borders and Bodies**

I would like to suggest that while it is apparent that the border has physicality, it is not as apparent that the border positions border crossers as synergistic dimensions. The application of militaristic tactics on the border such as predator drones to monitor the movement of bodies is done in an effort to separate the border from bodies. As a result, the cross border body is perceived as moving the U.S.-Mexico border as it situates itself in social space. The cross border body is also perceived as border – *the border moves as the body moves*.

The actions taken by Hazelton’s city council, for example, reinforce the notion of the *body as border*. In July 2006, the city council of Hazleton, Pennsylvania approved the Illegal Immigration Relief Act that imposed strict penalties on landlords who rented to illegal immigrants and it also declared English as the city’s official language (Barry 2006). While the passing of this law was ostensibly a reaction to the illegal immigrant sentiments rampant in current American border discourse, in the context of the U.S./Mexico border, the visual signifier of a Mexican or brown body embodies the tension of cultural intermixing. But the “brown body” does more than cause tension in space; it mobilizes the border across all territories. It was the presence of Mexicans as brown bodies that stimulated uproar and visually reminded white residents in Hazleton of the possibility of hybridity. In the eyes of Hazelton’s white residents the border came to them. Denying via legal ordinances the Mexican body’s access to a lived space in
Hazleton became itself another construction of a border. The ordinance sent out a clear message regarding the separation of one set of bodies from another not unlike the intended purpose of the U.S./Mexico border fence.

One could argue that while Hazelton’s actions were directed only at immigrants, the “browning” of the immigrant body portrays all immigrant bodies as problems (for example, see: Romero and Serag 2005). The representation of *Mexicanness* as “brownness” reinforces Anglo hegemony by identifying and controlling the movement of brown bodies in social space (see: Campbell 2005; Mains 2000). As the passage of SB1070 by the Arizona legislature in 2010 showed, a person only had to “look Mexican” to be identified as a threat to the body politic regardless of a person’s relationship with territorial identity, e.g. citizenship. For instance Hindess (2002: 128) comments on the difficulty of characterizing citizenship simply based on territory: “… citizenship is something that appears in certain kinds of state and where it does appear, any individuals who belong to that state will be citizens while others, who might also belong to the state in some sense, will not.” It is not a surprise that immigrants living in Hazelton responded by exciting the town (Barry 2006). In the end, Hazelton’s actions created a wall in order to staunch the encroachment of Mexican bodies; thus demonstrating that you don’t need a border to construct a wall.

**Concluding Remarks**

I have taken an unconventional view of the U.S.-Mexico border in this chapter. I have argued that the border is not just a static, one-dimensional representation of social and cultural space. By focusing on the neoliberalization of border identities and
communities I have argued that the U.S.-Mexico border is transnational and transcultural. In my conceptualization of the border identities are a hybridization of neoliberal practices and globalization processes for commodification and efficient productivity. The construction of a border fence is a threat to the expression of border identities rather as a separation of two countries with distinct identities. The political actions of the Hazelton city council illustrate how walls can be constructed that are far away from the localization of border identities.

The concept of *hybridity* creates theoretical space for discussing notions of nationhood and identity on the U.S.-Mexico border, such as *the body as border*. It offers the possibility of considering social and cultural representations as merging rather than polarizing. One result is that border discourse shifts away from the question, “What is wrong with the border as community?” to “How is the border a community?” The latter question begs for the recognition of a border culture that promotes collective identities that result in the creation of a “we” rather than “them.” The promotion of “we” in the social and cultural representations of the US-Mexico border is necessary for preserving the co-existence of multiple identities.

What happens when bodies, and their identities, are “out of place”? In the next chapter I address this question by examining how neoliberal ideology serves as a guiding strategy for the DREAM Act. Neoliberal ideology seeks to promote efficiency, increased productivity, and greater accountability in public education. I argue in the next chapter that the DREAM Act is an example of how public education is utilized as a vehicle for the transition of immigrant bodies out of space into productive corporate roles via the
military. The neoliberal agenda seeks to increase the importance of corporate identities for societal efficiency by deemphasizing personal differences in society. As such, the DREAM Act is an expression of neoliberal ideology that attempts to transition immigrant bodies out of space into a homogeneous culture and social order.
I believe in the idea of amnesty for those who have put down roots and lived here, even though sometimes back they may have entered illegally.

President Ronald Reagan

We believe in our students and our communities as a whole deserve full and immediate legalization without having to serve in the military.

Association of Raza Educators

One example of neoliberal ideology can be seen in the September 11th attacks on the twin towers in the World Trade Center. These events became the impetus for transforming public space into private interests. For example, the prison industrial complex, security and intelligence to private market forces blossomed and resulted in a $200 billion market exchange that didn’t exist prior to that year. In particular, after 9/11 the Patriot Act became the cornerstone of emerging neoliberal ideas in the United States, especially in the public sector. The Patriot Act introduced greater scrutiny over public life under the guise of personal freedom and democracy. More importantly, the neoliberal ideology embedded in the Patriot Act served as a framework for dealing with “bodies out of place.

On a global scale, neoliberal ideology has affected global cultures and communities. In Chapter Three I discussed how neoliberal ideology has constructed the border as a site for hybrid identities and as a potential launching platform for bodies into
social spaces where they are perceived as being “out of place.” Harvey (2005: 74), for example, succinctly describes the process by which countries like the U.S. utilize poor, underdeveloped countries:

The extraction of tribute via financial mechanisms is an old imperial practice…This tendency on the part of the core states like the US to protect financial interests and to stand by as they suck in surpluses from elsewhere both promotes and reflects the consolidation of upper-class power within those states around processes of financialization.

Mexico has become part of a neoliberal enterprise that lures Mexicans living in impoverished conditions to cross the border in a search of opportunity that results in their being out of place. Though most of the literature cites the Latin American debt crisis and the 1980’s as the starting point of the neoliberal enterprise, it arguably began in 1965 with the institution of free trade zones and maquiladoras under the Border Industrialization Program (BIP). This effectively changed the relationship between labor markets and production by moving factories to the labor, rather than the other way around. A chain reaction began, leaving Mexico with increased unemployment and poverty. The flow of bodies to the border merged production and labor and it also attracted bodies to the border; thereby increasing the chances would cross the border into social spaces where they would be out of space.

Another example of neoliberal ideology can be seen in post-apartheid South Africa, when the African National Congress (ANC), pushed by the IMF and World Bank, moved its macroeconomic policy in the direction of neoliberalism (Emery 2006). This move led the state to privatize state-owned corporations. At the same time, the private sector was forced to downsize in an attempt to increase global competitiveness. Both
progressions resulted in job losses. Local governments participated in a form of cost recovery, which required that the costs be passed on to consumers. As a result, the provisioning of basic necessities (such as water, electricity and sanitation) became subject to the same methods of cost recovery, meaning that poor communities became increasingly unable to receive them.

Neoliberal ideology does more than just pursue principles of efficiency and production at a large scale involving the merger of manufacturing industries and labor. Neoliberal ideology also identifies bodies as having a purpose in the production of profit for continued global expansion. However, in the case of bodies found at the U.S.-Mexico border, neoliberal ideology serves as a lure to dislocate them across social space into sites where they are perceived as being out of place. I discussed in Chapter Three how the city of Hazelton responded to Mexican immigrants being out of place. But, what happens when those bodies are both in and out? That is, what if bodies are lured by neoliberal dreams and promises to cross the border into the United States without any hope of having membership in society. What happens to those bodies when they seek membership in society; especially if society does not want them as members? I argue in this chapter that the DREAM Act is a neoliberal practice that utilizes public education as a vehicle for situating Mexican bodies out of place in U.S. society.

Neoliberal Ideology in Public Education – Zero Tolerance

The global corporate mindset has had a significant effect on the American educational system. According to Mahiri (2005: 77):

There are striking parallels between some of the strategies used to take over and control the natural resources and people in developing countries and those
revealed in the corporate takeover and control of curriculum, financial resources, teachers’ work, and students’ learning in public schools.

Education has become “commodified” and “marketized” (Bartlett et al. 2002). Students themselves are turned into the commodities that generate income and education becomes the market in which they are bought and sold. Corporate culture shapes the curriculum and the social reproduction that occurs in schools (Giroux 2001a). This is manifested through policies and practices that currently ascribe to increased accountability with the use of zero tolerance, competition, and standardized testing.

From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s there was a marked increase in the arrest of juveniles committing homicides with firearms (Richart, Brooks, and Soler 2003). In response to the increasing number of arrests, Congress passed the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 that required school districts to pass zero tolerance policies for firearms in order to remain eligible for funding (California Department of Education 2008). The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 calls for a mandatory calendar year of expulsion and referral to law enforcement for any student who brings a firearm to school. The institution of zero tolerance policies nationally in K-12 schools began in the early 1990s and has moved in and out of public notice with varying high-profile school incidences, such as the school shooting in Columbine, Colorado; and the gang rape of a high school female student in Richmond, California. While the term zero tolerance doesn’t actually appear in law, it appealed to the public and grew in popularity with the passage of the Act.

Zero tolerance invokes a stern sense of foreboding, especially when used in relation to school children. It implies that there will be no clemency for any sort of misbehavior or infraction, regardless of how small. Zero tolerance policies were intended
to signify the public’s response to rising concerns over violence in schools by implementing practices designed to prevent future acts of violence on school campuses. According to the American Psychological Association’s Zero Tolerance Task Force (2006: 2), zero tolerance generally is a, “philosophy or policy that mandates the application of predetermined consequences, most often severe and punitive in nature, that are intended to be applied regardless of the seriousness of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context.”

The implicit assumption in zero tolerance policies is that swift assured punishment will have a deterrent effect on students. The deterrent effect of zero tolerance policies is two-fold - as it attempts to reach specific offenders and general students who might consider violent offending. That is, zero tolerance policies target both offenders and potential offenders. For example, under zero tolerance policies, offending students are removed from the school environment via suspension or expulsion. In contrast, potential offenders are subject to after-school or Saturday detention. Potential offenders consist of those who may still be considered at-risk, but haven’t committed significant infractions like weapon, drug and alcohol possession, or violent acts. One result is that zero tolerance policies seek to incapacitate offenders and potential offenders; with the ultimate goal of preventing repeat offenders. As a result, zero tolerance policies send a message to the general population that policies are non-negotiable and stringently enforced. Zero tolerance policies also portray students as rational actors who are capable of examining actions and their outcomes in an effort to create a better and safer school climate.
Kennedy-Lewis (2014) studied the influence of zero tolerance discipline policies in U.S. public education. She developed a theoretical framework to distinguish between discourses of safety from discourses of equity in order to study how zero tolerance legislation portrays educators and students. Kennedy-Lewis’ findings showed that a “discipline gap” in which minority students received harsher punishments, and more frequent suspensions and exclusions than dominant group students. Her findings also showed that zero tolerance policies portray students as rational actors who deserve the punishment they receive and educators as having absolute power and their decisions to punish students are reflected as being consistent and objective. In general, Kennedy-Lewis’ findings reflect the influence of neoliberal practices in the application of student discipline under zero tolerance guidelines.

Unsurprisingly, the popularity of zero tolerance policies to the public increased their visibility in schools. However, despite their popularity, zero tolerance policies in the nation’s schools are not unified along a set of shared criteria, thus making it difficult to evaluate the effect they have on reducing school violence. Heaviside et al. (1998: 7) used the National Center for Education Statistics’ (NCES) definition of zero tolerance as, “school or district policy mandating predetermined consequences for various student offenses.” Heaviside et al. was the NCES definition of zero tolerance in a large-scale study of U.S. schools to examine the implementation of such policies. As a result, the authors found that 94% of all schools in the United States have zero tolerance policies for weapons, with a large majority of schools (79%) having mandatory suspensions or expulsions for violence or tobacco.
Description and implementation of zero tolerance policies varies from state to state. The California Department of Education (2008) has a set of criteria for actions falling under zero tolerance policies. For example, significant infractions include: 1) causing serious physical injury to another person, except in self-defense; 2) possession of any knife or other dangerous object of no reasonable use to the pupil; 3) unlawful possession of any controlled substance, except for the possession of not more than one ounce of marijuana; 4) robbery or extortion; and 5) assault or battery on any school employee. Though they are significant, these infractions are also discretionary, allowing the principal or superintendent to make the decision as to whether or not expulsion is appropriate. If the decision for expulsion is deemed appropriate, it must be based on one of the following guidelines: 1) other means of correction are not feasible or have repeatedly failed to bring about proper conduct; and 2) due to the nature of the act, the presence of the pupil causes continuing danger to the physical safety of the pupil or others. The need to determine these findings is what distinguishes zero tolerance expulsions from other offenses. Discretionary power is important. However, some of the generally applied concepts are ambiguous. For instance, the term “reasonable use” is left undefined and can be highly subjective.

The Florida Department of Education (2005) has an official policy of zero tolerance that clearly states, “the Legislature finds that zero-tolerance policies are not intended to be rigorously applied to petty acts of misconduct and misdemeanors, including, but not limited to, minor fights or disturbances.” However, the policy continues by stating that students must commit one of two offenses to be expelled and
referred to the criminal justice system: 1) bringing a firearm or weapon to school; and 2) making a threat or false report regarding school personnel, property or functions. Precise parameters for what should be considered a weapon or threat are not given. The severity and nature of false reports are also left unaddressed.

Kansas’ State Department of Education website features a publication from The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (2007: 34) entitled, “School Policies and Legal Issues Supporting Safe Schools.” This document seems to support the adoption of zero tolerance policies:

School boards may adopt zero tolerance policies in order to send a strong message about unacceptable conduct or simply to comply with a federal and state mandate. Although the federal mandate in the Gun-Free Schools Act applies only to firearms, some states have broadened the definition of ‘weapons’ for purposes of their related statutes firearms to include knives, razors, slingshots, brass knuckles, and any other inherently dangerous object. In addition, some schools may view threats of violence from students, including assaults not involving the use of a weapon, as a reason for expulsion.

Again, definitions and parameters are scant. It is unclear as to what a zero tolerance policy would specifically embody and in what standardized way (if any) it should be applied.

These policy statements suggest that zero tolerance does not have a universal or generally accepted definition, resulting in competing applications in determining what constitutes zero tolerance behavior. Some states even go so far as to provide contingencies that must first be satisfied before expelling students. Other states implement what are known as Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) which help to further label, sort and rank students in order to facilitate the efficient administration of the zero tolerance policies (see: Texas Education Agency 2007). As a
result, the “reasonable” utilization of zero tolerance policy differs greatly in actual practice when compared to a set of goals for zero tolerance outcomes. That is, one theoretical perspective may be used to support the policy’s intent, while another is responsible for the way it actually functions and manifests.

Zero Tolerance policy’s intent is well supported in theory. The notion of rational choice is not new. However, its ambiguous definition and severe, yet arbitrary application, makes assessment of its intended purpose difficult. Initial support for the theory came from sensationalized media reports on an epidemic of violence, despite evidence to the contrary. Youth violence did peak in the mid-1990s, but no similar trends have been found (American Psychological Association 2006).

There is a lack of any sort of direct evidence to support the current policy implementation. The application in this case has outpaced the empirical evidence required to accurately measure its efficacy. However, there is a growing body of literature that contends zero tolerance policies are counterproductive. Some studies have found evidence of disproportionate use of the policy against children of color. Sullivan (2007) conducted a study of the disciplinary action taken against 34,047 elementary, middle and high school students of color during the 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 school years. The most statistically significant finding was the influence of ethnicity on out-of-school suspensions and expulsions for students of color in the state of Texas after the implementation of the policy. Black students comprised approximately 14 percent of the population, yet received more than one-third of all disciplinary actions.
Another study conducted by Richart, Brooks and Soler (2003) points to one problem of zero tolerance policies as being a shift of responsibility. Juveniles became the jurisdiction of the courts rather than the educational system. According to the article, judges and court staff began to suggest that the referrals were beginning to overwhelm juvenile and family courts in the state of Kentucky. Court staff also cited issues with being ill-equipped to resolve the learning and behavioral issues of the youth referred to them.

The American Bar Association compiled a report on zero tolerance in 2000. One of the more interesting points the report makes has to do with the broad treatment of children. “...theories of punishment that were once directed to adult criminals are now applied to first graders...Zero tolerance has become a one-size-fits-all solution to all the problems that schools confront. It has redefined students as criminals, with unfortunate consequences” (American Bar Association 2000:1). The policy allows for a severity of punishment that equates young children to fully developed adults. Its “one-size-fits-all” answer provides for the same severe application of punishment to vastly different infractions, shattering any sense of fairness.

The neoliberal influence on zero tolerance policies can be observed in the commodification of student bodies. But about zero tolerance’s effect on students’ well-being? The American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force (2008) found the effectiveness of zero tolerance policies to be questionable. It found that zero tolerance can exacerbate the normal challenges of early adolescence. The Task Force highlighted the school-to-prison pipeline, which describes the increased number of
referrals to the criminal justice system for infractions that used to be handled at school. Though the Task Force does point out that the pipeline is currently based on anecdotal or descriptive research, it does state that the apparent parallels are compelling. Students are increasingly becoming part of the commodity list that fuels the larger markets. In this case the two newly applicable markets are found in education and the prison industrial complex. As Giroux (2006: 255) states:

Instead of providing a decent education to poor young people, American society offers them the growing potential of being incarcerated, buttressed by the fact that the U.S. is one of the few countries in the world that sentences minors to death and spends ‘three times more on each incarcerated citizen than on each public school pupil.’ Instead of guaranteeing them food, decent health care, and shelter, we serve them more standardized tests; instead of providing them with vibrant public spheres, we offer them a commercialized culture in which consumerism is the only obligation of citizenship.

More enforcement in schools means more partnerships with the criminal justice system, such as DARE. Money is exchanged for surveillance and containment. Funneling students to the correctional system provides an easy supply of people who need to be maintained, creating more jobs, markets and infrastructure in which to do it. Managing marginalized populations like students of color by making them surplus creates an opportunity for monetary gain through the enumeration of their bodies (Giroux 2001b).

Part of the marketization of education includes the introduction of a new doctrine focused on performance and competition between schools. Bartlett et al. (2002: 6), elaborate on some of the forms marketization takes in public education:

Marketization takes many forms, discursive and structural. Primary among those is the unqualified celebration of ‘choice’ in schooling, whether as vouchers, charters (also known as ‘public school choice’), or magnet schools. The rhetoric of choice positions parents and children as consumers of schooling; it implies that all parents are equally informed, politically connected, and capable of securing for
their own children the best education. Yet early studies caution that such policies easily result in increased race and class stratification.

Charter schools have become viable options over the traditional public school model. They are presented as being beneficial to the public school system by “instilling a sense of accountability into the system regarding its services to the student and parents and its fiscal obligations” (“Charter School Laws” 2009). In other words, they provide a competitive incentive for traditional public schools, as both are funded according to enrollment, with the money following the student. Thus, social entities designed to serve the general public good, are forced to contend with the bottom line and find ways to survive, rather than focus on the needs of students.

Aguirre and Johnson (2005) describe charter schools as being the “neoliberal answer” to a troubled educational system. Similarly, Smith and Scoll (1995) argue that the drive for charter schools during the 1990s was characterized by neoliberal rhetoric that depicted children as ‘human capital.’ Schools, in turn, were portrayed as ‘training centers’ for workers needed in an expanding global economy. For example, during the 1990s it became quite common for public high schools to develop vocational training programs with the private sector – McDonalds, Carl’s Jr, Ralphs, etc. – in order to “efficiently” prepare workers for corporate America. More importantly, students were made more accountable to corporate America as expenditures.

Lakoff (2004: 32) has come to the conclusion that the current public educational system is under attack by the prevailing neoliberal ideology and explain how through the use of standardized testing frames schools fall victim to evaluative measures and competitive choice:
Once the testing frame applies not just to students, but also to schools, then schools can, metaphorically, fail – and be punished for failing by having their allowance cut. Less funding in turn makes it harder for the schools to improve, which leads to a cycle of failure and ultimately elimination for many public schools. What replaces the public school system is a voucher system to support private schools. The wealthy would have good schools – paid for in part by what used to be tax payments for public schools. The poor would not have money for good schools. We would wind up with a two-tier school system, a good one for the ‘deserving rich’ and a bad one for the ‘undeserving poor’.

The advent of programs designed to increase accountability among schools through the use of standardized tests (such as those that emerged out of the No Child Left Behind Act) have resulted in punitive actions toward those having what is perceived as poor teacher and student performance. The No Child Left Behind Act made it possible for schools to pursue neoliberal values of efficiency and productivity by measuring teacher quality via test scores. The educational testing industry found an ally in a legislative process that was pushing neoliberal values. This has become the impetus for new corporate markets utilizing opportunistic niches in educational testing and materials (Kennedy-Lewis 2014).

Mahiri (2005) and Rice (2004) discuss the production of scripted curriculums by textbook corporations designed to prepare students for standardized tests. The scripted curriculums “treat all learners alike, while also having the effect of deskill[ing] teachers who became ‘simple deliverers of content’” (Mahiri: 72). The textbook corporations are entities playing “collateral roles” in American multinational corporations that wage ideological and economic warfare within schools. The neoliberal ruse for public schools is that standardized tests result in “statistical data” that can be used to make teachers accountable to quality teaching and students to learning outcomes (achievement).
certain standards aren’t met, public schools are forced to “make profound changes in the ways their resources are allocated and ultimately controlled” (Mahiri 2005: 77).

A good deal of the emphasis on standardized testing came with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, signed into law in 2002 by President Bush (Meyer 2005). The neoliberal argument that prompted Congress to pass the NCLB was that: “As the economies of the world were being more and more intertwined, interdependent, and interconnected, schools we were told were failing to adequately prepare students for the global market” (Leyva 2009: 370). The purported goal of the NCLB was to “close the achievement gap by holding school districts and states accountable, encouraging the use of flexible educational approaches and supporting parents’ rights to school choice” (Arce et al. 2005: 56). Under NCLB, each state establishes a definition of “adequate yearly progress” (AYP) for use every year in determining the achievement of each school district and school. The data for the AYP is drawn from the results of the standardized tests administered to students. This diagnostic tool is then used to identify areas where schools need improvement and should focus their resources (U.S. Department of Education 2002). In essence, the resulting test scores are used to determine whether teachers and schools are “effectively” doing their jobs. If it is found that one school “fails,” parents have the option of transferring their children to another “passing” school if the host school deems them worthy of joining the school.

The NCLB Act appears to have virtuous goals, superficially speaking. However, it fails miserably when accounting for larger, consequential social implications. In addition to its major oversights is the number of exploitative opportunities it presents.
Some of the oversights include issues with funding, testing and school improvement (Neill 2003). For instance, the NCLB does not authorize enough funding to meet its own requirements and assumes that schools can overcome the educational consequences of poverty and racism in its mandate to eliminate test-score gaps. For schools lagging behind in certain subject areas that are already impoverished this becomes an impossible task.

Perhaps more problematic to the NCLB’s mandate is that its “one-size-fits-all” testing strategy ignores differences among students. For example, English learners (ELs) enter the classroom with limited English proficiency, but are assessed in the same way as native English speakers under the NCLB Act (Arce et al. 2005). That is, despite apparent language differences, all EL students are tested on standardized English-only tests at grade level. As a result, the outcomes of tests that aren’t even properly assessing students’ achievement levels are being used as indicators of poor academic performance on the part of the school, teacher and student. And who loses? EL students are denied a curriculum that addresses their language needs, but rather identifies their language needs as a learning handicap.

School improvement has not been forthcoming in the resulting punitive actions taken against those schools that are deemed to be “in need of improvement” (Neill 2003). Parents are given the option of taking their children elsewhere, but there is no guarantee that space will be available for them. For example, Neill (2003) points to an issue in Chicago, where 240,000 students were in schools deemed to be “in need of improvement,” but the district said it only had 1,035 spaces available for student transfer.
This was partly due to the fact that the majority of Chicago schools were not making the AYP.

One example of an exploitative opportunity presented by the NCLB Act can be seen with its use by the U.S. government to push its recruitment agenda by requiring schools receiving funding to provide military recruiters with student names, addresses and phone numbers (Kay 2005; Aguirre and Johnson 2005). Parents have since been given the opportunity to “opt-out” their children by filing a waiver removing their child’s name from recruitment rolls. However, doing so also removes the child from mailing lists that provide information on financial resources for college (Aguirre and Johnson 2005).

Arce, et al. (2005) provide another exploitative example, by discussing who profits from the NCLB Act. The authors show how the need for standardized testing (mandated by the Act) serves as another profitable niche by providing educational publishing companies with the opportunity to hold a market monopoly on testing materials. This monopoly has provided limited choice when it comes to teaching materials. It also utilizes the concept of a “captive audience” by presenting choice bits of information to students. In effect, social reproduction of the consumer culture becomes institutionalized as the creative processes involved with learning are sacrificed for the efficiency of teaching to the test. The schools that are pushed into these “quick-fix” solutions for test prep are predominantly in what Arce, et al. (2005: 61) describe as “lower-income neighborhoods with culturally and linguistically diverse populations.”

Thus, it seems that the poor and disadvantaged children are forced to bear the brunt of the
social cost, and continue to be stereotyped in public education as non-learners, e.g. students who bring down a school’s test scores.

*The DREAM Act*

The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act of 2007 grants, “conditional permanent resident status” for undocumented minors who agree to attend college or serve in the military. The Act calls for the satisfaction of six provisions and addresses an “alien” minor who: 1) entered the U.S. prior to his or her sixteenth birthday and has been present in the country for at least five years prior to the enactment of the Act; 2) has “good” moral character; 3) is not deportable under the Immigration and Nationality Act; 4) at the time of application, has been admitted to an institution of higher education, or has earned a high school degree of the equivalent; 5) from the age of 16 and older, has never been under a final order of deportation; and 6) is under 30 years old on the date of the enactment of the Act (Library of Congress 2009).

Proponents of the Act have lobbied across a wide spectrum. The National Immigration Law Center (2005) maintains that the economic benefits will far outweigh any consequences by contending that the passage of the DREAM Act will reduce dropout rates, create a legal workforce, reward character, increase income and have a positive fiscal impact. The total estimated earnings of DREAM Act beneficiaries over the course of their working lives would be between $1.4 trillion and $3.6 trillion dollars (North American Integration and Development Center 2010). In addition, passage of the DREAM Act could lower the U.S. government’s deficit by $1.4 billion dollars and increasing government revenue by $2.2 billion dollars within a decade of its passage.
From a neoliberal perspective, the DREAM Act’s benefits will reduce potential social tensions, as a result, increasing efficiency and predictability in social behavior. To this end, the DREAM Act functions as a vehicle for economic efficiency.

Many researchers have also looked at the Act’s potential to provide a source for the pool of available military recruits. Currently, only citizens and noncitizens who are legal residents and possess green cards qualify to serve in the military (Bender 2007). However, with the passage of the Act, 279,000 youths ages 18 – 24 would immediately qualify for “conditional legal status” (Migration Policy Institute 2006). Enlistment would make undocumented youths eligible for the Z visa, which would grant them probationary citizenship until their time is served (Bender 2007). Although only some individuals would meet the criteria for the DREAM Act, even a 10 percent recruitment rate would equal a full year’s worth of new military recruits. A shortage of bodies does not seem problematic, as 715,000 undocumented children aged 5 – 17 years will soon come of age and replenish the pool (Migration Policy Institute 2006).

Despite being offered a choice between college and the military, it is projected that a large portion of the 279,000 potential beneficiaries may choose the military route. This path may be a more attractive alternate choice, “as it offers college tuition and job training benefits, as well as for patriotic reasons” (Migration Policy Institute 2005: 5). A survey conducted in 2004 found that 45 percent of Hispanic males and 31 percent of Hispanic females aged 16 to 21 years reported that they were “very likely” or “likely” to serve in active duty over the next few years (Migration Policy Institute 2005). This was compared to 24 percent of white males and 10 percent of white females.
Critics of the Act question its fairness and claim that it is nothing more than amnesty:

The illegal alien who applies for this amnesty is immediately rewarded with ‘conditional’ lawful permanent resident (green card) status, which can be converted to a non-conditional green card in short order. The alien can then use his newly acquired status to seek green cards for his parents who brought him in illegally in the first place. In this way, it is a backdoor amnesty for the millions of illegal aliens who brought their children to the United States (Kobach cited in “No DREAM at All” 2007: A18).

References to border security are also made, as the Act is viewed as a threat to national security:

The border needs to be secured first, and then we’ll talk about the problems caused by the total lack of coherent and consistent enforcement over the last two generations of immigration law. If we stop the bleeding at the borders, then we can have rational discussion of the solutions (Zoller 2007: 1).

What is perhaps most interesting about these critical views is that they don’t end with public opinion. Ironically, for example, the Department of Defense openly supports the Act, while the Department of Homeland Security opposes it (“No DREAM at All” 2007).

Several versions of the Act have been introduced in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Thus far, it has failed to pass. However, with the instalment of President Obama, there has been a renewed push (Dervarics 2008).

Organizations supporting it see this as an opportunity to advocate its passage to a sympathetic administration. Despite public debates, the Act is receiving bipartisan support. The last version was debated by senators in 2007 and was only 8 votes short of overcoming a filibuster by senators opposed to it (Library of Congress 2009).
The DREAM Act as Neoliberal Practice

With staunch endorsements from over 900 organizations nationwide, the DREAM Act appears to promote a better quality of life for immigrants by providing access to education and citizenship (Democracy in Action 2005). Proponents argue that it represents a more humane policy, inclusive of all citizens, both documented and undocumented. For all intents and purposes, it seems to be more about human dignity, inclusion and basic rights.

The DREAM Act is an example of neoliberal exercise because it links citizenship to military service via the public education system. In this sense, public education is used as a “bait and switch” tactic that lures unsuspecting consumers (alien immigrant youth) into the exchange, only to switch the outcome or product into something more profitable to the seller (U.S. government). The outcome or product that proves to be more profitable to the neoliberal hawker is the pool of potential military recruits. The promise of a “pathway to citizenship” by the U.S. government transforms the DREAM Act into a custom designed product for alien immigrant youth. (For a discussion on how product customization has become a trend for making customers believe their tastes and desires are being met by corporations, see: Bernhardt, Liu and Serfes 2007). It appeals to the dreams of immigrant youth to have membership in a society they have lived in most of their lives but which has rejected their identity.

A more modern twist to this “bait and switch” approach involves convincing buyers that they own the product and can customize to fit their whims. Advertising messages can now be tailored based upon particular characteristics and this is made
possible, in large part, by the Internet (Bernhardt, et al. 2007). This provides an illusory sense of control in the exchange process and allows consumers to believe they are receiving the better end of the deal. Bernhardt, et al. (2007) examine the effects of product customization on profit. They find that product customization can raise profits if brand names are weak. This can easily be applied to the proposal and sale of the DREAM Act. The “brand name” (The DREAM Act) in this case is constituted by a promise of a future identity that entails membership in society via military service (a patriotic duty) – a true heroic act of membership in giving up one’s life for society. Thus, the Act is presented as a customized “product” that answers to the specific needs of a large demographic like the alien immigrant youth population in the United States. All that’s left is for youth to believe in the dream’s promises to buy it.

The DREAM Act can also be seen as a part of a neoliberal agenda that seeks to blend alien immigrant youth into a framework that promotes social stability. In this framework, immigrant youth must be altered in order for them to fit into society. Once remodeled, they are offered a streamlined path toward citizenship. Thus, the process becomes standard and efficient, turning children into finished products fresh off the globalized factory’s assembly line. In addition, it legitimizes immigrant children as valuable commodities in U.S. society.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter I have tried to illustrate how neoliberal ideology is found in public education and how it serves as a guiding strategy for the DREAM Act. Neoliberal ideology seeks to promote efficiency, increased productivity, and greater accountability
in public education. I used the DREAM Act in this chapter as an example of how public education can be used as a vehicle for transitioning immigrant children into productive corporate roles via the military. One might say that neoliberalism seeks to increase the importance of corporate identities for societal efficiency by deemphasizing personal differences in society. If this is the case then the DREAM Act is an expression of neoliberal ideology that seeks to transition alien immigrant youth into a homogeneous culture and social order. And is this not what most Americans desire for immigrants – their invisibility in or absence from U.S. society?

The DREAM Act remains a dream. Legislative actions in Congress have not been successful in passing a version of the Act by both the Senate and the House of Representatives. Since its introduction in the Congress in 2001, the DREAM Act has undergone various changes in an effort to attract votes in Congress. The latest version in 2013 aimed to provide immigration benefits to those who arrived in the United States as children, before the age of 16 and who have been residing in the U.S. continuously for at least five years prior to the Bill being enacted into law. Failure of the Bill to pass in Congress can be attributed to the Bill being attached as a rider to another bill, such as a defense appropriations bill, instead of being presented as a single bill.

Congress’ inability to find bipartisan support for the DREAM Act legislation has moved some states to pass their own versions of the DREAM Act. So far, 12 states have passed their version of the DREAM Act. A common focus shared by 10 of the states is on making higher education more affordable for undocumented immigrants. The DREAM Acts passed in Maryland and Nebraska apply to all students not just
undocumented immigrants. Following is a list of the states and a summary of the DREAM Acts they passed.

The California DREAM Act allows qualified students to pay the same tuition and fees as California residents at public colleges and universities. It also allows undocumented students to apply for and receive private scholarships, state financial aid, university grants, and community college fee waivers. Applicants to the DREAM Act waiver must meet the following conditions:

- Has Attended a California high school for at least three years
- Possess one of the following: California high school diploma, California GED, or have passed the California High School Proficiency Exam (CHSPE)
- Be enrolled in an accredited California institution of higher education
- Must fill out an affidavit stating that they will file for legal immigration status as soon as they are eligible to do so

Illinois’s DREAM Act makes it the first state in the country to have a private scholarship fund for undocumented students. The state’s DREAM Act helps families of students plan for college by giving them access to the Treasurer’s College Savings Pool and the Illinois Prepaid Tuition Plan. It also requires high school counselors to be informed about undocumented students’ higher education options. Applicants must have:

- Attended an Illinois high school for at least three years, or received a GED or high school diploma equivalent
- Have resided with parents/guardians while attending high school in Illinois
• Have at least one parent who immigrated to the U.S.

The DREAM Acts passed in the states of Kansas, Massachusetts, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin provides in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants who meet the requirements:

• Have attended a state high school for at least three years
• Have graduated from a state high school, or received a state GED
• Must sign an affidavit stating that they will file for legal status when eligible to do so

New Mexico’s Dream Act provides in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants who meet the following requirements:

• Have attended a New Mexico high school for at least one year
• Have graduated from a New Mexico high school or obtained a New Mexico GED

New York’s DREAM Act provides in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants who meet the following requirements:

• Have attended a New York high school for at least two years
• Have graduated from a New York high school or obtained a New York GED
• Have applied for college within five years of high school graduation or GED obtainment
• Sign an affidavit stating that they will apply for legal status when they are eligible to do so

Utah’s DREAM Act provides in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants who meet the following requirements:

• Have attended a Utah high school for at least three years
• Have graduated from a Utah high school or received a Utah GED
• Have registered as an incoming student at an institution of higher education no earlier than fall 2002
• Sign an affidavit stating that they will apply for legal status when they are eligible to do so

On June 15th, 2012 the Obama administration issued a memorandum, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) that instructed the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to practice prosecutorial discretion towards persons who immigrated to the United States as children and were living in the country illegally (Fiflis 2013; Kelly 2012). DACA does not confer lawful immigration status, alter a person’s existing immigration status, nor provide a pathway to citizenship. DACA was the Obama administration response to Congress’ failed efforts to pass the DREAM Act and to grant residency to young illegal immigrants who have attended college or served in the military. Persons who apply to DACA must meet the following requirements:
• Been under the age of 31 on June 15, 2012
• Arrived in the United States before reaching their 16th birthday
• Continuously resided in the United States from June 15, 2007 (last five years) to the present
• Been physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, as well as at the time of requesting deferred action from USCIS
• Entered without inspection before June 15, 2012, or had any lawful immigration status expired on or before June 15, 2012
• Been in school at the time of application, or have already graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, or have obtained a GED certificate, or been honorably discharged from the U.S. Coast Guard or the U.S. Armed Forces
• Not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety

DACA is a temporary status that protects undocumented immigrant youth from deportation. It does not place undocumented immigrant youth on the pathway to citizenship or permanent residency. However, DACA recipients will be able to apply for a work permit and for driver licenses in some states. Because DACA recipients must re-apply to the program every two years they run the risk of losing their DACA status and facing possible deportation if their re-application is denied. DACA is an excellent example of neoliberal ideology because it incorporates undocumented immigrant youth into corporate work roles by issuing them work permits and transforms them into
consumers (e.g. car insurance policies) by making driver licenses available to them. DACA does all this without implementing procedures for providing them membership into U.S. society. In the end, DACA does not alleviate the status of undocumented immigrant youth as “bodies out of place.”
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APPENDIX A

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, a.k.a. The Simpson-Mazzoli Act (An act to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to revise and reform the immigration laws, and for other purposes)

S. 1200; Pub.L. 99-603; 100 Stat. 3359.
99th Congress; November 6, 1986

SUMMARY

The Immigration Reform and Control Act was passed and signed into law on November 6, 1986. The purpose of this legislation was to amend, revise, and reform/re-assess the status of unauthorized immigrants set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act. The content of this bill is overwhelming and is divided into many sections such as control of unauthorized immigration, legalization and reform of legal immigration. The focus of this summary will be on the legalization aspect of the bill.

This bill gave unauthorized aliens the opportunity to apply and gain legal status if they met mandated requirements. The fate or status of all those who applied fell into the hands of “Designated Entities” and finally the U.S. Attorney General. Applicants had to prove that they lived and maintained a continuous physical presence in the U.S. since January 1st, 1982, possess a clean criminal record, and provide proof of registration within the Selective Service. Moreover, applicants had to meet minimal knowledge requirements in U.S. history, government and the English language or be pursuing a course of study approved by the Attorney General.

This bill also outlined previsions for temporary residents’ travel, employment, false statements, numerical limitations, adjustments for status and treatment of applications by “Designated Entities”. Furthermore, after an applicant was assigned a legal status or
deemed a temporary lawful resident, they were disqualified from receiving all forms of public welfare assistance for five years. The rules for applications and welfare assistance did not apply to Cuban or Haitian immigrants.

KEY FEATURES of the LEGISLATION

1) required employers to attest to their employees' immigration status;
2) made it illegal to hire or recruit illegal immigrants knowingly;
3) legalized certain seasonal agricultural illegal immigrants, and;
4) legalized illegal immigrants who entered the United States before January 1, 1982 and had resided there continuously with the penalty of a fine, back taxes due, and admission of guilt; candidates were required to prove that they were not guilty of crimes, that they were in the country before January 1, 1982, and that they possessed minimal knowledge about U.S. history, government, and the English language.

SOURCE: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
The DREAM Act is bipartisan legislation that addresses the situation of young people who grew up in the United States and have graduated from U.S. high schools, but whose future is circumscribed by current immigration laws. Under current law, these young people generally derive their immigration status solely from their parents, and if their parents are undocumented or in immigration limbo, most have no mechanism to obtain legal residency, even if they have lived most of their lives in the U.S. The DREAM Act would provide such a mechanism for those who are able to meet certain conditions.

The latest version of the DREAM Act, also known as the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act, was introduced on May 11, 2011, in the Senate (S. 952) by Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL) and 32 fellow senators, and in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1842) by Reps. Howard Berman (D-CA), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA).

The DREAM Act would enact two major changes in current law:

The DREAM Act would permit certain immigrant students who have grown up in the U.S. to apply for temporary legal status and to eventually obtain permanent legal status and become eligible for U.S. citizenship if they go to college or serve in the U.S. military;

AND

The DREAM Act would eliminate a federal provision that penalizes states that provide in-state tuition without regard to immigration status.

If enacted, the DREAM Act would have a life-changing impact on the students who qualify, dramatically increasing their average future earnings—and consequently the
amount of taxes they would pay—while significantly reducing criminal justice and social services costs to taxpayers.

KEY FEATURES OF THE DREAM ACT OF 2011

Path to legal residency: Who would qualify?

Under the DREAM Act, most students who came to the U.S. at age 15 or younger at least five years before the date of the bill’s enactment and who have maintained good moral character since entering the U.S. would qualify for conditional permanent resident status upon acceptance to college, graduation from a U.S. high school, or being awarded a GED in the U.S. Students would not qualify for this relief if they had committed crimes, were a security risk, or were inadmissible or removable on certain other grounds. Under the Senate bill qualifying students must be under age 35, whereas under the House bill they must be under age 32.

Conditional Permanent Resident Status

Conditional permanent resident status would be similar to lawful permanent resident status, except that it would be awarded for a limited duration—six years under normal circumstances—instead of indefinitely.

Students with conditional permanent resident status would be able to work, drive, go to school, and otherwise participate normally in day-to-day activities on the same terms as other Americans, except that generally they would not be able to travel abroad for lengthy periods and they would not be eligible for Pell Grants or certain other federal financial aid grants. They would, however, be eligible for federal work study and student loans, and states would not be restricted from providing their own financial aid to these
students. Time spent by young people in conditional permanent resident status would count towards the residency requirements for naturalization.

**Requirements to Lift the Condition and Obtain Regular Lawful Permanent Resident Status**

At the end of the conditional period, unrestricted lawful permanent resident status would be granted if, during the conditional period, the immigrant had maintained good moral character, avoided lengthy trips abroad, and met at least one of the following criteria:

- Graduated from a two-year college or certain vocational colleges, or studied for at least two years toward a B.A. or higher degree, or
- Served in the U.S. armed forces for at least two years.

The six-year time period for meeting these requirements would be extendable upon a showing of good cause, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would be empowered to waive the requirements altogether if compelling reasons, such as disability, prevent their completion and if removal of the student would result in exceptional and extremely unusual hardship to the student or to the student’s spouse, parent, or child.

**In-state Tuition: Restore State Option**

The DREAM Act would also repeal section 505 of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), which currently discourages states from providing in-state tuition or other higher education benefits without regard to immigration status. Under section 505, states that provide a higher education benefit based on residency to undocumented immigrants must provide the same benefit to U.S. citizens in the same circumstances, regardless of their state of residence.
Since section 505 became law, twelve states have enacted laws permitting anyone, including undocumented immigrants, who attended and graduated from high school in the state to pay the in-state rate at public colleges and universities. The twelve states are California, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin. These states all pay the section 505 penalty by providing the same in-state discount rate to current residents of other states who previously went to high school and graduated in the state. The DREAM Act would repeal this penalty. This would not require states to provide in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants, but rather would restore this decision to the states without encumbrance.

SOURCE: National Immigration Law Center
President Obama and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that certain individuals without lawful status, who were brought to the United States before their 16th birthday and were under age 31 on June 15, 2012, may request discretionary relief in the form of deferred action and employment authorization. On August 15, 2012 the USCIS (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services) released forms and instructions related to the new process; it also began accepting requests for deferred action on the same date. To request consideration, individuals must submit Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals to USCIS, accompanied by a Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization (including relevant filing fees), and a Form I-765WS, Worksheet, establishing economic need for employment.

Deferred action is a discretionary form of relief that defers removal from the United States. It does not confer lawful status upon an individual. Individuals granted relief under this program will be eligible for employment authorization if they can demonstrate “an economic necessity for employment” and DHS retains the right to terminate or renew deferred action at the agency’s discretion. A grant of deferred action will not excuse previous periods of unlawful presence, nor will it provide a path to permanent residence or citizenship. It will also not grant derivative benefits (i.e. to immediate relatives or dependents); each individual potentially eligible must qualify independently for deferred action. Individuals potentially eligible must:
• Be under age 31 on July 15, 2012
• Have come to the United States before their 16th birthday
• Have continuously resided in the U.S. since June 15, 2007, up to the present time
• Have been physically present in the U.S. on June 15, 2012, and at the time of their request for deferred action
• Have entered without inspection before June 15, 2012, or have had their lawful immigration status expire before June 15, 2012
• Be currently enrolled in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from a high school, have obtained a GED certificate, or have been honorably discharged from the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States
• Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, three or more other misdemeanors, and not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety

SOURCE: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services