

Received: 2 September 2021 Accepted: 12 September 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v19i1.1796>

Double-Edged Roots: Two Advance-Parole ‘Dacamented’ Mexican Women Visiting Their Country of Birth

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Abstract

This article explores the experience of two young migrant women protected under DACA visiting Mexico within the advance parole program in 2017. It builds on qualitative research fieldwork conducted in Mexico and the US in 2018. This article discusses how they reconnected with their country of birth, after living caged in the US as children and teenagers and reinforced their sense of belonging to the US. This paper stresses their different experiences depending on the age of emigration, because of the memories that the young people may have endured of family and places. As other studies have documented, the short stay helped the young women understand the reasons that led their parents to emigrate and reinforced a sense of belonging to the US as they underpin their identification with Mexico, and it also helped build direct ties with their kinship. The paper concludes with the idea of double-edged roots to the ancestral homeland, because as the short visit to Mexico reinforces the idea that although Mexico is the country in which they do embrace an emotional kinship, it is not the country in which they feel embedded to achieve their life, their promised land is the US.

Keywords: *Young migrants; return migration; transnationalism; Guanajuato; Mexico*

“I believe that after I went to Mexico, I feel binational (...) but to return, to really return and stay permanently, I would have to be deported.”

(Laura).

“I think I feel more Mexican, but I also feel American. Many people tell me that I can't feel American because I am undocumented, but papers are just a piece of paper (...) but to return, I think that my parents would have to be deported (...) If it were my decision to return, it would be when I could have the facility to come and go.

(Leticia)

Introduction

Leticia and Laura² are part of the generation that migrated to the United States after the operation blockage took place in 1993. The policy with which the US have sought to restraint Mexican labor migration and which de-structured the cross-border male circulation flows. This resulted on the unexpected rise of irregular family reunification, including the migration of children, the so-called 1.5 generation (Alarcon, 2011; Rumbaut, 2004). They are protected by the Deferral Action for Childhood Arrival (DACA), and they were part of the Advance Parole Program that let them leave the US for 30 days. As about 750-900 thousand Mexican-

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² We use the interviewees first names with their authorization.



born children who could apply for DACA (Bruno, 2021), they grew up, socialized, and are unable to even think about leaving the US not only for the lack of papers to temporarily visit a birthland, but mainly because they grew up, socialized, and feel embedded to their American communities. Young Mexicans in the U.S. have deployed a repertoire of identities different from that of their parents, as their life trajectories have made it harder for them to maintain personal transnational contacts with their birth-land and their kinship, so they could be structuring a new profile of Mexican immigrants in the U.S.

Research on young undocumented immigrants in the United States has evolved in line with the political circumstances in that country. In Mexico, scholars have focus on these children coming back to Mexico seeking access to higher education (Ángel, 2013), joining specific niches in the Mexican labor market, (Da Cruz M. , 2014; Da Cruz M. , 2018; Serna-Gutiérrez & Mora-Pablo, 2018; Mora-Pablo, 2020; Meza-González & Orraca Romano, 2020), facing a subjective trajectory (Sandoval & Hirai, 2016) to reinforce their identification to an unknown birth-country, and learning how to become a 'Mexican of Mexico' from their identification as 'a Mexican of the US' (Vila-Freyer, 2021). In the US, scholars have focused on the differing assimilation patterns of the so-called 1.5 generation in that country. In short, the young people who were brought as children to the United States, socialized in that country, completed their basic studies (K-12), learned to be citizens, erase in an irregular situation after completion of adolescence, or to 'awaken to the nightmare' of the lack of opportunities due to their undocumented situation (Gonzales R. G., 2012; Gonzales & Sigona, 2017), and live liminal lives (Menjívar, 2006) in the country they feel as home.

Some have gotten protection of DACA since 2012. The executive order called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals emitted by the administration of Barack Obama (2009-2017), after Obama was named *Deporter-in-chief*, and young migrants mobilized demanding his government honoring his electoral promises to them (Ortiz Domínguez, 2018; Roth, 2018; De la O, 2017). The program protected from deportation to young undocumented immigrants of the 1.5 generation, who after satisfying several requirements let them count on a two-year renewable protection, a Social Security number, driver's license, work permit, bank account, and credit history, among other things. DACA allowed social and economic mobility for young adults who won access to limited financial and institutional resources (Gonzales, Ellis, Rendon-Garcia, & Brant, 2018). It also changed their status from undocumented aliens to DACAdocumented immigrants without a path to citizenship. DACA recipients could also "apply for a special permission, called Advance Parole, to travel outside the US for educational, work, or humanitarian reasons" (Ruth, Estrada, & Vázquez-Ramos, 2019); an opportunity they can get, after paying a fee, for a 30-day journey, several times and even for multiple entrances while their DACA permit is valid.³

The USCIS' December 31, 2020 data indicate that there were approximately 636,390 DACA recipients, 80% of which are from Mexico, more than 1 in 4 live in California, 53% are female and largely unmarried, with a median age of 26 (Bruno, 2021, pags. 22-23). As of August 21, 2017, about 45,447 DACA recipients were approved for advance parole, and 22,340 have been approved on December 31, 2015 (Bruno, 2021). Donald Trump's administration (2017-

³ As expressed by members of the group Advance Parole through DACA in Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/alumnifriends>), some youngsters have applied several times for leaving the US and visit their birth-land and, demonstrating they are on medical treatment in Mexico, they have gained access to a permit for multiple entrances. They pay about \$500 USD for the permit, and spent a mean of \$3,000USD during their sojourn in Mexico.



2021) tried to rescind DACA and access to advance parole was limited in September 2017 until December 2020, when a court-order reinstated both programs. As of January 2021, as soon as Joseph Biden (2021-2025) took office, applications for advance parole and visits to Mexico resumed.

So, gaining access to Advance Parole's migrants gave us access to the experience lived by some youngsters during their short visit to Mexico. They explained how they must confront the lack of knowledge of Mexican cultural codes or to feeling like American tourists in their birth-country. The Mexico closer to them arose during their visit to their families and communities. There, they faced how much they have lost of their markers of kinship, culture, and community belonging. Therefore, it is worth asking whether, strictly speaking, are these youngsters returning to their homeland or just visiting their country of birth? How did they experience their interaction with Mexican society? How has their life in the United States influenced their bonding with Mexico?

In this context, this article discusses the cases following two sets of literature: the notion of return migration and that of transnational relations. Regarding the first one, the cases presented involve young people who literally left their usual place of residence to make a short visit to their country of birth, in the opposite sense of the definition of the return migrant (King, 2000). The sole fact that young people were taken as children to the United States, and have socialized there, blurs the possibility of literally rejoining the definition of return migration as it explains their parents' experience. The second point refers to the transnational relationships of the 1.5 generation migrants. In the traditional definition of transnationalism, that is, the social spaces that link countries of origin and destination with which migrants maintain continuous links with their families, communities, and other social groups (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992), which sustain social networks cultivated by adult migrants who have effectively socialized in those communities *before* leaving them (King & Christou, 2011). However, following a different path, Leticia and Laura -and members of the 1.5 generation caged in the US- have only had the opportunity to form those bonds *after* a short visit to their birth-land. Paroled DACA holders transited from their parents' mediated relationship with family and culture to create their own intergenerational ties once in their birth-towns, and in some cases maintain them once back to their homeland, the USA, a home-country they only plan to leave if forced to.

The experiences of Leticia and Laura, however, were also affected by the age of their first emigration. As Leticia, who emigrate at the age of 9, most of her experience in Mexico reinforced her own memories of the country and the bonds to her family. In Laura's experience, who emigrate at 3 months of age, her ties with Mexico were new, and helped her understand their parents' decision to leave in search of a better live in the US leaving their family and culture behind. Both cases coincide with most of the findings of Ruth and Estrada on how this visit "helped them recognize their American markers of identity and the hidden privilege that living in the US has afforded them that they did not know they had prior to their trip" (Ruth, Estrada, and Vázquez 2019). They also crafted a sense of a bi-nationality as "undocumented youth in the US grow up feeling that they have hybrid or in-between identities, uncertain whether to identify themselves as either Mexican or American because they feel as neither fully (...) however, leaving the US to reconnect with their ethnic homeland allows for the reconciliation of both identities, despite still not being able to legally call themselves American" (Ruth, Estrada y Vázquez, 2019) which is the country they belong. As

the authors show “the visit to Mexico has also helped them to understand better the reasons they parents had had to move out of their birth country” (Ruth, Estrada y Vázquez, 2019).

All these, let us argue the visit to the ancestral land have a double-edged result for them. On one hand, it reinforced their personal social bonds and boundaries after interacting with their birthland and recognizing their kinship values; on the other hand, it also strengthened their roots and belonging in the US, as the country they would leave only deported. Some of their personal boundaries and check points that create their mapping of their identification as Mexicans in the US. As they reject leaving the US voluntary, the promised land is not Mexico, but the US, where they recognize themselves as a person of Mexican origin living in their homeland; or they just “live with their roots on the wrong side of their lives” (Zuñiga, 2012).

The paper continues presenting the Methodology of a fieldwork where we found the two cases discussed here. Then, we will discuss some of the points of the return migration literature and transnationalism to address how some of the presumptions help to explain an adult-centered, labor return migration, and not necessarily the experiences lived by the 1.5 (or 0.5) generation visiting their birth country. We will support our argument presenting the experienced narrated by Leticia and Laura, to discuss the results and offer some conclusions.

Methodology

This work is the outcome of a project whose fieldwork was conducted between May and October 2018 in Mexico and in the United States, when the DACA program was at risk of being eliminated at the initiative of the Trump administration, and the Advance Parole permits suspended. The research aims to identify how young migrants of Mexican origin -citizens, documented, undocumented or DACAdmented, returned, voluntarily or not, to Mexico-define their sense of belonging to Mexico and the United States, the elements that make them feel a country as their home, as well as the elements that they imagine would create, or in fact have created, more difficulties for them in readjusting to Mexico. During the field-work we completed 54 semi-structured interviews (35 in the USA and 19 in Mexico) with Mexican young migrants in Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles with the support of Casas Guanajuato in those cities; interviewees in the US were between 15 and 28 years old. In Mexico, interviews took place in León, Celaya, and San Miguel Allende, with the support of Dream in Mexico, A.C.; interviewees ages ranged from 23 to 35.

This work builds on the exercise conducted in the United States. In the interviews, we sought to explore into the migration trajectory of the young people, how being a migrant has influenced their lives, the special skills they identify as having acquired in comparison to the young people they study or work with, as well as how they define the elements that determine their sense of belonging to Mexico and to the United States. These themes served us to conduct open coding to identify the features that they believe make a country home. These elements as well as the ones they perceive they would need if they were forced to return to Mexico, allow us to understand the reasons why they do not want to migrate to Mexico and how they conceive of their country of birth after having been socialized in the United States. It is important to recall that the interviews were done 8 months after the Trump administration tried to rescind DACA, blocked Advance Parole travels for youngsters protected by the deferred action, no new applications were allowed, and menaced to deport about 700,000 youngsters protected then by DACA. All but one of the interviews in the United States were conducted in Spanish, a language that the young people speak fluently, are



very proud of doing so, and have studied in school in order not to lose their ability to speak it. All interviews were recorded and verbatim transcript.

In the interviews conducted in the United States we found Leticia and Laura, who during the interview talked about a visit to Mexico that took place in 2017, within the Advance Parole program. They were sponsored by the US-Mexico Foundation and local organizations in Chicago and Los Angeles. These cases gave us the opportunity to visualize how a temporary visit to Mexico, after having lived caged in the United States all their lives, reinforced ties of identification with the country of birth, facilitated transnational intergenerational bonding with her family, and allowed Laura to understand the reasons why her parents originally emigrated. It is important to note that the experiences narrated by these young women were influenced by the age of original departure, as Leticia had memories of her life in Mexico prior to emigrating.

Returning to the homeland or visiting the birth country?

Return migration is a topic seldom studied in international migration. In general, it is difficult to know whether return implies the end of a personal migratory project, or just a moment in the individual's migratory history. It has been defined as "the process by which people return to their country or place of origin after a significant period in another country or region" (King, 2000, pag. 8). According to Cassarino (2004), a discourse has been created around return migration in which return migration appears as one and the same thing, affecting the study of the different categories of existing migrants, with the different reasons for return, which has caused to lose sight of the motivations for return, its temporality or permanence, as well as the resources mobilized in the process. As the author relies on the theory of social networks to explain the mobilization of resources, the exchange of information based on the involvement of the migrant in his/her networks to prepare the return (Cassarino, 2004, pag. 259). Through the networks, a line of continuity can be identified between the knowledge and exchange of experiences between the host community and the community of origin. As if upon return, the migrant only changed his place within the different nodes of his social network, in a continuous line of an individual migratory history linking communities of origin and destination (Hirai, 2013, pag. 99).

For this reason, the old typologies proposed by King (2000) and Cassarino (2004) share the adult-centered, labor, breadwinner, first generation migrant who is settle in the US or in a destination country. These analytical approaches ignore 1.5 generations particular experiences, age of migration, socialization of young migrants, their sense of belonging to their 'home abroad', the birth-country. All the works share some fundamental issues: first, before emigrating, migrants have socialized and gained membership to their hometowns and a sense of belonging in the birth-country. Second, during their *séjour* abroad, migrants feature transnational bonding and reinforce social networks through temporary stays in hometowns, linking destination and origin in the same migratory network, in which they move from one node to another. Three, the migrant's family -wife, but mainly children who socialized in the destination countries- must share the same theoretical rationalization of their particular experience than their father, and they automatically include his migratory experience instead of performing their own (Vila-Freyer, 2021).

King and Christou (2011, pp. 358-360) acknowledge limitations on the theoretical explanation of second-generation migrant return and propose a new typology. One that includes: First, a

short-term return visits, which range from a couple of days to a summer vacation. Second, *the dynamics of return mobilities as the link between return visits and longer-term relocation*, where temporary visits are the “rite of passage” to a more permanent situation. Third, *the specific return mobilities of childhood*, where parents take their young children to their kin homeland. Fourth, *a second-generation return migration as an adult* is a specific migration “of the host-country-born second generation to the country whence their parents emigrated, this return taking place in adulthood (usually as youngish adults) and independent of their parents (...) the return might be part of family return, either taking place simultaneously with other family members, or following them, or in anticipation of them following on sooner or later” (King & Christou, 2011, p. 359). Fifth, the ancestral return, both visits and definitive relocation, and sixth, *to problematise the nature and location of return*. “The question to be asked is ‘Return to where, precisely?’ Back to the ancestral village? (...) or back to a town or city in the homeland which offers better social life and employment chances?” (King & Christou, 2011, p. 360)

This new typology takes as given on the most important issue at stake for DACamented youth: the lack of legal belonging in the United States, and by extension, the incapacity of this generation to periodically visit ‘the ancestral homeland’. Secondly, the ongoing struggle they are engaged in to achieve legal permanence in the United States has set their focus on this country which they consider home, and not their country of birth which they identify as their parent’s homeland. This implies not only the impossibility of periodically visiting their ‘ancestral homeland’, but it has also turned Mexico into a sort of political capital (Mateos, 2015) that they would only rely on when all possibilities of remaining in the United States are exhausted and this country expelled them definitively. Laura and Leticia, as we will discuss in the next section, may have made a temporary and unrepeatable, for now, visit to their ancestral land in accordance with King-Christou’s typology. This created a double-edge roots of their ancestral homeland, because as Laura claims to feel binational after the visit to Mexico, but equally as she said, she would be counting each of the days of the probable period of punishment that the U.S. would impose on her if she were deported, to be able to return *home*.

The double-edge roots to their birth-land includes a reconnection with youngster’s Mexican origin, and a reinforcement of her US belonging. The US is their homeland. Therefore, the idea of country of origin must also be reconsidered beyond their legal status that would ensure their national belonging relying only in a learnt sense of belonging as children. The documented, or undocumented, stay in the US is indeed a national-centered issue and an element that forces us to include the idea of *nation* in our analysis. Because counting on legal settlement is the real issue for assuring them belonging to the US, to move between borders and boundaries, and go beyond their everyday sense of homeland as stated by King and Christou. They experience that sense of belonging, as part of the undocumented generation of 1.5 Mexicans, protected or not with DACA, mainly because the US is the only country the only country known by them yet. The young people studied in this project are constrained by the nation, close to a bio-political sense of the term.

Identification and Belonging: a temporary visit to the birth-land

This section is constructed from the experiences narrated by Leticia and Laura about their visit to Mexico in 2017. Leticia⁴ was 26 years old at the time of the interview and had lived in the United States for 17 years. She came to the US with her mother and older brother to

⁴ Interviewed on September 24, 2018, in Los Angeles.



reunite her father who had arrived in Los Angeles 18 months earlier. She and her brother are protected by DACA, her parents are undocumented. Her parents' original plan was for them to live in that country for only 2 years, so the young woman put little interest in integrating and learning the language. It wasn't until she finished high school that she realized she had to try to integrate and learn the language to progress. A year before the interview, she had completed university studies in child development and family life education. She hopes to pursue a master's degree.

Laura⁵ was 26 years old at the time of the interview and migrated to the United States at the age of 3 months. Laura's migration story began with that of her parents. Originally from a peasant indigenous community in Puebla, both parents attended a few years of elementary school. Due to her mother's early pregnancy and the economic urgencies of his new family, her father decided to migrate to Chicago where he had family settled. Three months after Laura's birth, the family was reunited in Chicago. Before separating from her mother, they had 5 more children, forming a mixed family where the parents are undocumented, Laura is DACAmented, and the 5 siblings are U.S. citizens. She attended a community college and is studying law at the University. Her goal is to take the bar exams to practice law. Unlike her siblings, Laura has taken longer to advance in her college career, although DACA has allowed her to access it. With no government financial aid, she now pays for her studies with a job at the university before she worked as a waitress.

Both women's experiences as undocumented immigrants coincide in the lived experiences of discrimination and bullying received at school, and in the difficulty to access educational support programs because they are undocumented. Both are proud of themselves because they have found the means to push their way forward, to find resources despite the difficult economic conditions of their families, to achieve their projects through personal effort and being lucky enough to find people and institutions that supported them on their integration path. Despite having DACA, the program does not ensure them access to financial resources to pay for their studies, so in addition to university studies, they must work, which delays the obtention of their degree. The migrant life has taught them to work twice as hard to get study opportunities, scholarships, access to aid programs, etc. This is how they came to Advance Parole after obtaining DACA. They both spent 3 weeks in Mexico in 2017, Leticia in August, Laura in December.

Both found difficulties in deciding to apply to the “Dreamers without Borders” Program created by the Mexico-US Foundation in the hostile antimigrant environment created by the Trump administration. They also saw it as an opportunity to (re)discover their ancestral birth-country. They enjoyed the freedom to leave the US and cross the immigration lines in Mexico and the US without any troubles, yet they were afraid that the migration officials would deny them returning home. Leticia experienced an emotional reconnection with her old memories and the experiences she had shared with her parents in their homeland before leaving their rural community in Guanajuato. Leticia recalls “*Everywhere I went I was in tears because I recalled going there with my parents [as] when I went to the ‘Villita’ and other places. It was like reliving of where I have been with my parents (...) It was very difficult to be with them [my grandmothers] for a while, to see them like that, all those years we couldn't see them, especially my parents?*”.

⁵ Interviewed on July 27, 2018, in Chicago.

For Laura, visiting her mother's family in rural Puebla helped her understand the reasons for her parents' decision to leave their communities to seek a better life and, to some extent, those that put to her in legal limbo in the United States. *"When I returned to Mexico, I felt how my parents coming here, they took away a lot of their culture, their family... They sacrificed a lot so that we could eat, have access to good schools, and improve our lives. (...) Sometimes I think about what would have happened if my mom and dad had stayed there near my grandparents and cousins, and I'd grew up where I came from (...) sometimes I think [that] if Mexico offered opportunities for the peasants, my mom could have had an education, gone to elementary and high school, gone to college if she wanted to (...) I would have preferred to grow up in Mexico, because here in the United States, there is a lot of racism. It makes me sad to see how people who are brown are treated here (...) I would like my mom to be there, for me to be there, because my family is there, and here you can call and talk to cousins but you don't know them (...) And then, when I went to Mexico, it was difficult because I felt different, I felt American (...) and it was difficult to see the differences and to feel that although I was born in Mexico and my parents are from Mexico, I was not really from Mexico and it was difficult to feel that way".*

The double-edged roots of their ancestral country

As Ruth et al have found, visiting Mexico reinforces their American Markers. It also helped them understand their parents' decision to leave. By firsthand seeing what their lives in Mexico would have been if their parents had not decided to leave made them appreciate their sacrifice (Ruth, Estrada, & Vázquez-Ramos, 2019). The experience lived are full of contradictions, discrimination in the part of family members, as well as warm welcoming. Along with the mixing feelings they experiment during their visit, they also faced their kinship sense of belonging, yet they reinforced their American cultural markers. Laura recalled *"Well once, when I went to see the wife of one of my uncles, she told me 'You are not from here just because you were here for three months'⁶ and she made me feel angry because those three months mean a lot in the United States. Here, I don't have access to so many things or rights, just those three months. She didn't understand what living in Mexico or in the United States was like. What it was like to live in Mexico with my uncles and aunts and I lacked [words] or didn't know how to say something. I think also [I was different because of] how I dressed, and then I was also a little bit chubbier than my cousins, so I also think that's why they said I eat a lot of hamburgers, or we eat things that we shouldn't. And they also wanted me to drive, but I was scared there because I didn't have permission to drive..."*

Leticia's experience was very similar. *"[In Mexico, I felt] Totally different, in the way they speak because there were times when I couldn't find the words to express myself, and because I forgot a word, they criticized me. I always felt pointed out that I was saying something wrong or that I was doing something wrong (...) I clashed with their values all the time. [I imagine that my life in Mexico] would have more freedom, but I also doubt it since there are many people that [when] they know that you are coming from here, they treat you differently, even though they are your own people they treat you differently. I experienced that last year. They look at you and say 'oh you come from the United States, or you believe you are more and that' when you are returning to your country with your people and the least you want is to make a person feel bad (...). But they see you as a threat, that you are going from here, and you have all 'these qualities that are being sought there' [in the labor market] and that you are going to take their job [it is like what is said here about migrants] yes, that's how it is! I feel that as we criticize or discriminate against people here, they do it over there with the people who travel from here."*

⁶ Laura talked about a three-month visit, that took place in December 2017. However, it might have a confusion on words because AP permissions are usually for 30 days. We keep the word month because it is recorded like that.



So, the ancestral homeland is a place where inclusion and emotion intersect with discrimination, and mistrust on the part of closer members of the family. As Leticia and Laura say, *They don't understand what the situation is like here for us*. Before visiting their families, part of their trip was guided by the Foundation where they received instructions on how to protect themselves from discrimination and robbery, that they should try not to use English, or say they were American. For Leticia the places visited recalled her memories of experiences lived with her parents before. Laura reinforced their American cultural markers as security, political activism and organization in which she is engaged so *"I felt like a tourist in Mexico City; I felt like a tourist also in Puebla or Michoacán. In the big group we went to different places and then in the group they were showing us all these places, but I knew that if I decided to return to Mexico at that moment, I was not going to live like that, eating the food that I was eating, staying in hotels, and all. I also saw how people were begging for money in the streets, and all those things made me think that they were just showing us the nice things about Mexico. They didn't show us what was really going on in Mexico politically. In the US we heard about the students that were slaughtered in Ayotzinapa, that the government is so corrupt... I met a congresswoman from Puebla, but I didn't know how to criticize that reality in front of her. I know that in the United States, we can do criticize politicians, and what we must know to hold them accountable. I did not feel comfortable doing it with the congresswoman from Puebla, or other people from the government, because I did not know the system. So yes, I was not knowing a real Mexico."*

Their temporary visit strengthened their U.S. cultural markers (Ruth, Estrada, & Vázquez-Ramos, 2019) and their sense of belonging to an US political culture, their empowerment as women and activists, and their ability to organize in associations to advocate for theirs and their community's rights, which are simply not part of Mexican culture or values. All elements that would become social remittances (Levitt, 1998) should they be living a factual returning to their ancestral homeland. They would also need support for improving their belonging to Mexico such as language skills, their settlement needs as housing, finding jobs, and facing the frustration of not receiving fair salaries, political activism, and their commitment to fight for their rights, things they assume in the U.S. In case of a forced return, they would seek to organize support groups for people like them, as the leaders of *Dream in Mexico*, in Guanajuato, or *Otros Dreamers en Acción* in Mexico City have done.

Discussion and Conclusion

This article has examined the notion of double-edge roots to their birth-land in the light of the experience lived by two DACAmented women that won the opportunity to visit their birth-land. The evidence shows that after their visit they reconnect with their ancestral birth-land, however, they mainly reinforced their belonging to the US. As Laura and Leticia claim, after their visit they began to feel as binational persons. In their narration Mexico represents an emotional connection because the kinship relationship, intergenerational bonding with cousins, and, most importantly, their grandmothers. They also stressed the retrieval of their own family's culture and values. Family also represented the boundaries to their own personal values and American cultural markers, as family members also stressed and pointed their differences to locals.

The concept of double-edge roots to their birth-land also helps us to question the typology of King and Christou (2011) who take for granted the possibility of the return of the 1.5 generation, ignoring the current undocumented status of many of them. Laura and Leticia are part of a small group that has obtained advance parole (less than 5 percent of DACAmented

persons), to make a single-short visit to their country of birth. This trip allowed them to reconnect emotionally, but it did not change the fact that the only way they would leave the United States would be through deportation. In their view, that would imply the country in which they feel rooted would expel them, and they would rather continue to be 'citizens without papers' or with liminal lives in the country in which their roots are. Mexico becomes for them part of their political capital (Mateos, 2015) in which they have a formal belonging, and they have reinforced their kinship networks. Mexico then becomes the space to which they can potentially settle in case they are expelled from what their factual home-country is. This gives a sense of coherence to the experience lived by the young persons after a short visit to their country of birth (Ruth, Estrada, & Vázquez-Ramos, 2019), as it does to that experienced by the young people of this generation who got up-rooted, as they were deported to Mexico (Vila-Freyer, 2021).

The United States is, for them, the promised land where the 1.5 generation young migrants are embedded. As they are caged in the US and have been unable to freely circulate between countries, the origin/destination alternative becomes anecdotal, as being born in Mexico seems to be just an accident in their lives. This is particularly true when these young people try to explain their sense of belonging/identity in their countries of birth and residence. They maintain a double-edged roots with their country of birth and their country of (un)documented residency. In these situations, the nation remains the container that grants the rights of legal and permanent belonging, that raised them as citizens and then excluded them from the structure of public opportunities. They have grown up rooted and ascribed in the wrong space.

Acknowledgments

Funding for the fieldwork of this project came from *Instituto de Atención al Migrante Guanajuatense y sus Familias*. Contacts with Mexican youngsters in the EU were done through *Casas Guanajuato* in Chicago, Dallas, and Los Angeles. We would like to thank Georgina Balderas, Zuleika Gutiérrez, Sergio Aguirre, Toni Gutiérrez, and Lupita Vázquez for their invaluable support.

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