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GENDER AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF IMMIGRANTS IN A NEW
DESTINATION SITE

by

Emma Meade Earl

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Sociology

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ABSTRACT

Gender and Social Acceptance of Immigrants in a New Destination Site

by

Emma Meade Earl, Master of Science

Utah State University, 2019

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Department: Sociology, Social Work & Anthropology

In this article, I draw on secondary interview data with LatinX immigrants in Cache Valley, Utah, an emerging new destination site in the Inter-Mountain West. While immigrants are drawn to new destinations by employment opportunities, quality of life, or low cost of living, they face many challenges in integrating socially into fairly homogenous communities, which can be particularly challenging for immigrant women. This thesis analyzes the ways in which gender affects social integration in the specific cultural and demographic context of Cache Valley. Using interviews with 16 men and women, I examine gender differences in perceptions of the community, experiences of discrimination, and plans to continue to reside within the community. I find high levels of integration among both men and women. Although discrimination and racism are common experiences, many of the respondents were quick to downplay these experiences and focused instead on their overall positive assessment of the community. Women were more attuned to the experience of racism and less willing to downplay it. They also were less likely to have a long-term plan to remain in the community, but this appeared to be more related to their consideration of other family members' long-term plans, rather than

due to their experiences of discrimination. Women's integration in Cache Valley seems less problematic than in other new destinations, which may be related to demographic, geographic, and cultural factors.

(50 pages)

PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Gender and Social Acceptance of Immigrants in a New Destination Site

Emma Mead Earl

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Emma Meade Earl

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INTRODUCTION

Like many immigrants in Cache Valley, Maritza sees her adopted community as lacking in diversity—a condition that she believes has both benefits and drawbacks. While she appreciated the security and tranquility of a small community, she also noted “when there is not a lot of diversity, the brain is squared, you don’t see beyond and you think that because other people think or act differently, they are not in your good light.” Maritza’s experience highlights a well-known difficulty of immigrants settling in new destinations. While drawn there by employment opportunities, quality of life, or low cost of living, immigrants in new destinations face many challenges in integrating socially into fairly homogenous communities. Social integration into a community is defined and shaped by that community’s culture, religion, geography, and many other factors. The integration process is also different for men and women. This paper explores how immigrants’ narratives of social integration vary by gender in the specific context of Cache Valley, UT.

In the existing literature on immigrant integration, scholars have focused on differences in the integration process between new and traditional destinations, as well as on gendered experiences of integration, primarily in traditional destinations. In an initial search of the literature, I found very little research done on gendered integration processes in new destination sites. The main exception to this is research produced by Schmalzbauer and colleagues (Schmalzbaurer 2009; Schmalzbauer 2014; Garcia & Schmalzbauer 2017), which focuses on the role of gender in men’s and women’s integration experiences in a new destination site in Montana. I build on Schmalzbauer’s research by examining similar questions in a new destination with a different political,

cultural, and economic context, in order to expand the conversation on gender and integration, and to identify the role that place plays in this process. The research showed that the perceived safety and security of living in a small town was vitally important for an immigrant's sense of belonging, but that this sense of belonging for women was very dependent on their roles as wives and mothers.

Integration is an evolving term in migration literature. Broadly speaking, integration can be defined in two ways: as the process of providing stability for a social group through participation in organizations for the division of labor or public solidarity, or as the process of acculturation and "fitting in" with the rest of society (UNESCO 2019). Integration has been defined in research as a characteristic of a social system. The better a social system is integrated the better its members are able to relate to each other (Entzinger & Biezeveld 2003). Other research has critiqued commonly used definitions of "integration" as promoting a narrowly defined cultural conformity. These researchers have tried to determine a better and more inclusive approach to defining integration (Li 2003). The International Organization for Migration defines integration as a two-way, mutual process on the part of both the migrant and the new community (IOM 2018).

The literature on immigrant integration can be roughly divided into two camps. The first camp examines the economic integration of immigrants, focusing especially on occupational segregation and wage differentials between immigrants and natives (Lester & Nguyen 2016; Goodman & Wright 2015; De Paola & Brunello 2016). The second camp examines social integration, a broad category that encompasses residential segregation, marriage patterns, and participation in political and social groups, among other things (Jacobs & Till 2004; Berger et al. 2004; Sobolewska et. al. 2017;

Hainmueller et. al. 2017). There is a growing trend in looking specifically at the social capital of migrants to determine their level of social integration. This has been done by measuring community attachment or social network inclusion (Snel et. al. 2006; Jacobs & Till 2004; Wessendorf & Phillimore 2018; Augustina & Beilin 2018). This article follows this trend by defining social integration as the process through which immigrants develop a sense of belonging into the broader community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An immigrant's integration experience is shaped by a multitude of factors, including their communities of origin, legal statutes, and experiences within previous destination sites (Garcia & Schmalzbauer 2017; Oropesa & Jensen 2010).

Although there are countless factors that affect immigrants' social integration experience, gender and place are two of the main factors. Schmalzbauer has successfully studied intersections between place and gender in Montana. Her findings highlighted the roles of rurality, the gendered nature of local labor markets, and the specifics of local gender norms in shaping men's and women's integration into the local community. Examining this research raises the question of whether these factors are similar in other new destination sites, and whether there are any other prominent factors that assist or inhibit men's and women's social integration in other destinations.

Integration and Place

From 1971 to 1993, nearly 80 percent of immigrants to the U.S. settled in just five states (Massey 1995). Since then, these top five destinations for immigrants have seen a 60% drop in migration in favor of new destination sites (Massey 2008; Sanchez 2018). New destination sites include cities, towns and rural areas across the country, but particularly in the Southeast, Midwest and Intermountain West (Kandel & Cromartie 2004; Donato et. al. 2008; Singer 2004). This dramatic geographic diversification of immigration fueled a substantial body of research on the phenomenon of "new destinations." In contrast to traditional destinations, where local populations had a long history of exposure to newcomers and immigrant social networks were dense and well-established, new U.S. destinations had not seen high levels of immigration for 70 years,

or even longer (Singer 2004). Among the many questions posed about new destinations was the question of how effectively immigrants are able to integrate into new destination communities, compared to integration in traditional destinations. Different settlement locations demonstrate a variety of economic conditions, demographic makeups, histories, and cultures, along with state and local laws (Abrego & Schmalzbauer 2018). These factors will either inhibit or foster the integration process.

Where traditional destination sites are typically metropolitan, new destination sites are frequently not, which creates barriers to integration. Immigrants often live within “national boundaries drawn locally” in these smaller more rural locations, feeling the larger political and social discourse on a more tangible level (Sohoni & Mendez 2014). Many new destinations sites, especially those in non-metropolitan areas, do not have a well-developed public transportation infrastructure, which inhibits the adjustment and integration of immigrants (Bohon et al. 2008), which can create problems for building communities, accessing services, and acquiring capital.

The lack of co-ethnic communities in new destinations makes it harder for immigrants to “blend in”, creating particular problems for immigrants without documentation (Schmalzbauer 2014; Garcia & Schmalzbauer 2017). Along with this, new destination schools, while often high in quality, offer few supports to new English learners, leading to higher levels of stratification between LatinX and white students (Dondero & Muller 2012). According to Sanchez, Mexican immigrants are less likely to own homes in new destination sites, which can inhibit social, cultural and economic mobility and inclusion into the community (Sanchez 2018).

Immigrants who migrate to new locations will have to negotiate between

individual interactions, macro/micro social networks, and varying economic situations. They are also affected by location-specific policies, as well as the broader political and legal climate (Abrego & Menjívar 2011; Sohoni & Mendez 2014; Vaquera et. al. 2014). Local policy can have extreme influence over the lives of immigrants, affecting their access to jobs (Ayon et.al. 2011), healthcare (Flores 2010; Toomey et.al. 2014; White et.al. 2014), and security within their communities (Coleman 2012). These site-specific circumstances coupled with the effects of gender will direct the course of the integration experiences of immigrants.

Integration and Gender

Beyond the differences in integration based on immigrants' place of settlement, gender also plays an important role in shaping the integration process. Previously produced research has shown significant variation in the integration process by gender (Schmalzbaurer 2009; Abrego & Menjívar 2011; Dondero & Muller 2012; Dreby & Schmalzbauer 2013; Licona & Maldonado 2014; Snider 2017; Abrego & Schmalzbauer 2018). The research suggests that men, especially in rural new destination sites, are better integrated than women (Schmalzbaurer 2009). These differences can be seen in the relationships that male and female immigrants have with their communities, workplaces, and even within their homes.

Gender norms can affect the success of an immigrant's integration process. Gendered discourses marginalize the socio-economic dimension of integration and the structural inequalities that migrants face (Kofman et.al. 2015). Karimi et.al. (2018) interviewed 256 second-generation Somali-Canadians in hopes to understand gender as form of capital in the integration process. They showed that "doing" gender served to

further the process of successful integration. Male immigrants have struggled with integration due to expectations on masculinity and what it means to be a Latino man. These factors are highlighted in rural areas (Snider 2017). Their own views on what it means to be masculine, coupled with the views of the broader community significantly shaped their integration experience.

Women immigrants in particular face a directive, unique set of challenges in the integration process. Women are the primary caregivers and are expected to practice self-denial and self-sacrifice for the good of the family (Abrego & Menjívar 2011; Abrego & Schmalzbauer 2018). Women, more specifically mothers, are often the targets of legal violence, which inhibits their acquisition of assistance and other resources (Abrego & Menjívar 2018). Gendered and racialized non-belonging is produced through crosscutting multiple groups in any given society, and can affect every aspect of daily lives (Korteweg et. al. 2017). Examining all of these factors is essential in understanding the integration process.

Intersections between Place and Gender in Immigrant Integration

While there has been substantial research on how both gender and place affect immigrant integration, there is still limited understanding of potential interactions between gender and place in shaping the integration process. The work of Schmalzbauer and a handful of other researchers does show that place-specific aspects can affect men and women's integration in different ways. Rural destination sites, due to geography, city planning, and other factors, can be incredibly isolating for immigrants. This is especially true for women because of their lack of access to reliable public and private transportation (Schmalzbauer 2009, Mendez & Nelson 2016). Isolation not only increases

the likelihood of mental health problems but also produces conditions in which domestic, sexual and child abuse go unnoticed (Licona & Maldonado 2014). Although male immigrants similarly experience isolation, they are somewhat protected by the availability of well-paid jobs and their ability to drive (Snider 2017; Shultz 2016; Schmalzbauer 2009).

The small immigrant communities that characterize new destinations can be beneficial for men because they have less competition for jobs, which therefore leads to jobs with higher wages (Schmalzbauer 2009). The small number of immigrants, however, also makes men more visible to the larger community, leaving them more at risk for deportation (Schmalzbauer 2009). Women, although more protected from deportation, are affected by a lack of networks, which can make it harder to find the domestic jobs that women immigrants typically take (Schmalzbauer 2014).

Schmalzbauer also found that the local culture of Montana influenced immigrant integration. Gender norms of LatinX families tend to be fairly traditional, with women discouraged from working outside the home and encouraged to devote themselves to housekeeping and motherhood (Abrego & Menjivar 2011; Schmalzbauer 2014). Traditional gender roles also are commonly still in practice in rural parts of the United States, such as Montana (Schmalzbauer 2014). Many of Schmalzbauer's Mexican respondents, both male and female, felt very at home in Montana because it allowed them to live out their ideas of gendered family life in a way that other U.S. states could not.

Rurality, social networks, and local culture all effect immigrant integration in gendered ways. However, the extent to which these factors are common across different types of new destinations is unclear, due to the limited geographic scope of existing

research. Are the effects of rurality and traditional gender norms the same across contexts? Does a different local cultural or policy context matter for integration?

Examining other new destination contexts also allows us to potentially identify other gendered effects in integration that have not yet been identified.

RESEARCH SETTING

Like Montana, Utah is a new destination state, with an immigrant population that more than doubled between 1990 and 2000 alone. Cache County specifically has long had a non-trivial foreign-born population, due to the presence of a university. However, like the rest of Utah, it is very clearly a new destination for LatinX immigrants. The LatinX population of Cache County increased from 2% to 10% of the county population between 1990 and 2010. Previous research done in northern Utah on immigration has shown a couple of reasons for this growth, including both economic and cultural factors (Kontuly et al. 1995).

Cache Valley is similar to Schmalzbauer's Montana research site in a number of other ways. It is home to a small city surrounded by a largely rural area. Historically, it has been an ethnically and racially homogenous community. In the 1990 Census, the population of Cache County was 88.9% non-Hispanic white, but the overall level of diversity in the county is increasing dramatically (Carothers 2017). At the same time, Cache Valley is unique in a variety of ways. First is the unmissable religious majority. In the state of Utah, 62.64% of the population is Mormon (members of the Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints), and the proportion in Cache Valley is similar, at 64% (Cannon 2015).

This conservative religious group has affected other demographic trends of Utah, including in Cache Valley. The region has high marriage rates, with 64.8% of people in Cache county living in married-couple households, compared to the national average of 48.2%. Similarly, family size in Cache County is larger than the national average, at 3.2 people versus 2.6 people. The demographics of Cache County are also influenced by

being a university community. It is a relatively young county with 33.2% of its population being between the ages 18-34 (US total population in the age range of 18-34 is 23.4%). It is also, on average, a well-educated area, with 35% attending college at some point compared to the national average of only 29.1% attending some college (Social Explorer 2018).

Utah is also an unusual state in terms of its immigration policy, which has swung back and forth from conservative to liberal and back again over the course of several decades. The state's population is growing (2,763,885 in 2010 to 3,101,833 in 2017) and this has helped in the expansion of the agricultural and construction industry. These two fields coupled with Utah's dominant religious group have been key drivers in the state-level immigration policy debate (Hofmann et al. 2018).

In 2001, Utah passed a law that required police to verify the immigration status of any person who was arrested for a class A, B, or C misdemeanor or felony. Along with this, police could stop anyone whom an officer had a reasonable suspicion of being in the U.S. illegally. This conservative policy was challenged and fought by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in a federal district court. The ACLU won and the law no longer exists in Utah (Utah State Immigration Law 2018).

Just 10 years later Utah passed a law allowing undocumented immigrants to become lawfully employed. Although it allows them to work, it does not protect them to the same level that the law does for legal residents and citizens. This policy was embedded in a progressive immigration policy package. Although the bill was passed in 2011, it has not been implemented, to date. Along this time, there were multiple attempts to repeal the bill before it could be put into effect (Romboy 2016; Utah State Immigration

Law 2018).

A handful of research has been done on LatinX immigration in Utah in general, and on Northern Utah in particular. Like many new destination states, Utah has struggled to adapt to the rapid increase of a Spanish-speaking population that also includes many undocumented immigrants. This has resulted in issues including a high rate of high school dropouts among LatinX youth and conflicts between the LatinX community and law enforcement (Solórzano 2005). This is exacerbated by religious divisions in the LatinX community, and conflicts between the approximately 30% of LatinX who are Mormon and experience greater social acceptance, and the majority who have different religious backgrounds (Solórzano 2005). A study of Latina women in English-language centers in Northern Utah identified five prominent issues: social isolation, language difficulty, racial-ethnic prejudice, poverty, and lack of documentation (Smith & Mannon 2010). Social integration is clearly a challenge for immigrants in Utah, and the challenges of integration are very much shaped by the local context, but the extent to which these challenges are gendered has not been established.

DATA AND METHODS

This paper analyzes data from qualitative interviews with immigrants from Latin American countries who are currently living in Cache Valley, UT. Qualitative research allows new understandings from the derivation of elaborate unstructured data (Richards & Morse 2013). Interviews were conducted between June and August 2018, and respondents were recruited using a purposive sampling strategy. Initial contacts were made by posting flyers in local churches and community centers, and through posts in a Facebook group for the local LatinX community. Using a snowball sampling strategy, the interviewers requested that respondents pass on information about the study to members of their social networks.

In total, seven men and nine women participated in the interviews, with over half of the women recruited through the initial contacts strategy, but the majority of men coming through recommendations of earlier respondents. For qualitative research, purposive samples are widely used to gain an in-depth understanding of individuals and experiences (Patton 2002; Ptashnick & Zuberi 2018;). Being able to successfully identify participants who are particularly knowledgeable and willing to participate in the sample is important to the understanding of the immigration experience, although this does create the inability to control for unknown potential influences (Palinkas et. al. 2015).

The interviews utilized a standardized protocol that incorporated both closed- and open-ended questions. The protocol was developed as part of a project on gendered factors that draw immigrants to new destinations, and on why some destinations are more attractive to men and others to women. As such, the protocol included a complete migration history, questions about the respondents' sources of information about Cache

Valley before moving there, a variety of questions about the respondent's positive and negative perceptions of Cache Valley, and their intentions to remain in the future. In order to answer the research question about gender differences in social integration, I focus on answers that respondents gave to this last set of questions. The protocol was developed in both English and Spanish, and the interview was conducted in the language of the respondent's choice. The majority of respondents (13) opted to interview in Spanish. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and translated into English where necessary. Any personally identifying information was deleted or altered in the transcripts by the two interviewers, and each respondent was assigned a pseudonym. The Institutional Review Board of Utah State University approved the research.

To analyze the data I operationalized the concept of social integration along three dimensions. First, I considered the respondent's perception that the community is a friendly/welcoming one, drawing on literature that highlights the role of native residents in immigrant integration (IOM 2018). Second, I considered the level of interaction respondents reported with community members outside of their immigrant group, drawing on definitions of integration that highlight the importance of social interactions (Berry 1997; Berger et.al. 2004). Finally, I considered respondents' desire to continue living in the community in the future (Hainmueller et. al. 2016). This operationalization was used to motivate the data analysis at all stages.

I began by isolating the sections of the transcripts that contained data relevant to the question of social integration. Because the interviews were semi-structured, respondents mentioned issues related to their attachment to the local community and their interactions with locals at various points in the interviews, rather than only in response to

specific questions.

The second round was the process of open coding the data, to better understand themes; this identified common themes that emerged in the interviews, these can be found in Appendix A. Descriptive coding was important due to the nature of the data being secondary, it allowed the data to become familiar during the process of coding (Richards & Mores 2013). The third round was focused on coding these themes more in depth. Within each broad theme, I identified specific experiences, beliefs, or ideas. For example, among positive perceptions of Cache Valley, I identified continually emerging themes of tranquility, safety, accessible and affordable housing, etc.

Once I had completed coding, a second coder re-coded the transcripts using the same list of codes. We achieved an average Kappa coefficient of .73 across all codes, which is considered a sufficient level of inter-coder reliability (Cohen 1960). All coding was done using NVivo 11 software.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the assigned pseudonyms and demographic information on the 16 respondents. The respondents represented five different countries, but the majority are from Mexico, representing the overall composition of the LatinX population in Cache Valley. The youngest respondent was 25, while the oldest was 60. The average age for women was 40, where the average age for the men was 45. For respondents who reported their total years in the United States, the average total time in the U.S. was 20.6 years, with the men averaging 18.8 years and the women 22.3 years.

On average the women who reported the time they had lived in Cache Valley lived there longer (average 15.1 years), where the men who reported length lived here for a considerably less amount (average 9.5 years). All but two of the respondents were employed in some manner; the two who were unemployed were female, and they reported being homemakers/mothers. Although the interviewers did not formally collect information on the socioeconomic status of the respondents, they represent a range of education levels and occupational types. Not surprisingly in a college town, several of the respondents had higher education, and even graduate degrees. The female respondents are overall more educated than the male respondents, with only one man (Andres) having a college degree and a professional job. Finally, the table also notes whether or not the respondents were members of the LDS church. Although the interviewers did not ask directly about respondents' religious affiliation, many respondents made a point to either express membership or distance themselves from the Church.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Name	Sex	Years in U.S.	Years in Cache Valley	Occupation	LDS member
Anabel	Female	>20	10-15	Homemaker	yes
Andres	Male	>20	5-10	Professional	yes
Camilo	Male	10-15	5-10	Not provided	no
Carolina	Female	15-20	5-10	Service	yes
Gustavo	Male	15-20	15-20	Agriculture	no
Hernando	Male	<5	<5	Agriculture	yes
Leyla	Female	15-20	10-15	Service	no
Luisa	Female	15-20	5-10	Homemaker	no
Mariela	Female	>20	>5	Service	no
Mario	Male	>20	>20	Not provided	no
Maritza	Female	>20	>20	Professional	no
Natalia	Female	>20	>20	Service	no
Pedro	Male	<5	<5	Service	yes
Rodolfo	Male	>20	15-20	Service	no
Rosa	Female	>20	>20	Not provided	yes
Sandra	Female	15-20	5-10	Professional, part-time	yes

In the remainder of this section, I discuss three themes that emerged most strongly from the interviews: attachment to Cache Valley due to its perceived tranquility; experiences of racism or othering in the community; and plans to stay or leave. There were many similarities between how men and women perceived Cache Valley. Most respondents were generally satisfied with their lives there, although most of the interviewees had experienced some level of racism from the local community or felt like an outsider. The women respondents were less likely than the men to downplay these interactions, and they were more likely to express plans to leave Cache Valley. Even

when women planned to stay, they often explained that they were only staying because of their particular life situation. Women seemed, overall, to be less integrated into the Cache Valley community, but this lack of integration seemed not to be related to social isolation.

Tranquility and Attachment to Cache Valley

Most of the respondents had a positive overall assessment of their lives in Cache Valley. In general, respondents' assessments of the positive qualities of Cache Valley were similar, and not strongly gendered. Respondents valued the small-town character of the community—its friendly residents, its quiet, its lack of traffic, and its safety—as well as its natural beauty. Most respondents described Cache Valley using the Spanish word *tranquilo* (tranquil). *Tranquilo* encompassed the multiple ways in which respondents felt a sense of peace in their community, but particularly it was used in the context of safety.

Sandra stated: “I can go to sleep *tranquilo* knowing that nothing is going to happen to me nor my kids. I can go out with my children to walk and everything will be ok.” Similarly, when Pedro was asked to elaborate on his comment that Cache Valley was a tranquil place he stated: “As I said, I can have my door open. Sometimes I have forgotten the keys outside and then they are still there. I live in a house where I have my own space. I can go out and be outside. I mainly think about that, when I am in the house, I don’t have to worry about ‘Is the door open?’, ‘Is the car still open?’”

The majority of respondents (13) had lived somewhere else in the U.S. prior to moving to Cache Valley, generally in a larger and more diverse city. Several respondents contrasted the tranquility of Logan to the more stressful or dangerous environments they perceived in their previous places of residence. Luisa, when describing why she loved

living in Cache Valley said: “Very clean, calm, quiet, without so much mess of people that are bums walking around like in California, where you can’t even let your children alone, like I do here.” Similarly, Rosa compared Cache Valley to her home country: “My children can go outside and play and I know nothing is going to happen to them. It is not something I would do if I had raised them in El Salvador. I would never leave them alone on the street. I can trust my neighbors that they are going to be well taken care of. They can walk to school, wherever.” The favorable contrast between Cache Valley and other cities gave respondents a stronger sense of belonging.

Of the 13 Spanish-language interviews, 12 respondents used *tranquilo* at least once in their descriptions of Cache Valley. In the three English-language interviews, none of the respondents used the word tranquil, but they were also very satisfied with the small-town feel of Cache Valley, and particularly with its perceived safety. Carolina, the only Spanish-language respondent who did not use *tranquilo*, also expressed a positive assessment of Cache Valley’s beauty, safety, and “peace.” Neither *tranquilo* nor safety were particularly gendered concepts. Women were more likely than men to praise the safeness of Cache Valley in terms of their children’s safety, but both men and women agreed that Cache Valley was both a safe place to live and that safety was an important quality in their assessment of the community.

The tranquility and small-town qualities of Cache Valley that respondents valued did not have the effect of isolating women, as they did in Schmalzbauer’s study. The majority of women in this sample were employed, and of the two who were not (Anabel and Luisa), Anabel had recently finished a master’s degree, so she had opportunities to be outside the home. Luisa did feel that it was challenging for women to find jobs in Cache

Valley, saying, “I feel that for us women it is a bit more difficult and less paid compared to men. For men it is easier to find a job and be well paid.” Most of the female respondents, though, were satisfied with their ability to find a job in Cache Valley.

Some of the respondents did talk about isolation, but usually that isolation was in the past and they had overcome it. When Leyla first moved to Cache Valley, she lived in a small community with no stores and no bus route, and, not knowing how to drive, she felt quite isolated there. However, by the time of the interview, Leyla, like most of the sample, had her own car. Both men and women in the sample reported activities like going to the store and taking children to school, in addition to their employment. Some respondents, including Leyla, talked about going out and enjoying local activities: “Hiking, go to the lake, and picnic outside, boating. It’s a lot of things you can do. It’s beautiful, I love Cache Valley.” Four of the women and three of the men mentioned that they belong to the LDS church, which allowed them to engage within a larger, well organized, social network.

Perceptions of discrimination and othering

Because both male and female respondents had significant interactions with the local community through work, shopping and other activities, they had opportunities to have negative interactions. As shown in Table 2, most of the respondents mentioned experiencing some sort of negative interaction with locals when responding to the question of what are the negative aspects of Cache Valley. In most cases, these negative interactions were clearly racist or anti-immigrant in nature, while other negative experiences seemed more to reflect a feeling of “otherness” or not belonging in Utah’s tight-knit culture. Of the sixteen respondents, seven described experiences of racism or

discrimination. For example, Anabel explained that both she and her white, Utah-born husband spoke to their children in Spanish, but that they were treated very differently when they did so in public. “So I am criticized, and I am looked at differently than my husband. So if I’m at Walmart, and I’m speaking Spanish to my kids, I so often get the comment: ‘It’s America--English.’ Or, ‘it’s disrespectful. Speak English to your kids.’ Or ‘it’s rude.’ And it’s like, I’m talking to my kids, not to you, I’m sorry if it offends you. Yeah, but this is America, so speak English. I get those comments so often it is now a part of my life, I just ignore them. But my husband, if he’s speaking Spanish to them in Walmart, he gets, ‘oh, your kids are so lucky, you’re teaching them Spanish, wow, they are going to be bilingual, that’s awesome! Lucky kids’!”

The experience of exclusion or othering was mentioned by some respondents. This is a social phenomenon examined by through three dimensions: power imbalance, the creation of a moral inferiority complex, and property of knowledge and technology to a select group (Spivak 1985). This has been researched in many minority groups and can be seen in a variation of ways. There has been research done on the process of intersectional othering faced by minorities who also reside at an intersection of multiple minority statuses (Jensen 2011). The process of othering was felt by a number of the respondents, an example being when one respondent mentioned feeling excluded to networks due to their lack of LDS faith.

Table 2. Experiences of Exclusion and Racism

Respondent	Exclusion/ Othering	Racism
Anabel		Hostility when speaking Spanish
Andres		Racism, profiling. "I am darker and sometimes when I speak people respond with oh I don't speak Spanish".
Camilo		Hostility when speaking Spanish "There is racism everywhere".
Carolina		Stigma against Latinos or anyone who is culturally different "Logan is too white"; "The culture expects everyone to be the same".
Gustavo		
Hernando		
Leyla		
Luisa	Car has been vandalized several times, immediately after buying a new car	
Mariela	Mormon missionaries are intrusive.	
Mario		Racism & profiling.
Maritza		Discrimination against people "with accents" in hiring.
Natalia	"Locals are respectful but they are not welcoming of everybody"	
Pedro		
Rodolfo		
Rosa		
Sandra		Many locals are "closed minded" and do not like Latinos
Men:	0	3
Women:	3	4
Total:	3	7

Downplaying racism was common in the interviews, with many respondents

doing so by explaining that things are worse off in other places they have lived in the United States and their countries of origin, so comparing Cache Valley to those places allowed for them to downplay discriminatory experiences. Like Carolina, when discussing why she enjoyed living in Cache Valley: “In California it was scary just to go outside to put gas in the car. We were in very difficult places; there were gangs and things like that. Here I am telling you that everything is pretty. I have had some negative experiences, but for the most part it is very calm this place, I mean, it is good.”

Men were somewhat less likely to report discrimination, and more likely to downplay the experiences that they did report. For instance, Mario made a point to minimize these experiences when discussing intolerance in Cache Valley “Maybe it’s not accepting one another, but its minimal. Again, I tell you, they are people who carry personal problems, and for that one, ‘Okay, thank you’, and I move on, and you are happy. Happiness is one, and one seeks happiness.” Whereas women are not as quick to excuse it, sometimes not even excusing it at all. Responding to a question on whether Cache Valley was a friendly place to live, Sandra directly stated that it was not friendly to Latinos, and added: “There are many racist people. There are many people that, this can sound bad. There are many uneducated people, people that have their minds closed, people that don’t go out. There are many students and they are ok. But with the people that are native to here, it is people that are very close, they don’t travel, they see you as someone that is invading their territory.”

Future Plans

The final metric in assessing the level of successful integration into Cache Valley was whether respondents planned to still be living in the community in 10 years. Initially,

eleven of the sixteen respondents stated they plan to stay in Cache Valley ten years from now, five of the nine women and all six of the men (Table 3). Most of the respondents (both men and women) who initially stated they would like to stay in Cache Valley made a point to talk about the benefits for their families here, like Hernando: “Because for my daughter it is something good. I know she is going to find a better life here. We are not going to be all worried as we would in our country where there is a lot of crime, women are abused. Not here. Here it is very respectable. We also want to have family. More babies. I think that would be why. That is why I would see myself here.”

Most of the women who expressed an interest in moving based it on a family reason, whether it was to be with family, or to create a family of their own. For example, Leyla did not expect her teenaged daughter to remain in Cache Valley as an adult, because the daughter did not like the conservative local culture. Although Leyla did like living in Cache Valley, she expected to follow her daughter whenever her daughter chose to leave.

After asking about the respondent’s plan in 10 years, the interviewer offered various situations that might cause the respondents to leave, such as, if they did not have kids, if they were not married, if they found better work somewhere else, if they were not the main financial support of family back on their country of origin. Of the five women who planned to stay in Cache Valley for at least 10 years, four of them thought that they might leave if they were in a different situation. All four of these women agreed that if they were not married they would not be living in Cache Valley. Three men who planned to stay in Cache Valley also noted that they might leave if they were in different circumstances, but the remaining three could not imagine any circumstances in which

they would leave Cache Valley. One of these respondents, Andres, stated, “My wife insisted on moving. But I said, no. No, I like the place.” Men, therefore, appeared to be more attached to Cache Valley than women, in this sample.

Seven of the respondents mentioned experiencing some type of discrimination. Five of those respondents said they plan to leave or would leave if some type of life circumstance were different (Table 3). None of the respondents who both planned to leave and experienced discrimination expressed any link between their experiences of discrimination and their desire to leave. Both the men and women who mentioned wanting to leave, who also experienced discrimination did not state the former was caused by the latter. Though most of the respondents talked about wanting to leave and return home to their countries of origin, of the five who faced discrimination and stated they would leave Cache Valley, all five mentioned they would consider returning home. One respondent, Leyla, stated: “No, if I didn’t have kids of course I will be in Peru,” despite not reporting any negative experiences in Cache Valley. Responses like this one were common and make it difficult to draw strong connections between men’s tendency to minimize discrimination and their higher levels of attachment to Cache Valley.

Table 3. Discrimination and Future Plans

Respondent	Plan to stay	Possible or definite plans to leave	Experience of discrimination
Anabel		X	X
Andres	X		X
Camilo	X		X
Carolina		X	X
Gustavo	X	X	
Hernando	X		
Leyla		X	
Luisa	X		
Mariela		X	
Mario	X	X	X
Maritza	X	X	X
Natalia	X		
Pedro		X	
Rodolfo	X	X	
Rosa	X	X	
Sandra	X	X	X
Men:	6	4	3
Women:	5	7	4
TOTAL:	11	11	7

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Understanding the process of social integration is vital in understanding the immigrant experience. This research project set out to understand the social integration process of LatinX immigrants into a new destination site. By analyzing secondary data, I assessed differences in the levels and processes of social integration reported by men and women in this community. The data showed that respondents have a high level of satisfaction with the lives they have created in Cache Valley. The respondents typically live tranquil lives, with few complaints. Most of the respondents faced discrimination, which men were quicker to excuse than women were. Men were more likely to report plans to stay in Cache Valley for the long term, and were less able than women to anticipate scenarios in which their plans to leave might change. Overall, men experienced higher levels of social integration than women did.

This research had a number of limitations. First, the sample was small, with only 16 respondents. In some areas, such as the perception of tranquility and the tendency to downplay experiences of discrimination, 16 interviews were clearly enough for saturation. In other areas, it may not have been, for example, a link between experiences of discrimination and attachment to the community may have become clear in a larger sample. Another limitation of the sample is that a majority of the respondents had been living in Cache Valley for more than 10 years. This may have biased the sample towards those who integrated most successfully, as there was limited ability to capture the experience of immigrants who struggled to integrate and eventually left the community. The final limitation is that the data was drawn from a research project on gendered settlement patterns, rather than being designed specifically to answer the questions on

integration. This limited the ability to draw more in-depth conclusions on some of the responses. Despite these limitations, this research raises some important issues in gendered integration in new destinations.

In some respects, my findings are similar to Schmalzbauer's findings among Mexican immigrants in rural Montana. These respondents, like hers, expressed the love of living in the safety and tranquility of a rural new destination site. Just like these female respondents, in Schmalzbauer's work, women seem to be less successfully integrated into the community than men are. However, in Montana, this lack of integration was related to women's intense geographic isolation and lack of participation in the labor market. Although one of these respondents had experienced the type of geographic isolation that Schmalzbauer describes, this was not the norm for women in Cache Valley. Few of these respondents were able to live out the gendered dream of mother and homemaker paired with supportive breadwinner. Instead, women's lack of integration was related to experiences of discrimination and lack of commitment to long-term residence.

There seems to be a difference in isolation between LatinX women in Cache Valley, who are less isolated and less home-oriented than those in Montana. Cache Valley is a little larger than Gallatin County, where Schmalzbauer's research took place (total population of Cache county is 124,438 versus 107,810 in Gallatin County as of 2017) but it is significantly less geographically diffuse, with a population density of 97 people per square mile, compared to Gallatin County's 34 people per square mile. The LatinX population of Gallatin County only makes up 3.6% of the total population whereas in Cache Valley it is 10.8% (Social Explorer). While both Cache and Gallatin counties are non-metropolitan and predominantly white, these differences likely play a

large role in shaping the types of jobs available to immigrant women and their ability to form social ties. In addition to geographic and demographic factors, the prominence of the LDS Church in Cache Valley may also play a role by drawing in migrants of higher socioeconomic status and providing them with instant, dense networks. Many of the respondents who were LDS were better educated and more likely to hold a professional job than respondents who were not a part of the Church. The role that the LDS Church plays in integrating immigrants in Utah, and the differences that this potentially creates between LDS and non-LDS immigrants is an area that deserves further research.

The greater experience of (or at least sensitivity to) discrimination among women in Cache Valley is also worth further exploration. The literature on intersectionality indicates that women of color are disproportionately victims of domestic violence and hate crimes (Crenshaw 1990; Davis 2000; McPhail 2002; Sokoloff & Dupont 2005). While the negative experiences of our respondents were more on the level of microaggressions, it is possible that their joint status as women, immigrants, and ethnic minorities makes them more vulnerable than men to the sort of everyday racism that most women in this sample had experienced. The women in this sample also reported more opportunities for interaction with locals than men did. In their roles as mothers and homemakers, women went shopping, registered children for school and attended school events, and visited places like the bank, all of which brought them into contact with native-born, White Utahans. Gender differences in the experience of discrimination in new destinations is another promising area for future research.

Women not only report more discrimination, they appear to be less accepting of the discrimination they experience. Because women experience discrimination at higher

levels, they may be less able to brush off or excuse the encounters. However, another factor that could have led to the gender disparity in dismissing discrimination could be due to the gendered expectations in traditional LatinX social norms, which are heightened in the rural areas such as Cache Valley (Snider 2017). The expectation that LatinX men be aggressive and stoic could lead them to downplaying any incident that might potentially portray them as a “victim”.

The final contribution of this research is the question of why women in our sample were less attached to the idea of living in Cache Valley in the long term than men were. This may reflect women’s greater dependence on the plans of others, rather than anything specific to Cache Valley. Women in this sample frequently noted that if they were not able to have a family here, they would leave to search for the opportunity to create one. Similarly, women referenced their partner’s or children’s future plans when considering whether they would stay in Cache Valley. This could be due to the importance of self-sacrifice placed on women in traditional LatinX family gender dynamics (Abrego & Schmalzbauer 2018; Abrego & Menjívar 2011). Men rarely discussed their partner’s plans as a driving factor behind their decision, even when prompted. Women could be under increased social pressure compared to men to sacrifice their lives in order to for the good of the family. This lack of integration could also be due to women feeling the need to have access to life changes in order to help their family or theirs compared to men, who typically spoke only of themselves and their own plans.

Overall, the integration experience of the respondents was very positive, for both the men and women. In many respects, this is a more positive integration story than that told by Schmalzbauer’s respondents. These interviews were conducted in the summer of

2018, during a time when anti-immigrant rhetoric was very prominent in the United States. Respondents were well aware of this negative political climate, but it did not seem to affect their attachment to the local community. This indicates that other communities could learn from the experience of immigrant integration in Cache Valley, and that integration can be fostered at a local level, even if the national (and even state) political climate is not favorable. Opportunities for employment and interaction with locals are highly important. Even if those interactions are not always positive, they seem to protect immigrants, particularly women, from social isolation. Transportation is also an important facet in the positive experience of our respondents; few did not work because of lack of transportation. This is important for other communities to keep in mind in fostering positive integration experiences.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: LIST OF CODES

Future Plans:

- Plans to stay in the next ten years
- Plans to leave
- Would leave if they were not supporting family back home
- Would leave if not married
- Would leave for better job/work
- Would leave if they didn't have children

Good Quote

Living Situation:

- Lives alone
- Lives with family
- Lives with roommate

Member of the LDS church

Negative aspects of Cache Valley:

- Hard time due to lack of proper documentation
- Hard time due to language issues
- Hard to find a job
- Hard to find housing
- Not a friendly overall community
- Not a large community/social scene
- Not a safe place to live
- Bad weather

Negative interaction with community/local:

- ICE
- Negative interaction with local
- Not friendly
- Racism
- Violence toward them

Positive aspects of Cache Valley:

- Easy to find a job
- Easy to find housing
- Friendly/Open place to live
- Geographically pretty
- Positive interactions with locals
- Safe place to live
- Safe place to raise children
- Tranquil

Role in household:

- Cleans
- Cook
- Financial Supporter of family
- Handles bureaucratic decisions
- Shopper for house
- Takes care of children

Takes care of elderly family

Information (source of information) about Cache Valley:

Came because of church

Came because of family

Came for education

Came for work