



Mobilizing Local Action for Refugee Support: **Explorative Frameworks for Transforming Rural, Ethnic Communities**

David Sotelo Escobedo

Masters of Community and Regional Planning Professional Project

University of Oregon | School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management

Committee: Dr. Gerardo Sandoval (committee chair) and Dr. José W. Meléndez

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Executive Summary

Using the case of Anne Creek, this exploratory research seeks to identify latent frames of interactions with refugee communities in rural communities, allowing for a deeper reflection on organizations' understanding of resettlement. This is done by adopting Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework defining core domains of social integration in an attempt to capture key elements of stakeholder perceptions and expectations of what constitutes integration.

This paper first begins with a theoretical framework that first analyzes the archetypal immigration debate between assimilationism and multiculturalism, suggesting that this normative framing excludes the possibility of interrogating the societal structures that create positions of marginality to begin with. This project thus seeks to expand upon planning literature that seeks to create non-normative discourses of community development that allow for the conceptualization of bottom-up processes of community support as a mode of power in opposition to structures of domination.

This paper not only identifies the domains of social integration that are overlooked by the efforts of organizations in Anne Creek but more importantly these findings begin to point to some of the limitations in the ability for organizations to make an impact regardless of their level of concern. The disconnect in effort and impact, while in part is no doubt due to the limited scalability of under-resourced rural areas, potentially alludes to gaps in the framework that Ager and Strang offer.

Regarding the foundational questions of responsibility and citizenship, the uncertainties and sheer scale of navigating asylum-claims processes are not only difficult for migrants to navigate but put an insurmountable demand for service providers ability to provide sufficient assistance to do so. I argue that the current focus on simply attempting to alleviate the wide expanse in access afforded to citizens versus non-citizens is insufficient to provide a frame for a broad-based collective response to the humanitarian crisis and that citizenship must also be interrogated as a reciprocal, active responsibility toward residents in one's community.

Thus, I hope this case study provides some insight toward the potential for local service providers to begin making headway in the creation of these transformative spaces. These final insights highlight the need to (1) create spaces for encounter that respects difference but does not reinforce Otherness, (2) create mechanisms for migrants to take ownership over the integration process, and (3) engage in advocacy to address the economic situation of migrants.

1) Introduction

A. Project Background

On a misty, Friday afternoon in early February, dozens of protesters gathered outside the Lane County Sheriff's Office in downtown Eugene. Organized by University of Oregon undergraduates with the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), the demonstration demanded accountability in light of the recent allegation of the Office's backdoor collaboration with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This local assistance in the federal apprehension of undocumented community members would stand as a clear violation of Oregon's state sanctuary law. As law enforcement officers stood silently behind the glass courthouse doors, community members carried signs reading "Abolish ICE" and "No One is Illegal" and spoke passionately against policies that were separating families and sowing fear of violent state retaliation. Their chants of solidarity – "*el pueblo unido jamás será vencido*" – were echoed by the occasional supporting car horn but were also met with moments of confrontation. One particularly aggressive passerby, forced along by allies attempting to protect the predominately young students of color, vehemently made clear his attitude toward migrant communities: "*Don't come crying to me when they come into your home and murder your family.*"

This episode, like many similar to it, speaks to the conflicting national discourses that are separately responding to a refugee crisis that is global in scale. Nonetheless, while changes in policy regarding foreign military intervention and national immigration law are crucial, this debate is conveniently abstracted from the lives of many Americans – distanced from the lives of refugee¹ that are fraught with the contentious navigation of institutional barriers and oppressions that play out in intimate, daily experiences.

Given the ongoing back and forth between federal crackdowns on migrant communities and local/state responses to resist them, this begs the question of what a sanctuary city is *in practice*. Does support and solidarity for refugees end with the prohibition of local law enforcement collaboration with the federal immigration custody apparatus? Or does solidarity extend in more complicated exploration of how local communities can create spaces for processing trauma and facilitating interaction across difference? And more importantly, what are the limits of social integration given the existence of these larger hierarchical systems of oppression that link global disparities to local confrontations of belonging? While the scope of this project does not seek to answer these far-reaching questions, I believe this case study offers a unique – and urgent – frame for beginning to examine the efforts that small communities can make to concertedly move toward solidarity.

This research emerged from my recent volunteer work with a local service provider to help coordinate the implementation of an English as a Second Language (ESL) program to service the growing

¹ While there is a legal distinction between *refugee* and *asylum-seeker*, this paper will instead ground an understanding of a *refugee* as anyone who is fleeing or migrating their country of origin for reasons of violence, social unrest, or economic insecurity, and in this way may also include migrants who, from a legal perspective, are *undocumented* or *unauthorized*, and without a "legitimate" asylum claim. These bureaucratic distinctions are often not understood outside of legal circles, with the dominant understanding tending toward a homogenizing categorization of all migrants. As this paper largely focuses on questions of social integration and support at a local level with specific ethnic communities (rather than individuals with varying degrees of legal statuses), I did not focus my attention on how these distinctions impact the personal experiences as a migrant.

migrant communities that reside in Anne Creek², a small city of less than 10,000 within the county. Specifically, the program's target population was that of the predominantly-Mam-speaking, indigenous, Guatemalan refugee community which has settled in the area, and comprises approximately 250-300 community members and continues to grow.

Given the rural context, infrastructure to support the needs of this newly emergent community has largely stemmed from loose networks of locally-based community organizations and private citizens. The scarcity of formal service and support has the potential to exacerbate existing vulnerabilities carried by refugees, who bring the multiplying burdens of trauma and marginalization into their receiving communities. Efforts by local organizations, even if not perfect, point toward some potential capacity to be leveraged toward the community-wide project of responding to and integrating new demographic changes. As I will examine in the existing literature, difficulty with social integration can potentially hamper the ability for refugees to cultivate wellbeing, achieve successful outcomes for their children, and serve to reinforce resentment on part of the receiving community members. I confidently expect all readers of this report to share the belief that this is an undesired outcome in every sense of the word.

Using the case of Anne Creek, this exploratory research seeks to identify latent frames of community interactions, allowing for a deeper reflection on community organizations' understanding of resettlement. This project adopts Ager and Strang's (2008) conceptual framework defining core domains of social integration in an attempt to capture key elements of stakeholder perceptions and expectations of what constitutes integration. Using their framework as an evaluative guide, I seek to identify potential gaps in organizational focus and community efforts. My research questions are therefore:

- a) For community organizations in Anne Creek that are committed to providing services to the refugee community, which domains of integration are being focused on as evidenced in their efforts?
- b) Which domains of social integration are being ignored or poorly addressed and potentially reproducing social exclusion?

In addressing these questions, I also seek to evaluate the potential shortcomings and oversights of Ager and Strang's framework as reflective of the on-the-ground experiences of practitioners in the field. Before I outline this theoretical framework, we must first turn to the specific conditions that shape this case study in Anne Creek and the larger structural processes that are causing migration.

B. Case Study Context

Guatemalan immigration to the state of Oregon did not take place overnight, but rather was shaped by decades of complex political and social forces. To understand this pattern, an overview of the Guatemalan civil war and the resulting violence that continues to ripple through communities since 1980s is needed. For the purpose of this report, only a brief synopsis of the policies and causal actions

² Given the reactionary climate around immigrants, the name of the community in question has been changed to Anne Creek for the sake of anonymity. This has been done with the intention of honoring interviewees hopes that ongoing efforts with the local communities can "operate below the radar". Any organizational title that can be linked to case study community has also been omitted.

will be explained to provide historical context and background to otherwise poorly understood causes for migration and refugee resettlement.

A period of violence, known as “La Violencia”, erupted in Guatemala in the late 1970s followed by a civil war whereby numerous groups including indigenous communities were targeted. Guatemalan state forces carried out “a campaign of genocide, scorched earth missions to burn entire villages, forced displacement, and the hunting of survivors”. Foreign policy intervention from the United States upheld the military dictators and authoritarian regimes that engaged in these brutal practices “in the name of eradicating guerrilla movements” (Stephen, 2017: 556). In this way, we can begin to see the direct links of responsibility on the part of US citizens toward those refugees fleeing violence as caused by American geopolitical “interests”. Whether or not one supports and agrees with these forceful military interventions, the burden of responsibility still seems to rest on the US citizen to make oneself accountable as is intimately the case with the arrival of transnational communities.

Stephen (2019) further highlights the role of the American mass carceral system as mechanisms to deport the most criminalized elements of transnational communities back to their countries of origin – effectively externalizing the toxic consequences of societal marginalization and failed integration outside of the United States. Thus, recent waves of social instability and disruption have again been precipitated in part by the role of US domestic and foreign policy. As had been noted by Stephen, much of the state violence has been gendered, and “overlapping structures of primarily male power...and hetero-patriarchal kinship and domestic arrangements... suggest the difficulty of separating state and nonstate actors from the vectors of violence influencing women” (p. 230). Given the trauma many in this community – especially women – have had at the hands of state security forces, the threat posed by the renewed assault on migrant communities by the current federal administration is especially poignant.

For example, in June 2018, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions reversed previous rulings on the standing that asylum-seeking on the grounds of domestic violence did not qualify, claiming that such violence is “private”. This assault was later blocked by the US District Court of Washington with the conclusion that such policies were arbitrary and capricious, and violated federal immigration law as crafted by Congress. Given that many asylum seekers from Central America are seeking to make asylum claims on these grounds, this example speaks to the ways in which federal policy changes directly imbue continued confusion and insecurity into migrants’ daily lives.

Specific to the State of Oregon, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and Special Agricultural Workers Program (SAW) were significant pieces of legislature that spurred the settlement of indigenous Guatemalans, among other asylum seekers, by offering amnesty, the possibility of residency, and work permission for undocumented individuals, as well as sanctions for employers with undocumented workers. Once legal status was obtained, Guatemalan migrants were able to apply for their families to receive residency through. In addition, migrants were liberated to travel back to Guatemala as legal US residents. These two factors enabled migrants to establish transborder communities that served as the foundations for multi-generational networks and facilitated the building of indigenous Guatemalan communities throughout the state, including Lane County (Stephen, 2017).

Anne Creek itself, like many areas of rural Oregon, is predominately white, with over 92% of its residents identifying as white alone. The town is also reflective of the lower-income earnings of similar

communities with a median household income of just over \$40,000 and a higher unemployment rate of 10% (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2017). Nonetheless, the community of Anne Creek has been slowly transforming into one of these sites of transnationalism. Beginning with a wave of Mexican migration in the 1990s, immigrants have settled in the area, primarily integrating into the central agricultural and logging industries that are a foundational component of the area's rural economy. The more recent migrants are predominately indigenous Mam from the rural western highlands of Guatemala. Much of the agricultural labor performed by these migrants, however, is the informal harvesting of salal – a decorative shrub used in floral arrangements – in the surrounding temperate forests. This community is largely grounded by the evangelical church that was founded by one of the first Mam migrants to Anne Creek, and this serves as the primary space for the entire Mam community congregation.

C. Methodology

My research primarily focused on gathering qualitative data from members of organizations involved in coalition building and direct involvement with the Mam community members in Anne Creek; as well as organizations with stated goals of meeting the needs of the refugee community. This entailed six interviews with seven individuals that spanned multiple organizations. Given the small size of the case study community, many of the interviewees spoke from perspectives given their involvement in and with multiple organizations – ranging from family service providers, educational institutions, philanthropic boards, faith-based institutions, volunteer coalitions, and formal case work.

The limited number of interviews was reflective of the existential vulnerabilities of the communities in question. Some organizations/individuals contacted were not willing to participate because of hesitation of how this research may broadcast the local efforts of these organizations and threaten the anonymity that provides some protection for communities that do not seek potential confrontation with xenophobic community members or state law enforcement. Given the potential vulnerabilities I may have exposed, I did not contact/interview members of the Mam community itself.

This paper will first begin with a theoretical framework that first analyzes the archetypal immigration debate between assimilationism and multiculturalism, suggesting that this normative framing excludes the possibility of interrogating the societal structures that create positions of marginality to begin with. Then I will outline the conceptual framework of the domains of refugee integration as offered by Agar and Strang. Using the information gathered from my interviews, this project thus seeks to expand upon planning literature that seeks to create non-normative discourses of community development that allow for the conceptualization of bottom-up processes of community support as a mode to power in opposition to structures of domination.

Regarding Agar and Strang's domains and evaluating their importance for the interviewed organizations, I analyzed the interviewees' reference toward them as (a) *Strong Focus*, (b) *Mentioned*, and (c) *No Focus*. This first category (a) was used for domains in which two or more organizations not only referenced the domain in question but had clear demonstrable efforts to address that need within the refugee community. The second category (b) was used for domains in which two or more organization referenced the domain in question but did not clearly demonstrate any tangible practice to address it. The last category (c) was used for domains in which less than two organizations referenced the domain in question and there was no identified means of addressing the issue. Based on the interviewees' own evaluations, I also attempt to give some analysis regarding the potential impacts of these efforts.

2) Theoretical Framework

This section seeks to provide a critical theoretical framework on migrant integration. In this way, I will be able to move past an engagement with the traditional immigration debate and toward a deeper reflection on the interrelated components of integration. In this way we can begin to see the overlapping efforts of community organizations in Anne Creek as part of a holistic, comprehensive agenda of local solidarity with refugee communities, and evaluate it as such.

Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) define resettlement as “a process which a refugee, having arrived in a place of permanent asylum, gradually re-establishes the feeling of control over his/her life and develops a feeling that life is ‘back to normal’” (p.62). With such a broad definition, the question becomes how this return to normalcy should be facilitated. As with all discussions on public policy, any criteria for which to evaluate migrant resettlement fundamentally becomes a debate over competing value claims. As with Harris (2015), this paper operates on the “uncontroversial assumptions” that integration is not only desirable but much more than mere economic self-sufficiency:

Specific attention to asylee integration is important because of the unique qualities of this population, including their great potential and vulnerability. Asylees are individuals who have fled their countries, often because they faced a threat or suffered serious harm [...] At their very core, asylees [...] are resilient survivors ... Failing to provide meaningful support to asylees – regardless of whether they arrive with professional skills, education, or English language ability – risks wasting valuable human capital and marginalizing already traumatized individuals, which may have untold economic and other costs to our society (p. 42-43)

I will first begin with an overview and critique of the larger normative frameworks that tend to dominate the immigration debate: assimilationism and multiculturalism, before arriving at a discussion on the core domains of social integration as adopted from Agar and Strang (2008) where we will be able to carry forth the most beneficial contributions of both models.

A. Assimilationism vs. Multiculturalism: An Insufficient Distinction

Broadly speaking, much of the debate around the social integration falls into assimilationist or multiculturalist models. While there is a great deal of variability within each camp, a cursory overview can help us identify the limitations inherent in both. Ultimately, I will argue that the inadequacies of both is a consequence of their mutual adherence to and inability to adapt beyond dominant societal structures.

i) Assimilationism

Maldonado and Licona (2007) define assimilationism as integration efforts that are “conceived and pursued uni-directionally... conceptualized by members of receiving communities and deployed from established institutional sites, with the onus of change imposed on immigrant populations ... [to] become ‘absorbed’ into dominant culture and practices” (p. 130). Consequently, what results is a value on homogeneity, cohesion, and consensus. When not openly hostile to immigration outright there is an

emphasis on social capital building as a way to alleviate any potential disruption to social harmony through programs like ESL and citizenship courses.

While we will delve into a broader conversation later on social capital, the assimilationist's unitary focus on social capital produces a limited scope for suitable policy specifically through *bridging capital* between migrants and the receiving country, as opposed to *bonding capital* within their own community. Assimilationist models assume that given enough cultural competence migrants gain the capacity to navigate the society of the receiving country, and that any impediment is not too great to overcome given enough individual determination. As argued by Cheong, "the concomitant adoption of social capital as an assimilationist framework to policy development serves to sideline economic, material, and structural inequalities and the interventions needed to mitigate them" (2007: 29). In other words, as no attention is given to actively removing structural barriers that might impede this process, it seems that the assimilationist's ultimate goal of avoiding social disunity can never be entirely met as it is entirely uncritical of the ways in which power imbalances are maintained and generative of further societal destabilization.

This is especially problematic when dealing with migrants that are refugees and asylum-seekers as the structural conditions that force them to flee their home countries often create a sequence of compounded stressors beginning prior to migration, through the traumatic migration period itself, and carrying on after resettlement in the form of discrimination and prejudice (Pumariiega, et.al, 2005). Pumariiega (2005) notes that the very process of assimilation and acculturation is untenable to most immigrant groups as "even those who achieve competence in the dominant culture often experience a sense of loss that threatens their personal identity" (p. 585). By ignoring the added burdens of psychological and physical trauma, the assimilationist model risks penalizing migrants' inability to achieve effective integration due to mental health barriers like depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, or resultant dysfunctional behavior that may create further trauma as is the case with domestic violence. In this way, structural disparities and vulnerabilities are erroneously seen as reflections of individual competence or lack thereof.

Given this definition, we can see how a soft assimilationism is even present within many of the resettlement programs that strongly advocate for a focus on social inclusion. For example, Colic-Peisker and Tilbury (2003) categorize migrants into four resettlement types: achievers and consumers (grouped together as *active* types); and endurers and victims (grouped together as *passive* types). By characterizing the former *active* group as "successful" examples of integration, they put the onus on the individual migrant to overcome difficult circumstances in order to integrate into the practices and routines of the economic and social structures of the receiving country: participation in the workforce and material consumption. By isolating and atomizing the individual within larger systems of unbalanced access to resources, a large burden of sustained resilience is placed on their shoulders. Moreover, by reducing migrants to simply serving a functional role within the realm of economic production, more larger questions of civic participation and belonging seem to be ignored. Colic-Peisker and Tilbury are somewhat cognizant of this evaluation as they state that "it is easier for the government to individualize and personalize difficulties rather than to deal with structural constraints" but limit their understanding of those constraints as difficulty accessing employment and discrimination (p. 82).

Additionally, there is a problematic framing when regarding resettlers as *passive*, withdrawn victims unwilling to incorporate into the society of their receiving country. These types of migrants may be

isolated or excluded from broader social circle of ideal integration, but they are still part of these societies by nature of their lived proximity and participation within invisibilized cycles of social reproduction – through their roles in the local workforce and parenting (socializing the next generation of community members). Freire spoke fervently against this paternalistic reductionism on the behalf of dominant groups towards marginalized sectors: “the solution is not to integrate them into the structure of oppression, but to transform that structure so that they can become *beings for themselves*” (p. 74).

Despite these shortcomings, it should again be made clear that the assimilationist model is not wrong to prioritize social capital – but rather it is the focus in isolation of all other factors that creates a limited scope. In fact, the emphasis on *empowerment* and *agency* through social bridging are crucial elements that are overlooked in the multicultural integration models that we will now turn to.

ii) Multiculturalism

Instead of arguing for a one-way integration into the norms and principles of the receiving society, multiculturalism “calls for the recognition and accommodation of cultural minorities, including immigrants, and require states to create policies or laws that allow minority groups to root their participation in society within their cultural communities” (Bloemraad, et.al, 2008: 160). As such, policies and programs are oriented around the principle that minority groups have the right to protect their identity and language on the basis that “cultural membership is integral to individual freedom and self-respect” (ibid).

However, for Anthias, a liberal multiculturalist framework “means that the dominant group within the state sets the terms of the agenda for participation by minority ethnic groups and involves a bounded dialogue where the premises themselves may not be open to negotiation” (2002: 279). Following her argument, this bounding of dialogue is in of itself a legitimization tool for institutions of power. By positioning itself as accepting of difference, a social structure can effectively mask how its own internal processes reinforce difference through disparate access to resources and representation. More critically, this dualism between a dominant culture and the Other may, in effect, reinforce problems born of social isolation thereby reproducing trauma in subsequent generations. As has been highlighted in many studies, second generation children tend to have higher risk for behavioral conditions that stem from chronic stresses of poverty, marginalization, and discrimination (Pumariega, et.al, 2005: 589). Thus, in its purest form, multiculturalism does little to transform the positionality of the dominant members of society to have advantaged access to the institutions that enable social inclusion.

Conversely, this focus on preserving ethnic identities also negates the existence of difference and inequalities within a culture. Group identities are not all encompassing and experienced the same by all members but are made up of individuals with various intersections between other forms of identity beyond ethnicity like class, gender, sexuality, age, legal status/citizenship, religion, and physical ability. As argued by Anthias (2007):

Collective places, spaces, locales or positions are constructions that disguise the fissures, the losses, and absences, the borders within them. They tend to naturalize socially produced and therefore anti-essential situational and contextual relations, converting them to taken for granted, absolute and fixed structures of social and personal life. By collectivizing and producing a “natural” community of people, they function as exclusionary borders of otherness from which we all simultaneously exist inside and outside. (p. 277)

This awareness of inequality within group identity will be crucial later as we critically delve into the dichotomies that exist in how migration, belonging, and citizenship are experienced across gender. Totalizing narratives that disregard these differences will only reinforce injustices beneath a banner of multicultural celebration and ignore the dominant homogeneity that is hidden under the guise of superficial heterogeneity. In this way, the idealized premises of multicultural inclusion are not arrived at through multiculturalist notions of immutable group identities. The burden should instead shift from the mere recognition of difference to the creation of mechanisms that allow for this difference to transform the framework that initially bounds and categorizes difference as *different*. A difficult political feat far outside the scope of this paper, no doubt.

Rather than criticizing a perspective that promotes and supports minority ethnicities within a culturally homogenous community, I am instead questioning the notions of fixed, totalizing identities that only reinforce alterity and processes of exclusion. Ultimately, social integration is about a *reconfiguration* of networks and relationships – a process that is already ongoing and inherent to any social setting – and not simply the addition of another group into that social network. Following Maldonado and Licona (2007), “the dynamics of immigration and integration must account for the complexity of change, not simply as the reproduction of sameness, but as a reciprocal dynamic, that implies change on behalf of non-immigrant *and* immigrant populations” (p. 130). Any attempt on the behalf of dominant groups to hold onto historically specific relationships – to transform the peculiar into the universal – fails to adapt with the ongoing dynamism of an evolving society and risks perpetuating old injustices or creating new ones.

Table 1: Comparing Assimilationism and Multiculturalism

	Assimilationism	Multiculturalism
Values	Homogeneity, Cohesion	Diversity
Conceptualized by	Receiving Community	Receiving Community
Onus of change on	Migrant Community	None
Social unit	Individuals	Group Identities
Structural changes	None	Accommodation of Minorities
Migrant assistance through	Building Social Capital	Tolerance and Diverse Representation

A comparison of the two models can be seen in the preceding table (see table 1). While assimilationist models seek to preserve a static idealization of the dominant customs, multiculturalism only somewhat broadens the sphere of inclusion by concluding that all ethnicities are entitled to the same rigid temporal fix that ignores culture as an unfolding, emergent process. In both models, the majority group does not change or give up any of its claims on greater institutional access and privileges. While an

assimilationist model expects migrant communities to mold into the dominant culture, and expects no change on part by dominant actors, the multiculturalist model also fails to account for change. Additionally, both models oversight of structural concerns creates either a problematic focus on individual migrants or the ephemeral needs of totalized group identities. However, as we will see in our later discussion, the need to provide migrant assistance through social capital building and diverse representation will be important components of a larger, holistic framework.

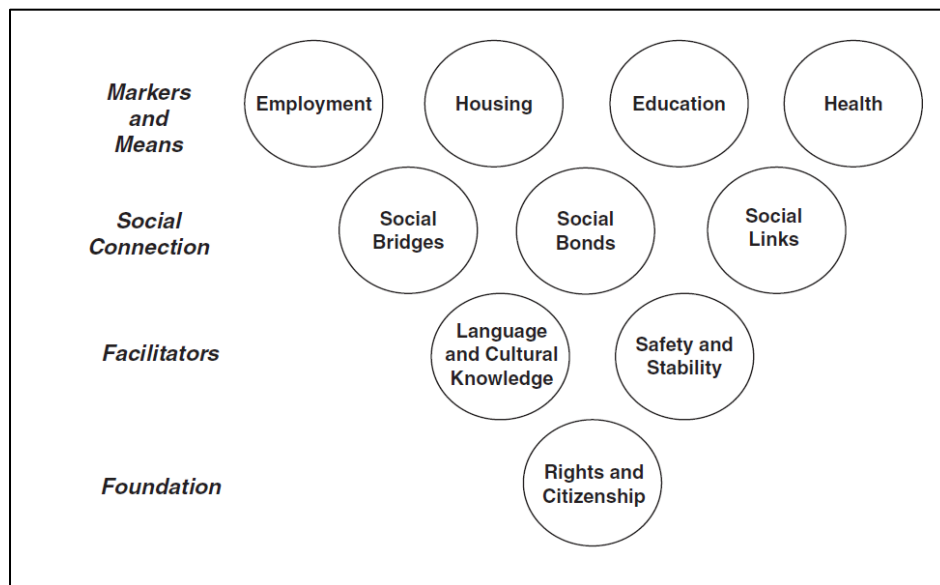
B. Domains for social integration

The scope for this research project’s understanding of migrant resettlement draws heavily from Agar and Strang (2008), who identify and define core domains of integration. Based on the critical analysis of assimilationist and multiculturalist frameworks, I believe their core domains achieve a healthy balance between the inclusive premises of multiculturalism and the essential assimilationist preoccupation with building social capital:

The structure of the framework reinforces a notion that processes supporting the maintenance of ethnic identity in no way logically limit wider integration into society (through the establishment of ‘social bridges’ and other means) ... In our analysis, social capital is presented in the context of an overall framework of interrelated domains, ensuring that other resources are essential to integration are acknowledged (p. 186)

These domains include foundational questions regarding citizenship rights and responsibilities, structural barriers to social connections, (*language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability*), processes of social connection (*social bridges, social bonds, and social links*), and finally, more public markers of and means to success (*employment, housing, education, and health*) (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Ager and Strang’s Core Domains of Integration



Following Ager and Strang, the discussion of *citizenship and rights* is made explicit given its centrality to the enabling access of all other domains of integration. Accordingly, articulating refugee rights “defines the foundation of integration policy to which governments are accountable” (2008: 175). National policy

that affords some the benefits of citizenship, “legal” status, or lack thereof, opens up the institutional mechanisms whereby access to all other domains is made possible.

Secondly, they adopt the traditional categories of *social connection* as the “processes seen to mediate or provide ‘connective tissue’” for migrants seeking to integrate into a receiving community (p.177). These connections are distinguished between social bonds (between families, ethnic groups, co-national, and/or co-religious groups), social bridges (between other communities), and social links (with the structures of the state). All these connections rest upon various types of social capital building as a necessary mode of existing in any community.

Next, Ager and Strang’s domain of *facilitators* build off these concepts of belonging and exclusion, moving away from social connections toward the wider structural and institutional barriers that inhibit connectivity. Their analysis focuses on two major areas where such barriers exist: *language and cultural knowledge*; and *safety and security*.

The final domain outlined by Ager & Strang refer to what may be considered “public outcomes” as indicators of achievement which includes *employment, housing, education, and health* (p. 170). Access to these is heavily contingent upon the presence of the preceding domains of integration. Favorable social capital appropriately deemed cultural/linguistic prowess, and a foundational allowance for inclusion within these systems through the legal sanction of “legal” residency, all are interrelated factors that affect the ability to access the other.

3) Anne Creek Case Study

Using the conceptual framework as outlined, I will now turn to the themes that emerged from the case study of Anne Creek. As stated in *Section 1.C*, I analyzed interviews with regard to organizations’ focus and ability to impact the domain in question (see table 2). After an explanation of the information revealed in the interviews themselves, I will then turn to a more thorough discussion on Ager and Strang’s framework where I will point out some of the ways that I believe the framework falls short in capturing some of the nuanced experiences provided.

Table 2: Case Study Evaluation

Domains of Integration		Level of Concern	Assessed Impact
Foundation	Citizenship Rights & Responsibilities	Strong Focus	Limited in capacity to get legal assistance in face of large institutional barriers
	Social Bridges	Strong Focus	Localized ability to create spaces of encounter between community members
Social Connections	Social Bonds	Mentioned	No efforts identified by external organizations

	Social Links	Strong focus	Some impact in bureaucratic processes to accommodate refugee needs
Facilitators	Language and Cultural Knowledge	Strong focus	Limited resources in supplying language assistance; cultural differences an issue
	Safety	Mentioned	Some external community mobilization to create safe community spaces
Markers and Means	Housing	Mentioned	Some provisions for temporary housing assistance by community members
	Education	Strong focus	Efforts to provide spaces of co-learning for parents and children
	Employment	No mention	No mention
	Health	Strong focus	Efforts to create teach healthy lifestyle in attempts to mitigate limited access to healthcare

A. Findings

i) Citizenship and Rights:

Given that many in the community are asylum-seekers or intend on seeking asylum, one of the largest concerns identified by interviewees was limited legal assistance. Unlike the legal status of “refugee”, which is primarily obtained in one’s country of origin, prior to arrival in the US, “asylum-seekers” arrive to the US with the intention of making that claim upon or after arrival.

One interviewee noted that despite the generosity of the receiving communities to provide material assistance, there is still a misunderstanding with regard to the safety and security of undocumented migrants once they have crossed the border and reached their destinations:

It doesn’t matter how much we take care of them if in the end they are found detained and deported ... if they can’t stay are we really helping them all that much? We make their lives better for a handful of months or a few years... but all it takes is being pulled over at the wrong time, getting detained, and then being put on the fast track back into the very violence they escape.

As noted by another interviewee, “a lot of people don’t know about asylum, and even people who say they’re applying for asylum often know little about it.” Once undocumented migrants have waited more than a year to begin the process, or have already been deported, the burden for proving asylum cases is even greater. The whole process favors those with more resources to begin with as there are needs for expert witnesses and a lawyer. For those asylees coming from especially oppressed backgrounds – like many in the indigenous Mam community face – these added barriers make it difficult to overcome the marginality caused by lack of proper documentation. Moreover, information on how to navigate these legal processes is often not available in the asylees native Mam language.

ii) Social Connections

All of the research participants indicated the importance of work to cultivate social capital in migrant communities, either through leveraging existing kin networks or assisting with the development of new capacities and skills, or some combination of the both.

One locally-based service provider, focused primarily on assisting families, effectively sees their organization as the *port of entry* for newcomers to the community. For migrant families, the scope of the work spans a range of services that help build social links between these families and the social services available the community:

We mold to whatever the family needs. So, do they need schooling? We’ll find the schooling. Do they need resources? We’ll find the resources. Do they need food and shelter? We’ll connect them to the food and shelter. Or we will bring the agencies right here, so the families are not running around trying to find the agencies.

Critically, this work was not merely conceived as traditional service provision. Representatives at several organization were very clear that they saw a large component of their work was empowering families to be able to have *self-sufficiency*. With this understanding, for migrant families to successfully learn and build off social connections, they needed to not grow dependent on the social services themselves. This means that the workers of one organization put a large emphasis at sitting down at a shared table with these families, “*eating with them, sitting on the floor, and playing with their children.*” That’s what being a safe space was all about, of demonstrating that “*we’re one of them*” and that the “*parents are the ones in charge.*” Ultimately though, as shared by one interviewee, this process of empowerment was also a means of providing more support within communities to be able to help each other: “*we hold hands a lot at the beginning... but when you see them flying, the ones that have been here for a few years, helping the new families, that’s what we are trying to do.*”

This organization saw a large part of their mission as being “*the gathering place, the plaza*” for different members of the community as a whole – both migrants and members of the receiving community. These spaces of encounter were facilitated the by organization’s role in providing a shared space for parenting programs so that people would “*get to know each other as parents even though they don’t speak the same language.*” One example was cited whereby a white mother had noticed one of the Mam mothers looking worried and confused talking to the cashier at the local Walmart. The mother made sure to follow-up with people at the center to make sure that everything was okay. The organization’s stated goal was to create avenues for building compassion between residents and newcomers. In all these ways, the center not only seeks to provide support and gather information, but also make space for those human connections:

When their kids are raised together, they're not fearful of each other, they know each other as parents. They know that this Latina mom, who just crossed the border, wants the same thing for her child as she wants for her child, and they get to see it here. That they're not strangers... We may not all speak the same language but we all smile the same, we all wave the same, and that's what the center does it breaks those barriers.

Significant attention was also put on the need for helping parents to be teachers and “*understanding that their children are going to be growing up in a bicultural world.*” Obviously, part of this biculturalism is providing a safe place for non-dominant families to be, but this is not merely an issue of representation, or as one interviewee, a Latin@ immigrant herself, stated: “*Don't ever think that just color and accent is going to make it happen.*” Instead, for workers at one organization, the “*bicultural mission*” was one of “*breaking down the hierarchies of being behind desk, of being in charge*” and or “*not seeing these families as clients but as human beings.*” Another important success as noted by the interviewees was the multigenerational return of those who grew up in the center and later return with younger siblings and kids of their own, or sometimes “*they just come to have coffee with us even if they don't have their own kids here.*”

Surprisingly then, one of the larger difficulties identified in the Mam community has been the lack of strong connectivity within the community itself. One participant expressed some frustration that while they tend to be very self-sufficient, “*they have a different kind of ethos than the Mexican immigrants that came in the 90s... They are not as attuned to the idea of cooperation and community building and there's more of a daily survival, my-family-first kind of thing.*” While one interviewee noted the importance of the inter-group networks that these individuals bring with them, especially the networks connecting them to the Evangelical church, Mam refugees are also bringing with them very real social divisions:

There also are conflicts that come... Everyone comes from the same town... it doesn't mean that they all get along. There's in fact very strong and difficult divisions within the community. There are gangs and organized crime, and a past of a really difficult civil war and the divisions of that civil war in terms of people who may have sympathized with guerillas, or not sympathized with anyone, or had been forced to collaborate with the army, security committees, and civil patrols. All of that is still active in people's lives.

This inability to address social bonds was instead focused on the concerted effort to build social bridges. One major component of refugee assistance was by relying on volunteer teams of “advocates”. By connecting two to four “*skilled volunteers*” (like retired educators, healthcare workers, and attorneys) with a migrant family the idea was to match refugees with a “*particular type of professional need.*” Expanding beyond the more conventional idea of accompaniment for legal services, the role of these advocates was described by one interviewee as “*giving them the tools necessary to help them succeed in this country*”. This assistance includes helping find tutoring services or ESL classes, providing help with translation, help finding housing and household furniture, accompaniment to appointments or school events (like parent-teacher conferences) or simply providing company for home-bound mothers feeling lonely.

One interviewee mentioned how the presence of these advocates often help prevent discrimination. They cited one example of an El Salvadoran migrant, who was a legal resident, who went to the DMV and was turned away because the DMV workers thought the documents were fake:

People will abuse when they can, if they want you, by just looking at your face ... [that's why you need to] Go places with them. If they need to go figure something out at the social security office, you just go with them, you're just there... Just have another eye on things... Anything you need to get done to survive in this country... Often it's nice to have a face that's seen as American – a white face

Refugee assistance is also seen through the designation of “community partners” where recruitment for volunteers is carried out. These tend to be faith-based institutions from a variety of faiths and denominations. Ultimately though, one large component of this advocate role is “*people connecting to each other*”. When existing residents integrate refugees into their own social networks they can tap into a shared social capital and provide access to their own legal, family, job, and friend connections. Interviewees emphasized, that by doing things together, this also provides the opportunity for families to learn about each other’s cultures.

One issue with these volunteer teams, however, has been the difficulty in retaining long-term volunteers. As noted by one interviewee, despite six to eight new people signing up to volunteer every month, people don’t necessarily follow-up with the interest. In this way, retired people have been the most engaged as they have the most time on their hands and the ability to prioritize their volunteer work. There was also a concern noted for the lack of ongoing training for volunteers, who now only are required to complete a one-time training at the start of their assistance. Up until recently there had always been more volunteers than families to be placed with, that situation is now changing:

Every population is different. Each has a very different sense of personal space, of relationships, of hierarchy, of everything ... We need to be more perceptive and educated about the issues in each cultural setting.

As reflective of Ager and Strang’s framework, many of these questions of social connections overlapping significantly with the need to alleviate the barriers to creating those connections.

iii) Facilitators

One large barrier identified by the interview participants was the lack of ESL classes and general lack of service provision in the migrants’ native language, in the case Mam. To complicate things even further, formal literacy is often perceived to be lacking in any language. As argued by one interviewee, language skills facilitate migrants’ ability to “*be conversant with what’s going on around them, to both perceive and perceive themselves as part of what’s happening.*” Some agencies have interpretation assistance offered in Spanish, but even if they do, not all family members speak Spanish. This means that in some situations, individuals have to wait for someone bilingual (in Mam and Spanish) to go with them to appointments.

Moreover, while some men in the community tend to have some Spanish-literacy, women are primarily Mam-speakers, alluding to a gendered dimension in this barrier to access services – at times more accessible for men over women. As mentioned earlier, services provided tend to be tied to employment or expectation of employment. For mothers of small children, this creates a dependence on men within the community. One interviewee mentioned a particular worry that the women in the community, already predominately illiterate and without jobs, might face greater isolation and perpetuate their condition as an “*underclass*” in Guatemala.

Because of these limitations caused by language literacy, there was a strong mission placed on “*system changes*”, so that migrants had less institutional barriers to access services:

We have to live within the guidelines of the state... But we're changing the system because if we don't change the system then we can't deliver the services. You can't keep telling the families, 'keep changing for them,' the system also needs to change for the families... That's why we break down those walls, and if you don't think they will, trust me they do – they do break down. We will kick them, we will do whatever is necessary

In the community there were several clear examples of changes to accommodate the needs of migrants. For one, “*for the predominant culture, accessing services is easier. You have a drivers' license and you have a car.*” For families that are new arrivals don't have transportation, don't know how the bus works, can't obtain a drivers' license because of lack of documentation, or simply live in rural communities without good public transportation – the taken for granted situation of geographic distance built for automobile transportation “*pushes them back quite a few steps*”. One internal practice change has been home visits, with the organization working to accommodate the situation of families fear to go out in the street and instead staying in the home. However, the organization successfully advocated for larger important changes to be made to programs by county and state service providers.

For one, it used to be that families in rural communities had to go all the way to Eugene (the largest metropolitan area in the county) in order to obtain vaccinations for children before the start of school. While the school district provided a bus, the organization had to coordinate taking 40 children and their families on the 25-minute bus ride to get vaccinations. Now, after obtaining a grant, someone has been hired by the County to come to the local center to give the vaccines in person, significantly easing the burden on the families' ability to obtain them.

In addition to this, a number of service organizations visit the center every Friday to be able to provide services otherwise only available in Eugene. These include Lane County Public Health and the county special supplemental nutritional program. A representative from Oregon Health Plan is also now available every Wednesday and Friday in order to get families enrolled as soon as they arrive in the community. Moreover, after pressure from the local organization, there is a bus that picks up and provides transportation for these families to the center for these weekly events – picking up on average 45 children (ages 0-5 years old) and their parents. In all these ways, the organization seeks to reduce the gap in service provision as mentioned by one interviewee: “*Just because they've been granted asylum, doesn't mean that they are accessing the services they are eligible for.*”

In another example, access to the Headstart program used to require proof of income but many families did have formal employment that would give them access to this paperwork. With so much of the community working informally to collect *salal*, they often do not even have receipts from the buyers. In the end, after much advocacy by the local organization, Headstart designed a letter that allowed migrants to claim they earned a certain amount of money every month and were able to use this document to avoid having their applications denied.

However, there still exists a number of significant barriers, especially around the preparedness of the public school system. One interview noted that there are more than seventy Mam speaking kids at local elementary school that aren't citizens, a situation that is typically only seen in districts with strong refugee support services. However, in the case of rural communities in Lane County, there simply is “*no*

infrastructure to help school adjust to that.” Given the importance and dominance of the formal education system in integrating children into the receiving community, this gap is a significant cause for concern.

Another important consideration was the general climate of fear around deportation, and the renewed federal attention on detaining anyone and not just those with criminal records: *“anybody could be stopped, or questioned, or picked up, anywhere at anytime for any reason.”* Because of this omnipresent threat, simple daily tasks like taking kids to school, going to church, shopping, working, all become situations fraught with risk. This heightened reality of danger negatively impacts migrants’ lives and creates a constant sense of fear and uneasiness that is not at all experienced by citizens. Marginalization and powerlessness become necessary burdens every time public space is entered. Initially this threat of endangerment was reason to not be too outspoken about work with these communities:

Those of us who have been working with the community have intentionally kept under the radar knowing that we’re not necessarily in the most welcoming environment. I think that’s going to change just because the community of people of colors is growing and people are noticing.

One interviewee also noted that racism against indigenous communities isn’t just a white issue, and how there is racism within Latinos and Latino immigrants against these communities as well. It isn’t just racism here that is an issue but also racism *“that gets imported into the US from Mexico and Guatemala, and into these communities.”* Moreover, it is not simply threats by existing community members that pose a danger but also that of reactionary state forces as well.

Because of this, there has been a stated emphasis on know your rights work for migrants. This also includes supporting planning for more practical considerations in the case of a family member getting detained – an outcome that is met with frustration by everyone interviewed, but nonetheless, interviewees were conscious of an effort to make this possibility less impactful. This entails assistance making copies of car/house keys, documents, or simply having information to leave with caretakers.

One significantly important role within larger national networks of migrant assistance has been help by community members in bringing up asylum seekers that have just crossed the border or have been recently released from detention. Not only have these community members helped in finding them housing or finding sponsorships to place them with welcoming families, but also provide secrecy and anonymity to navigate around the potential for deportation.

iv) Markers and means

Much of the assistance received by the broader community outside of organizational assistance has come in the form of material goods. Local community members who see what’s going on at the border and want to help have been assisting through the donation of a range of household items like dishes, tables, beds, blankets, bulk food items, or financial donations to organizational service providers.

Housing continues to be a constant issue, reflective of the housing crisis of most Oregonians. One interviewee mentioned that they were aware of cases where the family spent 70% of their income on housing related expenses. This obviously left very little money remaining for other purposes and creates a dependency on food donations to feed family members. Some community members have generously offered up whole rental units to refugee families free of charge for several months and then paying well below market-rate rent afterward to help them be able to make it.

Other issues with housing simply stem from the lack of awareness on expectations and obligations of living in this country. Not only are there steep rents to pay, but “*basic stuff like how to use a thermostat, setting up a bank account, getting used to billing, paying for electricity, garbage removal*” was noted by some interviewees to be another unfamiliar dimension that is difficult for migrants to navigate alone.

With regards to health, one member of a local community organization noted that they are very cognizant of the healthiness of food provided – at events and through donations – so as not to exacerbate ongoing medical needs. Because many children have dental issues, they noted the need to provide healthy food that would also be easy to consume. And as mentioned in the section on social connections, much of the focus of community organizations has been on facilitating the successful integration of children into systems of educational access.

B. Discussion & Limitations of the Conceptual Framework

Through coding of the interviews (see table 2) I’ve identified the domains of social integration that are overlooked by the efforts of organizations in Anne Creek. More importantly though, these findings allude to some of the limited abilities for organizations to make an impact regardless of their level of concern. The disconnect in effort and impact, while in part is no doubt due to the limited scalability of under-resourced rural areas, potentially alludes to gaps in the framework that Ager and Strang offer, as I will begin to critique in the next section.

i) Interrogating the Responsibilities of Citizenship

As gleaned from the interviews, despite the strong focus on addressing the requirements of obtaining legal residency through the asylum-seeking process, there are severe limitations in the ability to local actors to change processes that are largely set at a federal level.

The vulnerable positionality of migrants displays the artificial constructs that are nation-state frameworks of citizenship. While Ager and Strang are correct in founding their social integration domains on these considerations, the framework does little in actually addressing practical means that local actors can do to impact it. Consequently, while transnational communities stand as a concrete challenge to the idea of static national identities, they are forced by the existing status-quo to navigate an institutionalized space of non-being. For Sandoval (2013):

Shadow places are spaces that breed vulnerability as the regulations that exist (the opaque body) *create* the climate that pushes these populations into the darkness where (1) they are difficult to see (remain invisible); (2) they link with other informal activities (such as criminal networkers) that expose them to greater risk and further illegitimate them; and (3) the state and employers can “wash their hands” of many social and safety responsibilities (p. 191)

Rather than a simple geographic boundary to be crossed once, the very existence of a border speaks to the exclusion of some over others to the privilege of existing in a certain space. Therefore, I would argue that Ager and Strang’s framework falls short in providing a holistic conception of integration by highlighting that it is not enough to define citizenship solely as the benefits afforded with membership and access. Citizenship must also be interrogated as a reciprocal, active responsibility toward residents in one’s community. For Staeheli, et.al (2012), this means “fostering an affective sense of citizenship –

rooted in mutuality, responsibility, membership, belonging, and care” which they critically point out “is most easily accomplished at the local level through residence and engagement with the places of daily life” (p.369). Thus, migrant integration, by virtue of the reciprocal reality of citizenship, cannot be viewed as a one-way process.

As mentioned earlier, the dominant frameworks of integration (multiculturalism and assimilation) operate within this static conception of citizenship, whereby the primacy of social cohesion erases any larger responsibility that dominant groups have. This narrowing of political scope is clear even in its most liberal manifestation, that of tolerance. It is necessary but not sufficient for receiving community members to accept the inclusion of refugees within their social systems. For Theo Goldberg (2006),

Tolerance is always expressed toward the tolerated... from the tolerating agent’s position of power. I have the power and position to tolerate you. I am active; you the tolerated passive, powerless to affect me in my tolerating save to get under my skin, make me even less accepting of your distinction. My social power to tolerate turns on all those like me likewise disposed towards you (p. 338)

To tolerate those in a less dominant social group, is to acquiesce to their necessitated existence as a consequence of unequal social structures but does nothing to question the very processes that resulted in this imbalance to begin with. The question should therefore shift from “how must migrant communities integrate into their receiving communities?” toward “what do privileged social groups owe to those that are excluded from hierarchical systems?”. The migrant is therefore not seen as an outsider but as a necessary reminder of the hegemonic structures that citizens inhabit by virtue of having won the genetic lottery of being born in the right place at the right time. Rights without solidarity toward others are simply inherited entitlements stripped of their social legacy (both as outcomes of struggle and oppression).

In this way, the residents of Anne Creek provided some examples of the ways that residents with the privilege of citizenship (or at least *perceived* citizenship) could provide allyship through their perceived claims of legitimate access, demonstrating the ability to share this socially constructed power. This is especially clear in the case of community members who were committed to help find safe passage for migrants that have recently crossed the border and are attempting to make it to their final destination in Lane County. In this way, community members efforts point to some potentially critical corollary to Ager and Strang’s domains which instead focused on the responsibilities of citizens in the receiving community. As was stated early, any conception of integration as a one-way process is bound to reinforce the systems of oppression that necessarily create the conditions of asylum seeking.

ii) Unexamined Inequalities within Social Connections

Another critical oversight by Agar and Strang’s framework is their faulty conception of social bridges and links as horizontal. Transnational communities expose more profoundly the exclusionary avenues to civic and political participation that most take for granted.

Following Cheong, et.al (2007), “social capital building is rooted in the uneven and harsh realities of the reception experience of immigration. Bonding, bridging, and linking social capital building does not occur *tabula rosa*.” (p.38) Social bridges and links are, therefore, less like horizontal connections and more akin to ladders – that allow for limited access to the distributive apparatus that ontologically

presupposes and requires inequality. Moreover, “the concept of social capital is dynamic and itself value-based. Categories of good or bad social capital are socially constructed; which ethnic groups fill each of them changes over time and is dependent on the prevailing ideological climate” (p. 25). As mentioned earlier, most programs of refugee resettlement tend to focus heavily, if not exclusively, on social connections with and across state bureaucratic apparatuses (social links) as a necessary starting point for assistance.

As was evidenced in the case study, the overwhelming urgency of the needs of refugees often channels significant focus on this connection with services. According to Beirens, et.al (2014) “newly arrived families have limited awareness of, and means to access, health and social care services provided by the mainstream, voluntary and community sectors that fulfill their basic needs” (p. 222). As formal refugee resettlement programs tend to be operationally similar to other case-oriented service and welfare provision, it is within this institutional focus that most assistance tends to be limited. As referenced to the interview participants, there is not just difficulties in “*literal linguistic translation but also civic and cultural translation.*” Thus, one of an interviewed organization’s mission is to “*help children to enter a system.*” Here then, is an instance of acknowledgment and acquiescence to existing barriers all in the name of building social capital. While crucial, the efforts of organizations to make adjustments in “*system changes*” reinforces my argument that it is not sufficient to simply integrate migrants into existing systems – the structures themselves must change as well.

Moreover, there is some question regarding the framing of migrants as *lacking* the tools and capacity to settle into receiving communities without the necessary institutional support. The overemphasis on social links, therefore has the potential to erase alternative framings of internal social capital. Even in the most positive notion, there still seems to be an oversight with how navigating a new cultural milieu, while preserving one’s own cultural traditions, is in of itself significantly difficult and demonstrative of unappreciated social dexterity on the part of migrant communities. For Keddie (2012), whose research focuses on the integration of migrant children, these “deficit understandings of difference” silence diversity and the complexity of identities and experiences” (p.210). In other words, it is easy to fall into a paternalistic mentality of service-provision (focused on gaining capital through social links) that does not allow for subjective agency over the process of integration.

This was clear in the interviews as there seemed to be a tendency to reduce circumstantial moments of limited awareness into broader examples of Mam culture. Relevant here are Young’s (2011) understandings of *cultural imperialism whereby* “the dominant meanings of society render the particular perspective of one’s own group invisible at the same time as they stereotype one’s group and mark it as Other” (p.58). This is created through an often-unexamined process of dominant groups universalizing their own experiences as the norm, and thereby generating metrics by which non-dominant groups will always fall short. For example, an interviewee seemed to refer to differing cultural notions of cleanliness and hygiene of children as a contentious point for some members of the receiving community:

How do we work with that system that is willing and ready to report that these children are coming dirty, per say, to school? ... You need to work within the system but also say ‘so this is the issue: when you don’t have water in your country of origin, you might not take a shower for a month until you can make it to the river... We have to address these issues as a community and make plans with the families.

These attempts at naming cultural differences speaks to some latent cultural misunderstandings on the part of service providers. Paradoxically, their attempts at identifying barriers to integration reproduce the very framing of Otherness that should be examined. There was continued reduction of difference of operational unfamiliarity of navigating American lifestyles or as one interviewee stated: “*knowing how to live in a 21st century developed country.*” This seemed to ignore that the entire notion of *development* is in itself deeply wrought with injustice and inequality. Not knowing how to pay electricity bills is not a sign of cultural incompetence, but rather points to the strangeness of American society that expects willful participation in these practices of concealed affluence and punishes residents (through stigmatization) that are unfamiliar with them. Criticizing rural indigenous migrants as ignorant erases any knowledge and practices they have that stem from their own modes of being and forms of resiliency.

As is reflective of a lack of examination of American cultural norms, the typical focus on language and cultural knowledge tends to isolate individual’s capacities to learn how to navigate rather than break down institutional barriers for entire groups. In this way, an assimilationist paradigm into individualist modes of being is assumed. Maldonado and Licona (2007), instead argue for a reframing of immigrants as “holders and creators” of knowledge with an intimate awareness of their own wants and needs and a capacity to be actively engaged in a reciprocal process of integration. Their analysis “interrogates and interrupts the often taken for granted assumptions regarding immigrant populations and their practices as problems that need to be solved [and begin] from an understanding that immigrants hold knowledges and capitals that can contribute to the vitality of institutions and communities though such potential is seldom explored” (p. 129).

Thus, Ager and Strang’s framework did not provide a sufficient critical perspective to address *paradoxical* needs and problems associated with social bonds versus social bridges. As we saw in the findings, while the organization were able to address in some way the development of bridges between community members, it identified the ongoing difficulty to rebuild the bonds within the refugee community members themselves. This brings the added perspective that trauma not only impacts refugees’ ability to build bridges between the incoming and receiving communities, but to also develop trust and strong intergroup connections as well. As one organization noted, there is an added importance of finding and encouraging leadership *within* the community to be able to foster those connections.

Critically important, but also unexamined by Ager and Strang’s framework, is that these conditions of belonging do not affect all groups equally, with different forms of tension and alienation arising from differing signifiers such as race, class, and gender, and when and where those identities are considered as *belonging* for the group identity. As mentioned previously, this is one of the biggest shortcomings of a purely multiculturalist perspective. The nature of belonging is gendered, with expectations and assumptions offering differing avenues for legitimate claims of being.

Given that much of the signifiers of “successful” integration are focused on public-facing signs of economic self-sufficiency, the burden of proof falls harder on women, especially single-mothers. Sandercock and Forsyth (1992) draw attention to the strict dualism of public-domestic spheres as being a misconception that advantageously favors men, instead focusing on “interconnections between gender relations in the family and the paid workplace” with emphasis “on the fact that socialization for citizenship occurs in the domestic realm” (p.53). In other words, an examination of social integration cannot be complete without taking into consideration the feminist theoretical contribution that calls

attention to the interplay between “public” and “private” spheres of social reproduction. The typical focus on economic self-sufficiency thus privileges the social integration of men over women with children who cannot enter the workforce. Problems of isolation – and therefore marginalization and powerlessness – are thus heightened further. This also ignores the role that mothers play in socializing their children to live in a bicultural world. The psychological and emotional labor that is expended to facilitate the integration of those growing up in the receiving community is ignored for its central importance. As demonstrated in Anne Creek, attention on these sites of connection has transformative potential in being able to disrupt cultural assumptions within these intimate realms of social reproduction as will be explained in greater detail in the next section.

Significantly, domestic violence is another ongoing issue within the community, alluding to another intersection of oppression that is gendered and experienced by different community members differently. Within an integration model that does not consider differences within an ethnic community itself, these concerns would be entirely overlooked. Thus, a key component of cultural integration mentioned was the need to address normalized, and culturally specific, conditions for reproducing trauma after resettlement: *“there are no resources or support for women to go to [in their home country] so when they come here there’s no reason why they would behave differently... those different forms of intersecting violences do follow people here.”* This becomes difficult if one is operating from the perspective that all refugees experience trauma equally and in no way may perpetuate it within a community. One organization mentioned how some of their work has entailed going to the migrant churches with interpreters and speaking on the need to change certain behaviors.

iii) Creating Spaces of Encounter and Disruption

While much of the Ager and Strang’s discussion on how notions of safety are affected by how members of the receiving community can create feelings of hostility, it does not place sufficient emphasis on the state’s role in propagating fear. The coercive apparatus of state immigration enforcement produces a large degree of uncertainty and fear within migrant communities that severely limits their ability to safely participate within avenues of public participation. As demonstrated in the interviews, it is this overarching fear of state retaliation – rather than local community members – that tends to be the guiding worry of organizations involved with migrant communities. As stated by Miratfab and Diaz (2013) “the fear of deportation is a heavy burden that constrains association with undocumented friends and family members. The resulting deep caution is an important factor in immigrants’ non-participation in the structures of liberal democracy and decision making” (p.355).

This policing of existence by state forces is qualitatively different than mere discrimination. With a jurisdictional monopoly and sanction to deploy violence against “illegal” communities, the state becomes an omnipresent threat. Following Staeheli (2012), “the security state that is justified by fear is enhanced by an internalized sense of fear that regulated the exercise of citizenship in a reordered border zone that reaches beyond the legal border and into the spaces of the home and community” (p.638). In this way, organizations of Anne Creek were only able to respond through very limited, reactive attempts to accommodate this fear.

Additionally, I argue that Ager and Strang leave outside their scope of their consideration the importance of *space* – how it is defined, who defines it, and how its tied to cultural/institutional narratives to belonging. As argued by Maldonado and Licona (2007):

Totalizing narratives ... work to obscure, if not obliterate, histories and thus contested understandings of space in community contexts. A focus on the dynamic nature of space allows for multiple, even competing, histories and experiences – bound by space – to be identified and reconsidered. In this sense, it enables us to pursue integration policies and practices that account for and value immigrants’ perspectives, lived experiences, and knowledges.” (p.131)

Thus, contingent upon a truly grounded discussion of social integration is a strong need to interrogate local history as related to temporal projects of exclusion and oppression; and the creation of territories of precariousness:

In thinking about integration, we must engage with an understanding that spaces and the social interactions that constitute them are imbued with racial meanings and racialized inclusions and exclusions, both symbolic and material... attentive to the historical reality of the United States and the modern world-system as racialized social systems (p.132)

By removing any illusion of demographic serendipity and instead rooting the presence of current populations within their larger arcs of structural decisions and processes, a stronger claim to belonging, more reflective of reality can be made. The protest in front the Sheriff’s Office at the start of this paper demonstrates the capacity for community members to confront these institutional forces. While law enforcement operates on the assumption that public (and at times, private) space falls within their jurisdictional domain to police, community members and organization can push back through the collective disruption of what “public space” is assumed to be. Rather than operationalize on the practice that public space is only experientially for those deemed appropriate through membership, the *public* is reclaimed, and new avenues are opened for migrants to have claims to inhabitance.

As noted by Beirens, et.al (2013), this must entail a notion of social connectivity that is not necessarily dependent on acculturation into the dominant culture. Their research found successful models of “social bridges [that were] further created and strengthened by services that promoted social and emotional literacy skills, facilitated peer relationships, created opportunities for non-verbal communication and interaction and encouraged intercultural learning” (p.227). This creation of spaces of encounter outside the realm of dominant social interactions is perhaps the most crucial space for transformation by local communities, and perhaps the most difficult to attain. As argued by Amin (2002):

“Cultural change... is likely if people are encouraged to step out of their routine environment, into other everyday spaces that function as sites of noticeable cultural questionings or transgression... Their effectiveness lies in placing people from different backgrounds in new settings where engagement with strangers in a common activity disrupts easy labelling of the stranger as enemy and initiatives new attachments. They are moments of cultural destabilization, offering individuals the chance to break out of fixed relations and fixed notions, and through this, to learn to become different through new patterns of social interaction.” (p. 969-970)

I emphasize this notion of cultural *destabilization* as a critical benchmark for community’s ability to begin the process of reciprocal integration. It is far outside this project’s scope to assess the longitudinal shift in a dominant culture’s attitudes and perceptions of migrants. However, we can attend to these microcosms of change at an interpersonal level as indicators of shifting patterns. In this way, the case study of Anne Creek did point some shifts in the individual perceptions by local community members

toward otherized identities. As one interviewee mentioned, these spaces were intended not merely to teach migrants about the cultural norms of living in this country, but as a very real form of community education for the receiving community to the experiences of the migrant community. By grounding the basis for interaction within parenting, the organization was also attempting to move past notions of fixed group identities and instead reaching toward understanding as rooted in a common human experience, albeit filtered through differing cultural lenses.

However, it is clear that much of this facilitation still operates without much agency on part of the Mam community members themselves. While these spaces tend to be more horizontal in how power is operationalized, they still lack the empowerment to be the facilitators themselves of these processes. To an extent, this shows the difficulties of operationalizing the frames for interaction outside the purviews of institutional legitimization.

iv) Unmet Needs in Addressing Economic Vulnerability

While the previous discussion pointed to some attempts by community organizations to address, or at least think about, many of the domains in Ager and Strang's framework, the area most overlooked was that of employment. This seems to stem from the perception by part of organizations is that employment is sufficient regardless of the vulnerability of the employment in question. This brings us to my last major critique with Ager and Strang's framework that seems to qualitatively equate all *employment* and *housing* as one and the same.

Questions of economic exploitation are deeply tied to migrants' marginality within the global capitalist economy. Their legal precariousness is often the very reason for working in low-paying jobs in difficult/dangerous conditions. Without similar protections afforded to citizen workers, Sandoval (2013) argues how state (in)action creates conditions for maintaining and exploiting vulnerabilities in migrant communities, enabling extraction of profit and mistreatment by employers. Since access to material goods – like housing, education, and health – is dependent upon surplus income, participation within these exploitative economies is by nature necessary for survival.

4) Concluding Insights

In response to the research questions posed at the start of this report, I have attempted to reveal the domains of social integration that are the primary concern of organizations and in doing so unveiled some important questions that could help frame efforts in the future. Regarding the foundational questions of responsibility and citizenship, the uncertainties and sheer scale of navigating asylum-claims processes are not only difficult for migrants but put an insurmountable demand for service providers ability to provide sufficient assistance to do so. I argue that the current focus on simply attempting to alleviate the wide expanse in access afforded to citizens versus non-citizens is insufficient to providing a frame for a broad-based collective response to the humanitarian crisis.

In this way, Young's (2011) most important contribution to justice theory is its rebuttal of the distributive – or liability – paradigm of justice. Rather than conceive of justice as a set of goods and ends to be redistributed, Young strongly supports a vision of justice as fundamentally relational and rooted in an examination of how *oppression* is operationalized through institutional and cultural configurations. By moving from this liability model of justice, whereby individuals are only responsible for having caused harm

without a valid excuse, Young's *social connection model* says that all agents who contribute by their actions to the structural processes that produce injustice have responsibilities to work to remedy these injustices" (2006: 102). By framing responsibility in this way, the duty to right injustices is shared across the societal spectrum. As citizens who benefit disproportionately from these unequal systems, we should begin to frame the refugee debate from the perspective of our own responsibilities and obligations we owe those who have experienced the negative underbelly of American foreign policy and the domestic economy that then exploits these vulnerabilities.

Young rests her conception of justice on the necessity to alter structural constraints that impede individuals own emancipatory potential. This enabling conception of justice refers to the "institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation" (2011: 39). This begins to move us toward a more transnational appeal to the needs of others:

Political communities have evolved in contingent and arbitrary ways that are more connected to power than to moral right... The nation-state position ... makes prior what is posterior from a moral point of view. Ontologically and morally, though not necessarily temporarily, social connection is prior to political institutions. (p. 105)

We live in a globalized world, with increasing interconnection in terms of how we consume, how we communicate, and how we live. Migration does not happen in a vacuum, but rather arises as the demographic effect of transnational processes that link societies and economies to a common fate, with drastically different outcomes depending on one's position in the hierarchical distribution of power and resources. Thus, I do not find it appropriate to engage in a conversation on social integration without, like Young, clarifying our conceptions and meanings of justice through the lens of existing oppression. Integration without justice is only fated to reinforce different forms of exclusion and inaccessibility.

Moreover, as argued by Anderson (2000), "the local of everyday life is a crucial relational field within which qualitative determinations over national belonging are grounded" (p. 10). It is here in these local processes of organization and participation that we can begin to interrogate the narrow understandings of belonging as circumscribed to citizenship. Instead, she calls for the need to think "post-nationally" and seek a "new ethics of engagement across groups [that] reside in acknowledging the transitional terrain of encounter, exchange, memory, desire, and struggle" (Anderson, 2000: 12). I hope this case study has begun to show that these questions are not simply academic exercises, instead pointing toward the potential for local service providers to begin making headway in the creation of these transformative spaces. I offer the following three considerations to be further explored by practitioners and further research:

1. **Create spaces for encounter that respects difference but does not reinforce Otherness:** The most positive – and frankly unexpected – finding in this case study was the strong emphasis by certain organizations to create spaces of encounter and interaction across multiple groups in the community. Critically, these spaces were not specifically focused on being sites of inter-ethnic exchange, but instead intended to create understanding that bridging through shared human experiences like sharing food and childrearing. In other words, rather than positioning social groups from the positionality of their difference and alterity, social groups were engaging in a space whereby their commonalities with foregrounded. While there are still some limitations with regard to groups to being engaged in dialogue given the barriers of language, these spaces

clearly demonstrated a capacity to shift the preconceived assumptions on the part of receiving community members toward migrants entering the community.

2. **Create mechanisms for migrants to take ownership over the integration process:** One clear thread throughout the case study was the lack of spaces whereby the refugee community was able to frame and dictate the parameters of engagement. As discussed earlier, some cultural misunderstandings continued to operate even within the framings of the most engaged community organizations. While I do not claim to know what a process driven by their own identified needs and values would look like, I do imagine that the transfer of agency over to the community members themselves would allow for a further solidification of goal outlined in the previous consideration. Moreover, it seems that there is an inherent lack of capacity within the organizations themselves to address some of the issues of trauma that are negatively impacting the social bonds within the community. These community-led efforts should therefore include some culturally-specific means of processing through the traumas embedded in the collective memory of these communities.
3. **Engage in advocacy to address economic situation of migrants:** While organizations were clearly engaged in the urgent needs of building social connections and addressing certain barriers to services, there was a significant lack of concern regarding the vulnerabilities that caused by the of employment obtained by refugees. Consequently, central economic conditions that then impacted households' capacity to access other domains – like education, healthcare, etc – were lost within a more crisis-oriented approach toward addressing needs. Without a serious interrogation of the economic system that migrants are being expected to integrate into, there is some question as to the long-term viability of the programs and projects that these organizations are engaged in.

The emerging transnationalism of a rural community like Anne Creek provided a concrete example of how processes of social integration are playing out in the localized and intimate experiences of migrants and the attempts by receiving community members to respond to those needs. As has been continuously highlighted in this report, questions of the social integration of refugees into resettlement sites not only a pressing issue of urgency but a complex confrontation with deeply embedded inequalities that cannot be alleviated by the efforts of a handful of hardworking community members. For practitioners engaged in these communities and researchers delving into more substantive research question, I hope a central concern oriented toward social justice has been imparted. While the central gears and mechanisms that create the foundational imbalances within our society may seem too distant and impossibly out of reach, our own agency as historic actors give us the capacity to create some positive change, if not our own efforts of solidarity in our most intimate human connections but spiraling out into the localized communities that ground our collective experiences.

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