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**Re-thinking Integration as Reciprocal and Spatialized Process**

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**Abstract:**

In this article, the authors contribute to the ongoing discussions of integration by articulating a theoretical framework that attends to the complex and dynamic relationship between immigrant and non-immigrant populations as they interact within and with the spaces that have come to known as “new destinations.” The proposal is based on the re-conceptualization of integration that, first, defines it as necessarily distinct from assimilation, second, engages and is informed by an analysis of space as dynamic, contested, and racialized and third, focuses on re-spatialization as an opportunity for re-politicization. The authors ‘posit that integration must involve substantive inclusion of both immigrant and non-immigrant populations (in their heterogeneity) in the public sphere.

**Key Words:** New Destinations, Midwest immigration, racialization, assimilation, spacialization

“Host societies have become unnerved over the effect rapid and substantial immigration has on their ability to maintain their basic social and cultural identity. They are beginning to demand that newcomers adhere to the receiving society’s values and institutional arrangements” (Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Migration Policy Institute, 2006)

“Tolerance is always expressed towards 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... Race disappears into the realm of sociality, invisibly holding the social fabric together even as it tears apart” (David Theo Goldberg, 2006, 338-39).

“The conceptual opposite of hegemonic integration is a mutually beneficial integration based on solidarity and the authentic and democratically determined development needs of [a] region... Integration must be seen as something taking place at distinct levels from below, from among our peoples themselves, from within migrant populations, and at a cultural level” (Dello Buono, 2006, 9).” (Richard Dello Buono, 2006).

## **Introduction**

In the United States, growing immigration and the continuous replenishment of immigrant populations, particularly those from Latin America (Waters and Jimenez 2005), have increasingly brought questions of integration to the fore at the level of communities, states, and nationally. In the past few years, states such as Colorado, New Jersey, and Illinois have identified integration as a key concern, and have articulated a statewide vision for integration (Montalto 2006; New Americans Policy Council 2006; Downs-Karkos 2004). Similarly, the prestigious Migration Policy Institute (MPI) has identified integration as a key policy concern at the national level, recently launching a National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, to provide “those working on (integration) issues at the local, state, and national level the research and data that will guide them toward effective policies and practices.” Matters of integration are increasingly important in the rural Midwest, where since the 1980s restructuring of the meatpacking industry, employer recruitment efforts, and a number of state-led economic development initiatives have turned relatively homogeneous communities into “new destinations” for rapidly growing numbers of predominantly Latino/a immigrants (Kandel and Parrado 2005; Flora et al. 2000; Gouveia and Saenz 2000; Martin, et al. 1996).

In this paper, we seek to contribute to ongoing discussions of integration by articulating a theoretical framework that attends to the complex and dynamic relationship between immigrant and non-immigrant populations as they interact within and with the spaces that have come to be known as “new destinations.” Specifically, we propose a re-conceptualization of integration that, first, defines it as necessarily distinct from assimilation, second, engages and is informed by an analysis of space as dynamic, contested, racialized (Harvey 1996; 2000; Massey 1994; 2005), and third, focuses on re-spatialization as an opportunity for re-politicization. That is, we posit that integration must involve substantive inclusion of both immigrant and non-immigrant populations (in their heterogeneity) in the public sphere. We identify “new destinations,” and in particular the rural Midwest, as the spaces within which questions of integration are currently circulating, and as the focus of our emerging research. Our analysis interrogates and interrupts the often taken for granted assumptions regarding immigrant populations and their practices as problems that need to be solved. We begin from the understanding that immigrants hold knowledges and capitals that can contribute to the vitality of institutions and communities, though this potential is seldom explored. We draw from scholarship which challenges deficit theories of Latinos/as and Latina/o immigrants and mobilizes a reframing of immigrants as “holders and creators” of knowledge who have the potential to be actively involved in integration efforts. Finally, we begin to identify some implications of our theoretical framework for the study of the dynamics of integration in new destinations, and for policy, and social practice.

### A Critical Look at Assimilationist Models of Integration

In the United States, integration is often conceived and pursued uni-directionally. That is, integration efforts are often conceptualized by members of receiving communities and deployed from established institutional sites, with the onus of change imposed on immigrant populations. The assumed role of receiving communities (including community institutions and organizations) is often thought to be that of helping immigrants become “absorbed” into dominant culture and practices (Migration Policy Institute 2006). In this way, integration is a way of managing immigrant populations to become like their receiving communities, and is effectively conflated with assimilation (San Juan 2002; 1992).

The assimilationist model of integration positions immigrants as community outsiders, and defines change in terms of the reproduction of dominant social structures and cultural identities. In this sense, change is not but the reproduction of sameness (Alcoff 2006; Garland and Chakraborti 2006; Essed 2005; Essed & Goldberg 2002; San Juan 2002; Essed 1991), or what Philomena Essed has termed *cultural cloning*. Assimilationist models of integration pursue versions of cultural cloning that are unidirectional (*they* must change to be more like *us*).

Significantly, as Essed notes, cultural cloning is implicated in the reproduction of privilege and power. Practices of exclusion are not simply based on perceived difference but also reveal a “preference for *sameness*,” especially in high status positions. Such preferences work as a function of social cohesion, which is predicated on an imagined homogeneity (Essed 2005, 229). Cultural cloning also works to effectively exclude those who are *not the same* from full social, political, and cultural membership in receiving communities. While segments of receiving communities often express a willingness to embrace the contributions of immigrants (the “pluralist” position identified by Flora et al. 2000), such embracing often remains in the realm of ethnicity and culture (e.g., the embracing of ethnic food, music, festivals, and other “cultural products”) and does not include a transformation of the public sphere towards greater inclusiveness and power sharing (see Massey’s discussion of the public realm 2005; and San Juan’s critique of multiculturalism 2002).

Essed’s discussion of practices of exclusion in racialized spaces illuminates our analysis of integration in several ways. On the one hand, it helps us think about the ways in which dominant visions of space and identity can lead to assimilationist practices. On the other hand, Essed’s analysis brings into focus the ways in which groups and communities often create the illusion of homogeneity and cohesion in ways that normalize and further entrench inequality. Cultural cloning can be understood as a set of practices that pursue and perpetuate the reproduction of sameness. Such practices turn difference into inequality, and therefore preclude the engagement of, and benefit from, immigrant knowledges and capitals. Our analyses of 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.

The assimilationist model of integration has not only been dominant in policy circles, but has also been pervasive in the scholarly literatures in various fields, such as sociology (for a review of the sociological literature on integration as assimilation, see Waters and Jimenez 2005), political science (e.g., Huntington 2004) and education (see the literatures critiqued by Delgado Bernal 2002 and by Villenas & Dehyle 1999). However, there is a growing awareness in both scholarly and policy circles that a monoculturalist, unidirectional model of integration is problematic. It has become increasingly apparent that

integration must entail change on behalf of both immigrant *and* non-immigrant populations. It needs to be understood as a process that “engages both the immigrant and receiving community, and involves an ongoing renegotiation of social, economic, and political relations and power,” (MPI 2006, 3). Further, as Fix (2007, vii) argues:

“Integration implies a two-way process that involves change on the part not just of immigrants but of members of the receiving community... Successful integration builds communities that are stronger economically and more inclusive socially and culturally... Integration can also be defined by what it clearly is not—the formation of an ethnically identifiable bottom class made up of immigrant groups or communities of immigrant descent.”

We anchor our subsequent analysis, then, in a definition of integration as a two-way (and we argue, potentially multidirectional) process. Following, we discuss how scholarship in critical geography and racialization informs our analysis of integration.

### **What does space have to do with integration**

We contend that an understanding of space must inform our analyses of the barriers to, and the potentials for, integration. By “space”, we do not mean a generic collection of geographic features, or a fixed area that serves as ecological or geographic context or backdrop for social interaction. We use space here in the sense articulated by Massey (2005) and other feminist and critical geographers. For Massey, space is a relational production, that is to say, a product of social relations, and thus, necessarily political. Space emerges through active material practices (see also Katz 2006). It is never complete, never finished. Rather, it is the sphere of dynamic simultaneity constantly disconnected by new arrivals and determined by new relations. To capture such a dynamic and contested nature of space, we engage a narrative-based definition of space as “stories so far” (see Hayden 2006; Massey 2005). Geography is a series of “erasures and overwritings that have transformed the world” and our understandings of it (Massey 2005, 110). Space becomes a place of potential shock that is indeterminate and constructs geographies, histories, and even subjectivities.

Totalizing narratives, such as those that underlie cultural cloning and assimilationist models of integration, 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.

In addition, integral to our analysis of integration is a focus on re-spatialization as an opportunity for re-politicization. Much like space, the “public sphere” is the product of specific power relations (or in Massey’s terms, power-geometries), and as such it entails exclusions as well as inclusions. Through a focus on spatialized practices (who is present in what spaces, who interacts with whom and where, whose meanings are visible or invisible, present or absent in spaces) we can begin to consider who is included, excluded, and displaced from the public sphere. As Massey notes, “conceptualizing space as open, multiple and relational, unfinished and also becoming, is a prerequisite for history to be open and thus a prerequisite, too, for the possibility of politics” (2005, 59).

Finally, we want to engage Massey's (2005) interruption of a linear and causal relationship between the local and the global. As she cogently argues, the local is neither a mere product of the global, nor an inevitable victim of globalization. Instead, social relations mutually produce and reproduce both the local *and* the global in contexts that are always contested and contingent. Such shift in focus from "one-way-ness" to relational production has significant implications for our understanding of integration. Specifically, Massey's argument implies, indeed necessitates, a multi-directional approach to (the histories of) contested and contingent terrains as important considerations in the pursuit of democratizing practices.

### **The Racialized Spaces of Integration**

In order to ascertain how different spaces (as defined above) are implicated in the production and maintenance of barriers to integration, and how re-spatialization might contribute to realizing potentials for integration, we must attend to the ways in which such spaces are imbued with and shaped by ideologies and relations of power. One such ideology and relation is that of race.<sup>1</sup> While race has been shown not to be a biological or genetic reality, as a social construct it has been powerful and enduring. In the United States and throughout the modern world-system, race has been implicated in a wide range of social processes, from the formation of identities and cultural forms to political mobilization. Further, race has been a structuring principle of societies, becoming "real in its consequences" in the sense that it is intertwined with the distribution of power and resources (Winant 2001). We use the term racialization to denote an understanding of race as a process and relation, which is historically-contingent, and always in flux. Racialization can be defined as the production, reproduction of and contest over racial meanings<sup>2</sup> and the social structures in which such meanings become embedded

In thinking about integration, we must engage 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 (Goldberg 2006; Essed and Goldberg 2002; Essed 2005; 1991). For example, racialization is implicated in the production of meanings about space, in the level and type of interaction that occurs between immigrant and non-immigrant populations in various spaces, as well as in the formal and informal norms governing and regulating uses of space (Low and Smith 2006).

Engaging an analysis of racialization as it affects integration (in the context of specific socially-produced spaces), is not to be divisive, as some analysts have argued (e.g., Fix 2007), but to be attentive to the historical reality of the United States and the modern world-system as racialized social systems (Bonilla-Silva 2006; 2001; 1997). The belief that anti-immigrant sentiments, policies, and practices are "not about race," and the assumption that the dynamic between immigrants and receiving societies is somehow devoid of racial content, ignores race and racism<sup>3</sup> as historical and systemic phenomena.<sup>4</sup> The ways in which racialization and racism (which, as articulated above, are different but related) are implicated in the production of meanings about, and in the movement and conditions of immigrant populations in the United States and around the globe, have been abundantly discussed and documented (see for example, Goldberg 2006; Maldonado 2006; Winant 2006; 2001; Fekete 2004; Grosfoguel 2004; Kim 1999). For, example, a growing body of scholarship from various disciplines calls attention to the ways in which the history of racialization and colonization of Latino/a populations informs public perceptions of and practices towards Latinos/as (e.g., Rodriguez 2005; Santa Ana 2002; Gutierrez 1996).

These works have illustrated, for example, how the public rhetoric that frames Latino/a immigrant populations and practices is often coded with de-humanizing characteristics, as has been the case in the deployment of notions such as “aliens,” “wetbacks,” and “illegals” (see also Flores 2003; Villenas & Dehyle 1999; Bartolome & Macedo 1997).

As Goldberg (2006) reminds us, race is not simply a set of ideas or understandings, but significantly, a way (or ways) of being, living and making meaning in the world. Therefore, we must attend to racism in its spatio-historical conditions and expressions. In studying how racism affects integration, then, our task is to identify regional mappings of racisms in their spaces of origination and in their historically-specific manifestations. To be relevant, that is, in order to inform effective integration policies, emerging scholarship about new destinations must engage an analysis of how racialization is occurring in formal and informal contexts within such spaces, as well as the particular modes of articulation of racism found there. Likewise, in light of the point raised earlier that social relations mutually produce both the local and the global (and other scales in between), we must engage a relational understanding of racialized spaces. For example, we must be attentive to how racialized narratives of the nation become articulated with narratives about local spaces and identity in ways that effectively include or exclude segments of immigrant populations. Narratives of the nation and of community are implicated in models of integration. It is important to emphasize that these narratives are not merely in the realm of the discursive, but have material implications as well. They are embedded in and also re-produce material conditions and relations, inclusions and exclusions (Doane 2006).

### **Integration in new destinations**

Research on community responses to immigration in new destinations consistently shows a polarity between those who generally disapprove of the immigrant presence due to perceptions of immigrant illegality or criminality and those who see ethnic diversity as generally good (Flora et al. 2000; Fennelly (forthcoming)). Likewise, Grey and Woodrick have found through a host of studies that what they call the 20-60-20 rule tends to operate in rural communities in Iowa. That is, about 20 percent of local residents actively welcome immigrant newcomers and are open to making things work. About another 20 percent intransigently oppose a growing immigrant presence. The remaining 60 percent is ambivalent about newcomers and fearful of change. Grey and Woodrick’s work also replicates the Flora et al. (2000) finding that the division between those who embrace new immigrants and those who do not, corresponds to a division between those who see immigrant influx as an increase in lawlessness, and those who see it as needed or inevitable diversification and change. For example, a recent study in Marshalltown, Iowa, shows that while many Anglo residents have received immigrants enthusiastically, perceiving that their arrival has contributed to the long term social and economic well-being of the community, others vehemently object to undocumented (illegal) immigration, and associate immigrants with perceived increases in crime, and with a corporate scheme to weaken unions and lower wages (Grey and Woodrick 2005). The tension between legalists and pluralists is also evident at the level of public agencies and community institutions. The pervasiveness of this polarity is symptomatic of the larger structural context in which community change occurs, and specifically of the relation and tension between globalization, nation building, and community building as racialized and spatialized projects in the United States (Rai 2002; Goldberg 2002). However, in order to inform effective integration policy, our analyses of community responses to immigration must extend beyond an examination of the presence of

pro-immigrant, anti-immigrant, and undecided camps.

In new destinations, particularly in rural spaces, the rapid and unprecedented growth of Latino/a and Asian immigrant populations represents not only a marked demographic shift, but also significant changes in community identity and dynamics, and in how quality of life is defined and pursued. Rural spaces have been historically defined and nostalgically represented in relation to White European ethnicities (Garland and Chakraborti 2006; Tauxe 1998). In the U.S., the very presence of Latino/a and Asian immigrant populations is often associated with the demise of such a romanticized image of rural life (Cantu 1995). However, such racialized ways of defining rural spaces and rural life are not unique to a U.S. context. For example, Garland and Chakraborti (2006) identify the strategies that receiving communities in England deploy to preserve traditional community space. They also identify spatialized practices that reinforce authority and exclusion. Their research distinguishes the experiences of non-immigrant newcomers from immigrant newcomers in rural contexts. Interestingly, Garland & Chakraborti use the language of “shock” to describe how rural community members respond to visible differences in newcomers from non-dominant ethnic groups. They conclude that efforts on behalf of receiving community members to preserve the status quo often result in discourses and practices that represent an idealized version of historic space. As Massey (2005: 124), points out, these nostalgic articulations of space and time “rob others of their histories (their stories).” Such idealized representations fail to offer insights into the complexities of rural life (Cloe 2004). In his investigation into the politics of rural community, Little (2002) explores how communities pressure newcomers to assimilate to traditional ways of doing things in the form of obligation and even coercion (see also Giddens 1994). Some research suggests that social structures and practices are particularly impenetrable for ethnic newcomers in rural contexts (see, for example, Magne 2003; Francis and Henderson 1992; and Saunders et al. 1978).

Additionally, existing research focusing on new destinations suggests that immigrant and non-immigrant populations might differ in their definitions of community and quality of life. For example, Dalla and Christensen (2005) point out that “local residents often report feeling the quality of life in their community has deteriorated given the large influx of employment-seeking immigrant laborers.” In addition, Cantu (1995) shows that what Anglo residents perceive as hospitality (which they define as a salient element of community identity and quality of life) may be experienced as unwanted surveillance and social regulation by immigrant Latino/a residents. In addition, there is distrust of state authorities (e.g., police and ICE) among Latino/a populations with various legal and citizenship statuses. Hence, notions of safety as an element of quality of life can be expected to differ across populations. In effect, the existing literature on community responses to demographic change in rural spaces suggests that while some quality of life outcomes might be the same across populations, some outcomes and the factors that mediate them might differ. Importantly also, quality of life outcomes might be ordered or prioritized differently among immigrant and non-immigrant populations (Garland and Chakraborti 2006; Tileaga 2006; Chavez 2005; Cantu 1995). Shifting definitions of quality of life and contested prioritizing of quality of life outcomes have implications for how integration is defined and pursued (Tileaga 2006; Augoustinos and Reynolds 2001; Rapley 2001).

Regarding the relationship between racialized articulations of rural space and the question of integration, it is important to attend to what Cantu has termed the peripheralization of Latino/a immigrants. Cantu’s work uses archival and ethnographic data to explore practices that perpetuate an “insider/outsider” or “core/periphery” distinction

between receiving community members and Latino/a immigrants in rural Iowa. As Cantu shows, evidence of this outsider status is represented, in part, in receiving community members' erroneous mis-representations of new immigrants as "Mexican." Increasing numbers of Central Americans and Mexican-Americans, too, are present in Iowa's rural settings.

### **From Deficit Theories to Asset Theories**

Assimilationist models of integration are grounded (explicitly or not) on deficit theories of immigrant populations and their practices. However, various literatures increasingly point to the limitations of deficit models, identifying the existence of multiple (though seldom explored) capitals within immigrant populations. One such literature has specifically identified circulating *funds of knowledge* in immigrant communities.

Research by Gonzalez et al shows immigrant households as "containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great potential [which] contrasts sharply with prevailing and accepted perceptions of working-class families as somehow disorganized socially and deficient intellectually; perceptions that are well accepted and rarely challenged in the field of education and elsewhere" (2005, 75). They specifically document relationships and networks of communication and alternative forms of learning that exist in such households. Similarly, Villenas & Deyhle (1999) discuss multiple ethnographic studies of Latino schooling experiences that, like the work of Gonzalez et al, "give powerful testimony to the cultural strengths and assets of Latina/Mexicano family education" (421).

Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (1995) and Carger's (1996) work also documents Latina/o students' practices as demonstrating resilience, persistence, and ethics. Specifically, these researchers show that Central American students demonstrate a "loyalty and commitment" to family that serve, not as a deficit, as argued in some analyses of familialism, but instead as positive stimulus for educational success and community vibrancy. Similarly, Delgado Bernal discusses how a Eurocentric perspective has been used "as the basis for a deficit understanding of Mexican culture throughout the 1900s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century" (2002, 110). She uses critical race theory and Latino/a Critical Theory, *LatCrit*, to investigate the knowledges that circulate in communities to inform daily practice. Focusing on the particular context of education, the funds of knowledge literature shows that cultural resources such as *dichos*, *consejos*, kitchen talk, autobiographical stories, and pedagogies of the home are indeed strengths and strategies found and productively mobilized in immigrant communities.

Nevertheless, an insistence on the need to assimilate to dominant cultural norms prevails in school settings. One area in which this is evident is in language education. Specifically, the English-only agenda is steeped in deficit understandings of linguistic diversities. It positions immigrant students as linguistically deficient, instead of as students who are capable of manipulating not only "two language systems," but also as holders of "sophisticated and specialized knowledge" that allows them to act as translators and cultural brokers for their families (Vasquez et al. 1994 as quoted in Villenas & Dehyle 1999, 426).

We concur with Villenas & Dehyle (1999) when they point out that the assumptions and rhetorical framings that researchers begin with are implicated in their research outcomes. Further, we argue that theories that are based in deficit models and understandings of immigrants have implications for practice. Therefore, the analysis that we begin to articulate here seeks to interrupt the assumptions that are steeped in deficit models. We specifically seek to contribute to scholarship that asks how the cultural knowledges

within and between immigrant communities can and do contribute to mutually transformative integration practices (Gonzalez et al. 2005; Delgado Bernal 2002; Villenas & Deyhle 1999).

However, a rhetorical reframing through counter-narratives and a commitment to new assumptions is but a beginning. Recognizing a population's strengths and potentials in the context of unchanging social hierarchies and practices is not enough. Institutional structures and practices must be mutable in order to overcome the barriers to integration and effectuate real and reciprocal social transformation. The re-framing of immigrant populations as holders and creators of knowledge and as potential assets necessarily changes how we imagine, pursue, and practice integration. Our questions acknowledge that there are not only multiple stakeholders in questions, practices, and policies of integration, but that there must also be multiple contributors to integration as an affirmative and dynamic practice.

### **Another Integration is Possible: Some Thoughts on the Implications of our Framework**

Integration, as theorized above, requires that we pay attention to the perspectives, structural positionalities, and capitals of immigrant and non-immigrant populations. In particular, in new destinations where there is a growing Latino/a presence, research that seeks to inform integration must attend to diverse Latino/a perspectives and experiences. National origin, length of residence in the United States and in a particular community, age at time of arrival, birth cohort, legal and citizenship status, racial composition, are all factors that affect the experiences and conditions of immigrant populations, including Latinos/as. While this has been extensively documented (much research has attended to "segmented assimilation" trajectories among immigrant groups; see for example, Abrego 2006; Valdez 2006; Waters and Jimenez 2005; Zhou 1997; and Portes and Zhou 1993), the implications of heterogeneity within immigrant populations have yet to be fully considered in relation to integration policy.

The theoretical framework outlined in this paper provides a useful analytical vantage point to investigate tools and strategies for community integration from diverse immigrant perspectives. It allows not only for the identification of immigrant capitals, but also for the identification of mutually transformative practices that might already be at play among immigrant and non-immigrant communities. By reframing immigrants as agents of social change we address the paucity of research on the local benefits of a transforming demographic, from the transformation of cultural practices, to positive institutional change.

The framework we have outlined also prompts us to ask how diversity, within and beyond an immigrant population affects the networks that facilitate or impede integration. For example, our exploratory research on Latino/a views and experiences regarding integration in Perry, Iowa, suggests that there are differences in the ways in which Latinos/as of different national origins and with different lengths of residence (both in the United States and in Perry) are included and engaged in official efforts toward integration. Our preliminary analysis also suggests that those Latinos/as who are involved in official integration efforts in Perry tend to have higher levels of formal education than most Latinos/as in Perry, speak English, and have been in the United States and/or in Perry for a considerable length of time. They tend to differ from Latinos/as (who are newer to Perry and are not active in official integration efforts) in their views about integration. Specifically, the former tend to adhere to more assimilationist views of integration. In some ways, this

should come as no surprise, given that these individuals have in many ways already adopted dominant values and practices. However, one question that this finding has brought up for us is to what extent broad inclusiveness is accomplished through the incorporation of these particular segments of the Latino/a population in the planning and implementation of integration efforts.

Ongoing discussions among scholars and community practitioners, including recent discussions held in Marshalltown IA, under the sponsorship of Iowa State University's North Central Regional Center for Rural Development (NRCRD), have highlighted the need for qualitative studies that examine the micro dynamics that unfold in receiving communities. We posit that we must not only attend to the micro dynamics between immigrant and non-immigrant populations, but also to micro dynamics *within* immigrant populations. Both have the potential to affect integration.

The case of Perry, Iowa, also provides an interesting context in which to analyze how the production of racialized historic space is implicated in the production of particular relations between diverse immigrant and non-immigrant populations, with repercussions for integration. For example, "Hometown Perry," is a local effort among whose stated goals is that of studying, understanding, communicating, and celebrating the vital contribution small towns have made to American life "as seen through the prism of the immigrant experience in Perry, Iowa, and other small towns across the Midwest." The ways in which such "immigrant experience" is framed discursively, through symbolic displays and other representations, in the local built environment have repercussions for integration. Images of Perry as representative of "small town America" have symbolic consequences insofar a space thusly defined necessarily involves the privileging of particular histories and identities (as analysts such as Cantu and Garland and Chakraborti have shown) Such symbolic framing entails material repercussions as well, for example, to the extent that development efforts seek to be congruent with local identity so conceived. The extent and the manner in which small town America constitutes a racial project (in the sense articulated by Omi and Winant 1994), with particular symbolic and material consequences for different groups, including various immigrant populations, merits analysis and necessitates empirical investigation.

Intriguing and important also is the question of how space (as a tangible, observable, socially-mediated and socially-shaped reality) might give us clues into existing barriers, opportunities, and instances of integration. Through textual and discourse analysis, we might examine official documents (including maps) and textual representations of rural communities for evidence of how integration is pursued and represented. As Del Casino and Hanna acknowledge, ambiguities and tensions in social identities can be read in mapped spaces. In their words, social spaces are sites of identity construction that can highlight the ways that identities are based on "performances of social actors operating in and through these spaces" (2000, 43). Similarly, the research by Villenas & Dehyle discussed in the previous section illustrates how material space matters for Latina/o students in educational contexts. Often Latina/o students are not just relegated to different spaces (e.g., classrooms) but through the demarcation of different spaces, they are also placed in what they identify in their counter narratives as "lower" positions vis-à-vis non-immigrant students. Villenas and Dehyle's findings suggest that, in our effort to identify best practices of integration, attending to the production of space and spatialized practices within particular institutional contexts such as schools and workplaces is also imperative.

Building on Cantu's research cited earlier, we suggest that the production of mapped

space by Latina/o immigrants might highlight the ways in which space and identities are contested and mutually constructed within and across immigrant and non-immigrant populations in new destinations in the rural Midwest. We posit that maps produced by immigrants might be interpreted as “representations from within,” and might help us understanding how integration is pursued, resisted, imagined, and accomplished from diverse cultural and structural locations. Our emerging research in Perry, Iowa, seeks precisely to identify and explore spaces as they are experienced and utilized – or not – by Latino/a immigrant populations. As Cantu (1995, 409) concludes, “given more time, Latinos may have opportunities to challenge the preconceptions of Anglo residents through dialogue and social exchange.” Dialogue and social exchange are, indeed, necessary components of integration as a reciprocal process, and they might be enabled or hindered through particular spatialized practices.

Regarding the existence of diverse *funds of knowledge* within immigrant populations, the question has emerged in our exploratory research in Perry, Iowa, of how informal mechanisms of information dissemination such as *chisme* might also work to build networks or maintain boundaries within various Latino/a immigrant populations, with consequences for integration. *Chisme* is an important source of feedback regarding cultural events for those working from within and on behalf of the Latina/o population in Perry. Informal knowledges and mechanisms such as *chisme* can inform integration as it is imagined, conceived, practiced, and pursued from different locations, and thus have the potential to transform social practices and to contribute to effective policy. We see a need to identify other funds of knowledge that might exist within the Latino/a immigrant populations and to investigate how they might inform practice in a wide range of community contexts from schools, to workplaces, to health care institutions and practices.

As scholars, policy makers, and individuals and groups within many communities across the globe have argued, another integration is possible, and indeed, necessary. Such integration must be informed by the perspectives and experiences of diverse and non-dominant immigrant populations at the level of communities, but also at the level of nations and the world-system. As scholars, there are multiple ways in which we might contribute to identifying best practices for integration. One such way is by documenting the capitals and funds of knowledge that exist within immigrant populations. Another way is by producing theoretically-engaged analyses that account for the “inconvenient fact” that power relations and structures affect the meanings and the practices regarding immigrants that circulate within communities, nations, and regions of the world. Such understanding is necessary for meaningful transformation of the very structures that to date remain impenetrable for many immigrants.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Here we are invoking Howard Winant's definition of race as "a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies" (Winant 2001:317).

<sup>2</sup> Racial meanings involve essentializing on the basis of biology or culture.

<sup>3</sup> We engage here E. San Juan's definition of racism as "ideas, systems of thought, institutional practices and all behavior that deterministically ascribe fixed roles and negatively evaluated group characteristics (moral, intellectual, cultural) to peoples on the basis of selected physical attributes whereby their oppression and exploitation are legitimized and perpetuated" (1992:2). We want to move away from understandings of racism as a pathology that afflicts maladapted or "prejudiced" individuals, toward a sociologically-informed understanding of racism as the normal outcome of the racialized structure of society (Bonilla-Silva, 1997; 2001; Bonilla-Silva and Lewis, 1999, Feagin, 2000). Racism is systemic, in the sense that it is woven into "normal" everyday institutional discourse, social organization, and practice. It is sustained or maintained on a day-to-day basis, often despite no overt intention of individuals.

<sup>4</sup> These positions reflect and represent colorblindness, which has emerged as the dominant racial ideology in the contemporary United States (Winant, 2001; Bonilla-Silva, 2001; 2006; Ansell, 2006). Colorblindness denies the significance of race, while ignoring enduring situations of racial inequality.