A Comparative Study: Tucson, AZ and Colorado Springs, CO

Discrimination of Intersectional Identities

A SENIOR CAPSTONE PROJECT
Presented to
The Department of Anthropology
The Colorado College

By

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2018

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Date: April 20, 2018

Abstract

Discrimination comes in many forms especially amongst intersectional identifying people. This study focuses on the different types of discrimination that native Spanish-speaking women workers face often in Tucson, Arizona and Colorado Springs. This comparative study discusses and explores the idea of how distance from the U.S./Mexico Border plays a role in the types of discrimination these women face. Some common types of discrimination encountered include: racism, colorism, sexism, classism, and discrimination based on language fluency and/or pronunciation. Distance plays a large factor in shaping political and social cultures of Tucson, Arizona and Colorado Springs. The results show that in Tucson, Arizona, due to its closeness to the Border, there are many more Spanish-speakers and there are clear legal policies that particularly target Spanish-speaking populations. Meanwhile in Colorado Springs, there are lower percentages of Spanish-speaking populations, therefore, the discrimination can be much stronger since some people may not be accustomed to hearing Spanish being spoken, or sometimes not as strong as in Tucson because there are not as many laws directly targeted towards these populations since Colorado Springs is further from the Border. That's not to say it doesn't exist, because it is clear that social culture and media both target Spanish-speaking populations more often than laws in Colorado Springs. Both cities' social and political cultures strongly impact the types of discrimination these women face in this study.

Honor Pledge
On my honor, I have neither given, nor received, any unauthorized aid on this project.
Honor Code Upheld.

Signature: *Audriana Santana Alvarado*

Date: April 2nd, 2018

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Acknowledgments
This Capstone Project could not have been completed without the extraordinary advice from the Anthropology Department, Professor Christina Leza, Professor Mario Montaño, and Professor Krista Fish.

I also give a special thank you to Professor Clara Lomas, Professor Eric Popkin, Mr. Matus and Ms. Rosemary, Ivana Murillo Rascón, and Javier F. López Fabián for support along the research process.

Last but not least, thank you to my mother for guiding my thoughts throughout the entire course and instilling in me the passion to learn.

I am very blessed to have the support and friendship of all of the people listed. Without you this work would be incomplete.

Thank you.

With all my love and gratitude,
Audriana S. Alvarado '18

Introduction

Tucson, Arizona and Colorado Springs, Colorado are both two very distinct cities culturally, politically and socially, and in distance compared to the U.S./Mexico Border. In each city there are many different factors that affect how native Spanish-speaking women are treated such as the state laws, the cultural dynamics, and the histories of where they live. With that being said, I have chosen these two cities to be the main focal points of my thesis because they are very different from one another and to understand how they compare to one another. My thesis focuses on the question, does distance from the U.S./Mexico Border in Tucson and Colorado Springs have an impact on the discrimination of native Spanish-speaking women workers?

Social and Political Border-Culture Theory

From my results, I have developed this theory: the social and political border-culture theory. My theory focuses on how distance has an impact on political and social cultures that affects the extent of discrimination that native Spanish-speaking women workers encounter. The political and social cultures affect how people view discrimination, in particular perceived race, gender discrimination, and language discrimination. This theory explains how the more distance from the U.S./Mexico Border into less diverse areas, the more likely it is for Spanish-speaking women to be discriminated against. The further you travel away from the Border in the United States, they are likely to experience more discrimination due to smaller representation of Latinx/Hispanic/Chicanx/Spanish-speaking populations. This theory does not include coastal areas or large cities. This theory is focused on areas near the U.S.-Mexico border

where there are large Spanish-speaking populations compared to areas far from the U.S.-

Mexico border with smaller numbers of Spanish speakers. People are less likely to be

accepting of people different than them if they have not been exposed to other cultures.

This theory derives from other border culture theories and trends by Andres

Villarreal, Edward Telles and Edward Murguia, Joseph Rodriguez, and Alberto Davila

and Marie T. Mora. Scholars like Villarreal, Telles, and Murguia have their studies and

theories based on phenotype discrimination, essentially that with darker pigmentation of

the skin, there is an increased likelihood of discrimination. Villarreal discusses this idea

more in depth particularly in contemporary Mexico where there are essentially 3 groups

of skin colors; people with darker skin tones tend to face more everyday racism as well as

systematic racism in the sense that they are typically of lower socioeconomic status and

less likely to even become affluent in their lives (Villarreal, 2010). Phenotypic

discrimination correlates with income disparities in Mexican-American populations as

well as in other studies (Telles and Murguia, 1990). It is important to note that Mexican

or Mexican-American populations have many distinct characteristics including skin

color; there are lighter skinned Mexican/Mexican-American peoples with strong

European ancestry, others with strong indigenous roots (also known as mestizos), others

who identity as Afro-Mexican or black, and others of different, mixed ancestry.

This color discrimination I will refer to as colorism since it is not linked to just

race but rather a discrimination that can occur within a race or ethnic group. Mexican is

not race nor is Hispanic but rather another categorization of people. I use both terms

racism and colorism in my paper since some of the people I interviewed do consider

themselves white or black, which are racial groups, and others who do not necessarily identify with any racial category.

It is common in Latinx communities in the United States to view white skin or European ancestry as superior or more beautiful and to reject their own "Latinismo" due to the strong Anglo influences that have occurred in borderlands and border towns (Rodríguez, 1998:165). This is not exclusive to the United States or to the California-Mexico border where this study was conducted. European influence affects many idealizations across the world.

However, skin pigmentation is not the only factor impacting the women interviewed; another factor is English fluency. Though Spanish is a common language along the Border, it is still not considered important or necessary for some jobs. Two studies (Davila and Mattila 1985; Davila and Mora 2000) show that Mexican immigrants or Spanish-speaking immigrants along the Border tend to have lower earnings if their English skills are not competent (Davila and Mora, 2000: 137-145). Though Spanish is the minority language, it is not uncommon in these border areas. These studies compare the earnings of Spanish speakers in several border cities to those in cities in the rest of the United States. These studies, which draw data from Texas border cities and San Diego, California, inspired me to research other parts of the border, eventually leading me to conduct research in Tucson, Arizona. Tucson is not quite on the Border but is definitely considered a borderland city (See Appendix 1). Davila and Mora's 2000 study shows that even Mexican-American men are at a disadvantage when it comes to wages, and discrimination (Davila and Mora, 2000:133-139). My study focuses on women and intersectional identities..

The women I interviewed have multiple social and cultural identifiers, intersectional identities, so on top of being discriminated against based on their skin pigmentation, English fluency and/or pronunciation, they many also experience sexism. Many of the studies listed before focus on general population regardless of gender so what makes this study different is that it is based strictly in Tucson, Arizona and Colorado Springs, Colorado and it is focused on women workers. I specify women workers since these are women who not only have discriminatory experiences within their home, community, and/or within their culture, but also in the workplace. This is a place where many women are discriminated against, but especially women with intersectional identities.

Reasoning

My personal reason for conducting this research starts from a young age. I was born in a small near-to-the-border town in New Mexico (90 miles north of the U.S./Mexico border) where everyone and everything was Spanglish. As a child, I moved with my family to Colorado Springs where Spanish was no longer acceptable and being brown was uncommon. I saw my single mother work many types of jobs along with my grandmother. One job that struck me the most was while I was in high school. My mother worked for a large international hotel company. She was hired as a seasonal worker and was kept on to work a variety of roles. She was a housekeeper, a laundry worker, a housemen (the person who ensures the public spaces are presentable in a hotel); she even switched between the main hotel she worked at and the hotel next to her. However, what struck me the most is that she never worked in the more "professional" roles such as the front-desk assistant, manager of a sector, or anything that involved face-to face

interaction with guests; she was given the jobs that hid her from the public. Her jobs were always behind walls, in the laundry room that is hidden, or cleaning the rooms when no guests were near. My mother has the advantage of being documented, speaking English, and having white skin; however, she was never treated as well as the perfect English speaking white women she worked with. A large number of women she worked with were undocumented; many did not speak English, and some did have browner skin. By seeing this contrast it made me notice the different types of discrimination, especially amongst women of color in the workplace. My mother was never given the opportunity to work to her full potential and neither were the other Spanish-speaking women to different extents. This discrimination and the levels of different types of discrimination in the workplace has led me to critically think about the unusual treatment of women based on several identities. Intersectionality is a term that refers to an identity made up of multiple socially constructed categorizations such as race, gender, age, class, health, ability, sexual orientation, and other socially constructed identities. For my mother it was difficult for her as a Hispanic women to be viewed equally, but since she has the privilege of having lighter skin and speaking English, she received better treatment than many of the other women with browner skin who didn't speak English and who were older and had even more difficulties finding better positions in the hotels. Intersectional identities can affect to which extent someone is presented to society and how they are treated.

For example, the United States has a population of people who strongly believe that English is the official language of our country, and there are some who even push to establish English as a national language; however, English is the official language of the

U.S. and establishing English as the U.S. national language is difficult to do due to the diverse population living here. There is no official language of the United States. Due to the lack of diversity in places further from the borders or coasts, cities where there are lower amounts of immigrants or cultural diversity, more people are accustomed to only hearing and speaking English. So when someone does not speak English, or does not speak English perfectly, these people feel threatened and offended to hear a language they are not familiar with rather than ignore it; some people act upon their confusion and question the person speaking in a different language. This can be pretty invasive and I will speak more to this point in the analysis/discussion section.

This study focuses on many types of discrimination including those related to language fluency/pronunciation, gender, age, race/perceived race, and socioeconomic status. To clarify, language fluency is defined as the grammatical skills of speaking a language, while language pronunciation is the sound of the language. These two factors may overlap or may be completely separate depending on the person's language skills. An example of perceived race: "I have white skin and blonde hair, but I do not speak English well. I don't feel discrimination in my job because I work with other Latinos. I am the head chef and I feel respected. When I go to the supermarkets, that is where people judge me for my English-speaking skills" (Translated by Audriana Alvarado, Interview AZ, 2017). Race versus perceived race has to do with the color of someone's skin. Race can be a self-identifying label, while perceived race can be an assumed race from an outsider. For example, someone who has very light skin and blonde hair may be Latina, but are perceived as white. A person who has dark skin who identifies as Latina may be perceived as black. Race is an interesting topic for Latinx/Chicanx/Hispanic

peoples since we are technically considered part of the "white" race, however not all of us have white skin, and do not necessarily fit into other racial categories either.

Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx/hyphenated identities come in a range of skin colors. I use the terms in a list to be inclusive to self-identity rather than rely on political or social labels. Not all labeled "Hispanic" people identify as "Hispanic". "Hispanic" people may identify with different races such as white, black, native/indigenous, or with no race. I respect the term Latinx, written with an "x" to be inclusive to all gender identities. Latino with an "o" is a male-dominating word. Latin'o' can be a mixed group of genders but takes the masculine form which perpetuates male-dominance. Chicanx is written with an "x" for the same reason, but Chicanismo refers to a political identity as well as cultural identify. Chicanx typically refers to Mexican-Americans who may or may not have years of living in the United States ("Are Chicanos the same as Mexican?", 2012). Hyphenated identities refer to multicultural identities, such as: Mexican-American, Honduran-American, Peruvian-American, etc. This is a multicultural identity, which may include roots from both countries or simply connect culture and birthplace.

Due to colonialism and oppressive histories, there are many mestizos, meaning people of mixed cultures of Spanish and indigenous. It does not necessarily mean half and half but rather different quantities of mixing these cultures. The skin color of many mestizos has an extreme range anywhere from very dark to very white. Colonialism reinforced a racial hierarchy. The whiter skin one has, the more social power one has, meanwhile darker skin marks lower social status. For some of the Hispanic/Latina/Chicana/hyphenated-identifying women that I interviewed, some were phenotypically "white" while some were phenotypically "brown". Though all of the

women I interviewed identified as Hispanic/Latina/Chicana/hyphenated- identity, those that were phenotypically "white" seemed to face less discrimination and were aware of the increased likelihood of discrimination for women who have darker skin.

Intersectional cultural/linguistic analyses are something not highly focused on in American Anthropology; therefore, I am doing this research to bring more perspective to the discipline. As someone from the community I am researching, Colorado Springs, and from a similar community to Tucson, I offer my own experience as knowledge and data. Often times, anthropologists conduct research in places other than home or very unlike home, when in reality our home is what we know most. I am writing to bring to light the difficulties my community faces daily and those faced by a community similar to my own. This study will discuss what trends I found that are shared among these women, and what causes their experiences to be different.

Methods

I interviewed native Spanish-speaking women workers that live in Tucson, and Colorado Springs, CO that are older than 18 with the IRB Approval. After receiving the IRB Approval to conduct this research, I created a list of standard questions to ask each participant (see Appendix 2). Native Spanish-speaker refers to people whose first language is Spanish, or those who grew up bilingual, however not all the women that I interviewed are bilingual; some only speak Spanish. Native Spanish-speaker does not refer to native as in indigenous person who speaks Spanish, but rather that Spanish is one of the woman's first languages, though some women I did interview also identify with being indigenous or native.

I interviewed thirteen women in Tucson and thirteen women in Colorado Springs. In order to recruit people for my interviews in Arizona, I used my limited contacts. I was interning at a non-profit organization called Alianza indígena sin fronteras/Indigenous Alliance Without Borders (AISF), which is a group that focuses on advocating for indigenous peoples' rights and bringing the community together. I also have a friend whom I worked with over the summer in Matagalpa, Nicaragua in 2016. We met through a volunteer program called Amigos de las Américas. She identifies as Mexican-American and has a lot of friends who also identify similarly, so she introduced me to some of her friends that allowed me to interview them. From the new contacts my friend gave me, I would ask them if they had another contact so that my sample would be more random and from different parts of the community. Tucson is smaller than Colorado Springs, but has a very similar city plan. (see Appendix 3). Through my observations, both Colorado Springs and Tucson have pockets of ethnic groups mostly in the Southern side and scattered throughout the city, while the Northern area is predominantly white upper-class people.

I analyzed the responses to find similarities between them and to contrast the differing responses. The first few questions asked in the interviews were about how each person identifies herself: name, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and English proficiency. Afterwards, I asked a few questions about the women's cultural heritage or roots from other countries, where each woman lives, and where they work. I asked about the culture or racial identity of the people that they work with and their relationship with their coworkers and bosses. Then, depending on their responses, I asked either follow-up or clarifying questions.

I always prefaced each interview by making the person being interviewed more comfortable by saying that it is just a conversation and there are no wrong answers, it is all about experience, and they have the right to refuse any question they do not feel comfortable asking. So for the most part the interviews veered away from the basic questions, but were still guided in the same format: identity, cultural climate of home versus work, relationship with coworkers, experiences in public spaces, and experiences in family or social groups, then, finally, general questions.

Historical Context

Arizona

I started my research during the summer of 2017 in Tucson, Arizona. This was well into the Trump Era, and post-wall idea (Trump's plan to build a new and taller wall along the entire U.S./Mexico border where a wall/fence already exists/other natural barriers like the Rio Grande and the rolling hills on the Arizona/Mexico border). Due to the momentum of building the physical wall, it appears that this derogatory language is more acceptable if not heightened. Arizona, once part of Mexico, always-indigenous land, has an interesting history of discrimination. Tucson has 46.6 % of a white identifying population and 41.4% Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx populations, but in very strategic separations of community, which is obvious through infrastructure and advertisement (Statistical Atlas, 2018). South Tucson is almost considered a sub city of Tucson. This is where many indigenous and Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx peoples live; neighborhoods are given different *barrio,* or "neighborhood" names. Signs in these areas mark *barrios*. These *barrios* were originally named after the Spanish settlement in

modern day Tucson, and through the years have kept most of these names in recognition of the past and because they have almost separate identities due to the designated areas assigned to a name (Netherby, 2015).

As my former boss at AISF told me, the majority of this area was home to indigenous peoples from different tribes, but due to the recent immigration from Latin America, many indigenous peoples were displaced from their homes and were pushed to live in poorer areas or, for some, back to their tribe's reservations. Also, due to the housing crisis, Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx peoples were moved from other places and moved to South Tucson where housing was cheaper and where indigenous peoples could no longer afford their living costs. This community is now mixed with Indigenous and Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx peoples; meanwhile, the northern end of Tucson is predominantly upper middle class white people. These communities in the South and the North are not really integrated or mixed in any way and are obviously segregated.

Legal Discrimination

Discrimination in Tucson is something pretty well known of and obvious. Arizona laws such as SB1070, that gives police officers the right to ask for documentation from suspected "illegals", is legal permission of racial profiling. Though it was questioned for its racial profiling, nothing has really changed since it remains in place today. Undocumented people and people with legal status (meaning U.S. citizens), may visibly appear to look the same which allows law enforcement to question anyone for appearing brown (Walsh, 2018). There is no data taken by Border Patrol for the amount of people who are taken into secondary at Border Patrol checkpoints due to racial profiling. I spoke to a Border Patrol agent about how they try to avoid racial profiling, and the Border

Patrol agent said they have particular measures and details to look for, such as how many keys are on a person's key ring or how people make eye contact (Alvarado Observations, 2018). Though it has been documented that a Border Patrol agent can use a person's having brown skin as an excuse to question or pull over a person and send them to secondary (this is where further questions are asked and vehicles tend to be searched and drivers are asked for more legal identification documents). From my own personal experiences, I have always been asked for my documentation at any checkpoint or in the presence of law enforcement while in Southern Arizona. There have been times when I was in a fifteen-passenger van, where I and two other students who identify as Latina, were the only ones asked for our documentation while the other students weren't. With SB1070 residents with status who don't speak English can even be detained until proven not guilty; this is where this law can be seen as unconstitutional but, for some reason, it still remains in place (Theodore, 2011).

Arizona has a long history of legal actions that add to the racism that occurs daily. In the 1940s, there was a program called the Bracero Program that allowed Mexican citizens to legally work in the United States in agriculture mainly in California, Texas, and Arizona (Zatz, 1993:851).

As a result of this program, many people who participated in the Bracero Program began to establish their lives and families here, so it was deemed unfair to send them back once they had U.S. born children or spouses. Because many people were hoping to continue staying in their homes with their families, they "overstayed" their workers contracts. This led to a large number of undocumented Mexican people living in borderlands areas, mainly in California, but some in Arizona and Texas as well.

Because the people who joined the Bracero Programs were already working for little money and basic accommodations, the contractors easily hired them for their cheap and efficient labor and this is where some of those associations of "Mexicans are stealing our [white American] jobs" came from. During this time was the United Farm Workers Movement in the 1960s and 1970s (Kiser 1973:600). Farmers were on strike so, during the strike, immigrants were hired to fill their place at a much lower cost. However, then there were more laws put in place to ensure there was no "harboring or concealing" of immigrants who were overstaying their permits from the Bracero Program; if someone was found doing so, it was considered a felony. This caused some fear for contractors, so they limited the number of Mexican citizens that they would hire or were too afraid to hire any (Zatz, 1993). This fear is what led to "Operation Wetback" in 1954.

"Operation Wetback" was a law that was essentially a racist law that allowed the sweeping of known Mexican and Mexican-American or Latinx-American communities, having officials go into these communities to check people for their documents and deport anyone who could not show proof of residence. This included a large number of U.S.-born Latinx people (Hernández, 2006:421). This was legal profiling, which comes up again in history with the Arizona bill SB 1070.

The previous laws were not exclusive to Arizona but they were more present in the borderland states, California and Texas in particular, and it had an impact on people's views and stereotypes throughout the nation. However, these laws impacted U.S. citizens' ideas about migrants from Mexico in a negative way. One idea was that they were coming only to take advantage of the economy and resources; unfortunately, that idea still exists today. Racism is perpetuated through media coverage of Mexico and

Latin America, due to the drug wars occurring and the violence within the country. People living on the border have polarized ideas either based on media coverage or from personal experiences. These ideas cause people to either be very supportive of immigrant populations or criminalize them. The people who are fleeing are not the ones committing crimes; these are the people running away in fear of their lives. However, those who do successfully communicate that they are in fear of their lives have an option to apply for asylum; however, the asylum process is strategically very difficult to get through. In order to apply for asylum there are two ways, to either report oneself at a legal border checkpoint, or to declare asylum after crossing into the United States. Once one crosses into the U.S. to ask for asylum it can be very risky. Either one is granted the asylum and goes through the elongated process, facing many forms abuse from the privately owned detention centers and the emotional abuse of being detained and repeatedly asked about the abuse they experienced in their home country, or they are sent back to the place they fear. Also, if sent back, the person is charged for crossing "illegally" into the United States. A second attempt to crossing is an automatic felony (Cabot, 2013). Many of these people who are escaping their home country, do not have validated proof of their fear sometimes putting them more at risk for not being able to win their asylum case and these cases cost a lot of money as well. Very few cases win; between 2008 and 2013 "more than 130,000, people were killed as a result of the drug war" (Molloy, 2013). People in borderlands consider this a "border war" rather than a place of entry for refugees (Interview AZ, 2017)

Another legality that has affected Arizona Law is HB2281, which essentially outlawed any ethnic studies programs in public education because it was seen as a way of

creating dominance of one race over another. Eliminating ethnic studies programs from

public education provides students a one-sided story of history, and a curriculum that

lacks any teachings of cultural studies in economics or global studies (Kunnie, 2010:16-

19). This law has allowed the continuous teaching of white or Anglo American history in

public schools, discounting the histories of many non-Anglo students in public education.

This hides the many histories of people who occupied these lands previously and

deprives students of open-mindedness and learning histories from different perspectives.

It is important to recognize the history of the land one lives on and to commemorate all

the people who have made contributions to the city. This is a law that contributes to white

dominance in our society by starving our young brown students of our own histories, and

keeps all students ignorant to the fact that there are multiple perspectives and multiple

histories.

By viewing this historical context it is evident that it has had an impact on

ideologies of people living in borderlands. Legal racial profiling derived from racist

views reestablishes the room for racist actions taken against Spanish-speaking

populations in this area.

Colorado

In comparison, in Colorado there are not as many obvious laws that contribute to

discrimination, like there are in Arizona. Rather there are subtle yet strong forms of

discrimination in political, social, and cultural environments, which I experience living in

Colorado Springs. This section is written from a personal experience of being raised in

Colorado Springs. I use my personal experience and observations as knowledge and data

in this section. I give my perspective through the eyes of my own intersectional identity.

I moved to Colorado Springs from New Mexico when I was child. I didn't recognize the cultural differences as much at that age. I was about 4 or 5 years old but, now as I have grown older, it is apparent that there are distinct political and social cultures in Colorado. I have researched recent laws, and none of these policies use explicit racist language or target specific groups, but they do have an impact on segregating the city and/or state. These laws are not directly targeted at one group of people but rather at ideas that inherently affect people of color, lower-income people, women, or other marginalized identities.

Generally Colorado Springs is known for being a politically conservative city. Our Representatives tend to vote more conservative or at least the most noncontroversial way. They tend to avoid conflict or liberal policy in order to ensure their position since the majority of Colorado Springs residents are conservative. Theses conservative stances have an effect on the population that lives in Colorado Springs because it emphasizes traditional social structures, which are not so inclusive to diverse populations. Conservative policies do not always benefit people of color, lower-income people, or especially Spanish-speaking women. Though there are no explicitly racist or discriminatory laws, racism and discrimination are still very prevalent in Colorado Springs.

In social contexts, these conservative laws can influence how people view change or different perspectives. As a Latina/brown woman of lower-income, growing up in Colorado Springs, my experiences are evidence of discrimination in social contexts. In the Southeast area where I live, there are many people of color, so being brown is not as obvious or noticeable or different to people. The majority of my community is made of

people of color. Meanwhile in the northern end, there is less racial or socioeconomic diversity. I have had many experiences of feeling uncomfortable in predominantly white spaces in the north end and this isn't exclusive to just me; this is a commonly shared experience for brown women which I will discuss further in my analysis/discussion section.

For the most part, Colorado Springs is a conservative city. Of course, some parts of the city are more conservative than others. Colorado Springs, much like Tucson, is quite segregated. The north side is typically wealthier upper class, white people, and people of color mainly populate the southern end. Growing up in southeast side has been a thought-provoking experience especially in the last couple of years. It is an area shared by several poor neighborhoods, near military bases, and an almost suburb area. My community is very diverse with many different identity groups: race, religion, age, and gender identity. This diverse population has made me feel more accepted in comparison to the rest of Colorado Springs. Of course there are people who are not as accepting, like the older people who have lived in this community for a long time and are not accustomed to the changing culture. My neighborhood is mainly lower income people of color, in which many are immigrants, or English as a Second Language (ESL) household, with a mix of older white people who have lived in the area for years. Some of the older white people have explicitly called me racial slurs, or discriminated against me in my own neighborhood, in my own front yard, at the nearby grocery store, and from their car windows.

What separates Tucson and Colorado Springs is that in Colorado Springs discrimination happens explicitly but there are lower numbers of people of color in the

entire city. My community does have a large Spanish-speaking community for its small size, and often times this community and other marginalized groups will ignore the discrimination because it is so explicit and dangerous to sometimes respond. In one of the interviews I conducted, the interviewee described a daughter and her mother entering Wal-Mart on Platte. The mother is speaking only Spanish but she and the daughter are bilingual in English and Spanish. The mother is merely communicating with her daughter about their grocery list, and a white woman in front of them in line finds the audacity to question this conversation happening between mother and daughter. The mother understands what the woman is saying but tries to ignore it because this isn't the first time someone has questioned her. The daughter is offended and tries to defend the two of them by explaining what their conversation was about. The daughter remarks that if this situation were to have happened again she would not feel the need to defend herself or her mother because she has nothing to defend; it is merely a form of expression, and for someone to question her conversation is an invasion of privacy (Interview CO, 2017).

Socially, Colorado Springs has some exclusive spaces. There are several country clubs around the city with private golf courses; there is a military culture, and there are other certain areas that are isolated for a reserved population. Growing up, I remember my rich teachers talking about their weekends at the country clubs with their families. They explained their membership at "the club" and how comforting it is to have access to spas and golf. I spoke to my family about this and my mother only knew that they existed but never considered being part of a country club for its costs and cultural dynamics, and simply different interests. It is curious how there is the Valley Hi Country Club and Golf Course in an area near my neighborhood. It is located near one of my favorite taco trucks,

apartment complexes where many people of color live, and an intersection where many shootings and crime have happened.

Colorado Springs may not have laws that express its discriminative culture, but it still evidently exists. Colorado Springs and Tucson are not complete opposites, but laws do create a different culture, which I will review in the next section.

Analysis/Discussion

I chose these two locations due to different cultural environments and mostly based on distance. Some trends that seem to be consistent include: racism, colorism, sexism, and discrimination based on language pronunciation and/or fluency. In order to discuss the effects I will first focus on Tucson, Arizona and then Colorado Springs, CO. Then I will discuss the relationship to one another and how my theory connects the two.

Firstly, in Tucson, Arizona, there are more Latinx/Hispanic/Chicanx peoples than in Colorado Springs. It's not necessarily diverse because there are only two large ethnic groups; meanwhile Colorado Springs mainly consists of white people and several different smaller cultural or ethnic groups. Colorado Springs is diverse in the sense that there are many different cultures but the population sizes of each of these groups are smaller in comparison to Tucson.

In the sample group from Tucson, some of the women were bilingual; some knew some English and others spoke little to no English (see Appendix 4). The women who spoke little to no English said it would be an advantage to know English but it was not necessary for them in Tucson or in their workplaces. These women worked in restaurants catered to Spanish-speaking communities, or worked in the kitchen with many Spanish-speaking coworkers. All of the women under 28 years old spoke English at least

conversationally because most of them were either born in Tucson, or have lived in Tucson for many years. All said speaking English has been an advantage but the majority of these women do use Spanish as well. Some speak Spanish at least half of the time and others less but all speak at least some Spanish in their workplaces. Tucson has a very large Spanish-speaking community and it's definitely been an advantage to speak Spanish for all of these women.

In Colorado Springs, all but one of the women I interviewed are bilingual. Many of the women discussed how difficult it would be to speak only Spanish in Colorado Springs, since it has a smaller Spanish-speaking population. The one woman who doesn't speak any English said she is thankful to have English-speaking children to translate for her and that in her workplace most of her coworkers speak Spanish and most are bilingual in English and Spanish. Her experiences in the community have not been super negative since she tends to stay in her community where she surrounds herself with only Spanish-speaking people (Interview CO, 2017). The other women all said that English was important to speak especially in their jobs, regardless of their positions, and in school and in the community (see Appendix 5). In Tucson, one is likely to find at least one Spanish-speaking person in a supermarket. Meanwhile, in Colorado Springs it is a bit more difficult to find Spanish speakers.

However, though all of these women that I interviewed speak Spanish and some speak English, not all of them are viewed the same. There are differences in skin color for these women that plays a large role in their everyday lives. Inside "racism" there also exists colorism. I use the term "racism" as a word used by the women I interviewed to describe their experiences based on their perceived cultures or race, since

Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx are not races but rather linguistic groups, cultural groups, collective political identity. I differentiate colorism from racism, because colorism can exist within the same racial category. Though all of the people I interviewed speak Spanish, some are treated differently than others. In both Colorado Springs and Tucson, women with browner skin were more likely to face discrimination than those who are "white-passing". "White-passing" refers to pigmentation of the skin that appears very fair or light-skinned, and with more "white" characteristics like a more European nose; blue, green, light brown eye-color; or blonde/light brown hair. For example, Ms. Dalesio speaks no English but has blonde hair and light skin; she agrees that she is "white-passing". She said that sometimes people don't believe she is from Mexico because she is so light-skinned. She is often thought to speak English and that if she is not speaking (in Spanish since that is the only language she knows), no one realizes she is Mexican. She says it has been helpful to appear white so people do not judge her as she has seen happen to her friends and family members with more brown skin. Ms. Dalesio strongly believes she has never experienced any extreme racism and this seems to be true with Ms. Silvestre, Samantha Vazquez, and Ms. Leticia Kever who are also all women with light skin and varying levels of English. None of the women who I interviewed in Colorado Springs considered themselves white-passing.

However it was a shared idea that women with more brown skin were more likely to be discriminated against since they are more visibly "different" than the hegemonic culture. On many accounts, women said they have seen friends or family members with browner skin receive harsher discrimination. In one example, Jackie Rodriguez was eating in the North side of Colorado Springs with her mother, father, and brother. Her

father has very brown skin and, though he speaks some English, he was almost removed from the restaurant since he was speaking Spanish, disturbing a family nearby who "thought he was talking bad about them". Ms. Rodriguez never has felt that same discrimination that she has seen her father face since she has lighter skin. Her father was nearly removed since the family who complained to the restaurant felt threatened by his language and his skin color.

To continue, sexism is also very apparent in both cities. As intersectional identifying women of color, their experience as "women" is very different than any type of sexism, along with many other forms of discrimination at the same time (see Appendix 6). There are many stereotypes around Latina/Hispanic/Chicana women. There are perceived notions that these women are supposed to be housewives that stay in the home and are dependent on their husbands, due to many *machista* cultures in Latin America. The women I interviewed are mostly Mexican or Mexican-American or Chicana, and a few from other cultures: Honduran, Peruvian, and Salvadorian.

 In both Tucson and Colorado Springs, Spanish-speaking women are very likely to face discrimination based on the color of their skin, their gender, and their English language fluency or pronunciation.

Conclusion

Distance from the U.S./Mexico border is not the only factor affecting how native Spanish-speaking women living in Colorado Springs and Tucson are treated, but political and social cultures in relation to the Border does have an impact. In this study, it seems that there are many levels of discrimination experienced by native Spanish-speaking women due to intersectional identities. The women in this study only share a

few characteristics in common; they all natively speak Spanish, they identify women, and they live and work in cities. These shared identifiers, however, do not result in the same experiences or the same types of discrimination that these women encounter in their everyday lives.

These levels of discrimination are impacted by the distance of the communities focused on in this study from the Border. The distance impacts the politics surrounding Spanish-speaking populations, the population sizes of Spanish-speaking women, and media coverage about Spanish-speaking people. Social and political-culture theory is applicable because it reasons how discrimination is likely to compare and contrast in relation to the Border. It is also clear that discrimination exists in all parts of the United States, and people with marginalized intersectional identities are likely to experience higher levels of discrimination..

All in all, this theory and data only represents a very small sample size of a population, and it is not applicable to all cultural groups or even on a large scale; however, it does give an insight and perspective of how these women are treated and viewed in our current society. There is a lack of focus on intersectional discriminations, and this thesis was written to merely explore this idea. I hope this will be a more researched topic in the near future.

Limitations

My research is experimental in the sense that it focuses on complex identities in dynamic political and social cultures that are specific to the people I interviewed, to the locations, and to the current time period. I recruited people in Colorado Springs by asking

close friends and family members, so this interview data sample is not as diverse as the

interview data sample from Tucson. Most of these people in Colorado Springs were from

the same part of Colorado Springs, the Southeast. They're from the same neighborhood

that I was raised in so they have similar biases to me, and they do not represent the

diversity of Spanish-speaking women in Colorado Springs. I also only interviewed

women between the ages 18 to 67, with more women being under the age of 28. Most of

the women I had interviewed were in college or have been college educated, while only a

small handful were not, and that may have an impact on their beliefs and how much they

do/do not notice discrimination.

Another limitation was time. I have spent more time in Colorado Springs since it

is my hometown than I have in Tucson. If I had spent more time in Tucson, I could have

learned more about the city's social cultures . However, with the resources given, I was

able to recruit people for the study who have lived most of their lives in Tucson. All of

the women I interviewed in Tucson were either Mexican or Mexican-American, while in

Colorado Springs the group of Spanish-speaking women ranged a bit more in different

cultures as noted previously.

Further Research

If given more time I would have liked to compare at least one larger city in every

border state: California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, with states throughout the rest

of the U.S. to get a greater overview of perspectives as well as to further develop and

distinguish this idea of borderland cultures. Each state has such a distinct history and

culture and is impacted by the border in different ways. There needs to be more research

on intersectional identities since for many people our identities are inseparable. For

example, I cannot be seen as just my identity as a woman, or just my identity as a Chicana; I am both all the time and at the same time. The Trump era has had an effect on many communities. It would be helpful to study how cultural dynamics are currently changing and how Trump's time in office has affected discrimination and how people view discrimination; in particular, how this discrimination is legally being implemented with racist laws, border militarization, and immigration and education reforms. One more way research could be improved or furthered is if there was a word that was more inclusive to identify race for Hispanic/Latinx/Chicanx/hyphenated identifying peoples; white is not inclusive and is a misrepresentation since not all of these peoples are visibly white. For people like me who do not have white skin, are not perceived as white, and do not fit any other race category, "white" as a race is not sufficient. More inclusive language needs to be introduced and used more often to create a more inclusive environment and to give more freedom to self-identification.

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Appendix

1. **Map of Tucson in relation to Mexico**

2. **Interview Questions**
- What is your name? What name can I use for my research? (Pseudonyms will be used)
- What is your gender?
- When is your date of birth?
- How do you identify your race/ethnicity? (Latina/Hispanic/Chicana/Mexican/Mexican-American/etc.)
- What is your English proficiency level? (0 No English, 1 Beginner, 2 Intermediate, 3 Advanced, 4 Fluent)
- How long have you lived in Tucson/Colorado Springs?
- Where do you work? How long?
- Why do you stay at this job?
- How many jobs have you had in the last 5 years?
- How did you get this job?
- What is your overall impression of your job?
- What do you think of your coworkers?
- What is your relationship with your boss?

- Have you ever had any conflicts at work? Why?
- Has anyone ever mistreated you in your workplace? Do you have any ideas why they mistreated you?
- How do you feel you are treated? In comparison to others?
- What are you praised for at work?
- What changes would you make to your job?

If my questions do not lead to any thoughts about discrimination, I will openly ask about experiences with discrimination.

- Have you experienced racism, sexism, ageism, or discrimination based on your language proficiency?
- Can you tell me about some of your experiences with these discriminations?
- How do you think people's views of you change from the work place to public/social environments?"

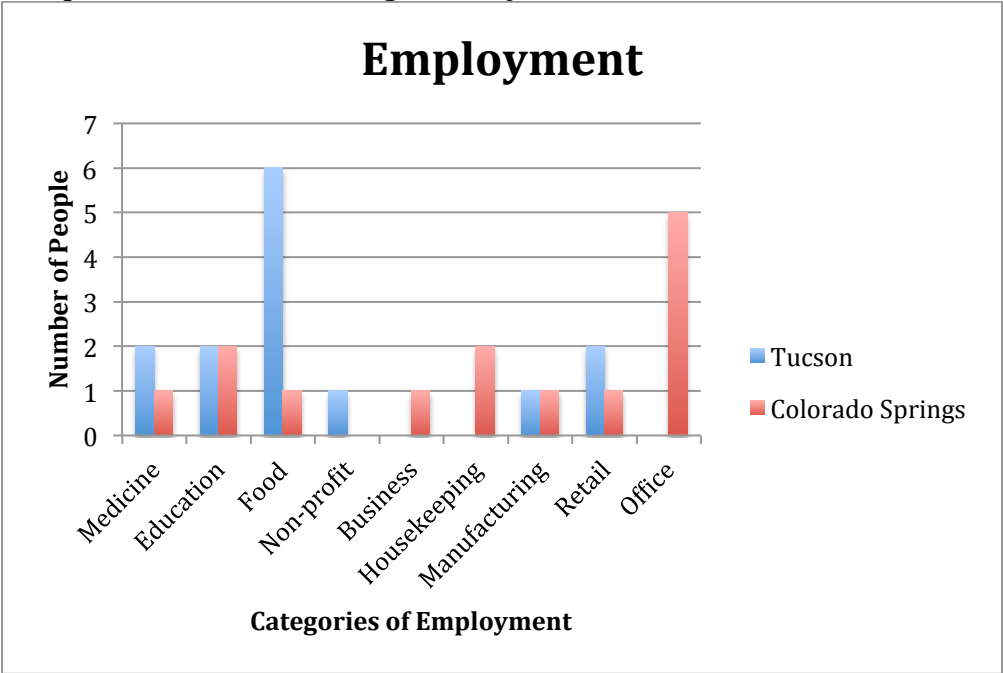**3. Map of Tucson and Colorado Springs in relation to one another**

Screenshot of Google Maps

4. Graphs representing English Proficiency of the women interviewed and Average English Proficiency and the Standard Deviation of the averages
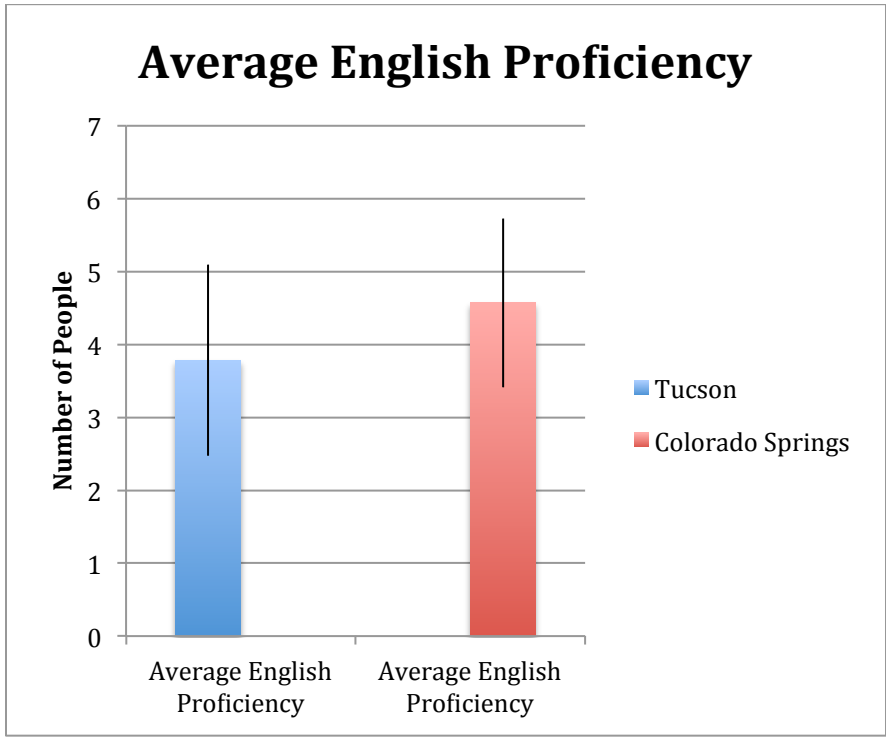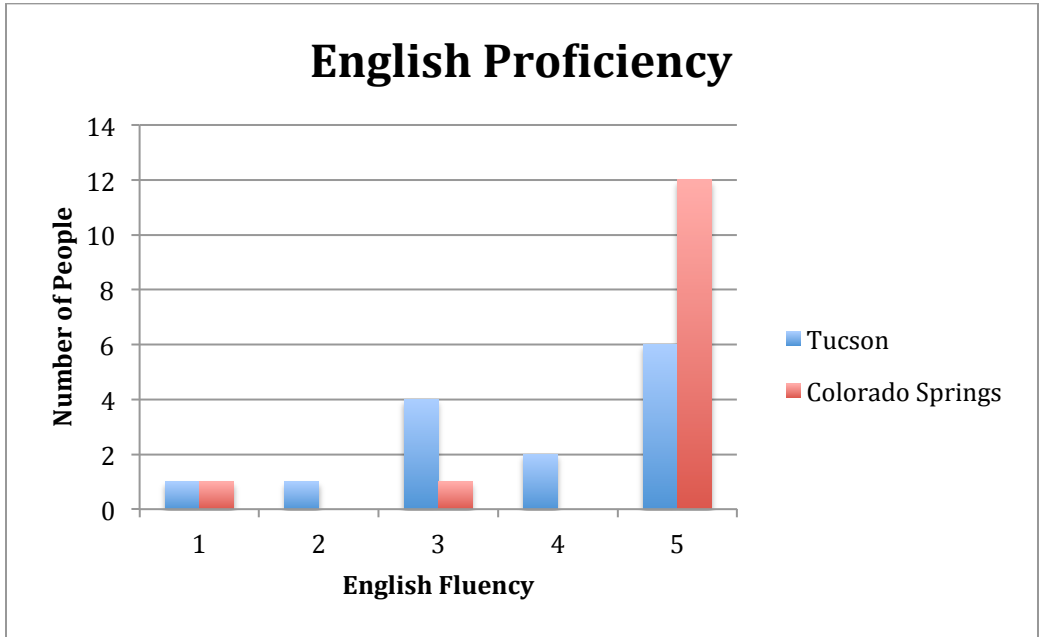
5. Representation of the categories of jobs the interviewed women work

Employment

6. The types of discrimination the women interviewed experience, due to intersectional identities it is likely that one or more forms of discrimiantion apply to one woman.

Types of Discrimination Experienced
(more than one per person if applicable)