Measuring the Social and Cultural Contributions of Immigrants to Their Integration Efforts in Rural Communities

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Latinos in Missouri

- Immigration of Latinos to otherwise uniform areas of the state, both rural and urban
- In Missouri: 112% growth 1990-2003, like in other heartland and Southern states
- Over 130,000 people, distributed in every county of the state, with some counties showing 4 to 20-fold increases
- States and local governments ill prepared to serve newcomers
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>139696</td>
<td>217123</td>
<td>77427</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>201596</td>
<td>323877</td>
<td>122281</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>904446</td>
<td>1530262</td>
<td>625816</td>
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<td>118592</td>
<td>56890</td>
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<td>Kansas</td>
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<td>188252</td>
<td>94582</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>57456</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>53844</td>
<td>143382</td>
<td>89538</td>
<td>166%</td>
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Premise

“Recent developments in the cultural identity literature can help us to move beyond a deficits approach to viewing culture not as an obstacle but as a resource from which individuals draw to create strategies to function in various domains in society (Berry 2003). **This new orientation shifts us away from a deficit model for thinking about how individuals of different cultures gain and lose in the process of integration to recognizing the multiple ways that individuals can adapt in new and ever changing environments without suffering loss of identity in the process.** This approach shifts our attention to looking at what the newcomers offer and leads us to ponder how we can engage them in the future development and prosperity of the new settlement communities.” (Asset Accumulation Strategies, 2006)
Food Processing Companies with 500 or more Employees & Latina/o Population Growth Change: 1990 to 2000

Lazos and Jeanetta, Cambio de Colores 2002

LEP Enrollment Ranges from 0.6% to 29.2%. For example:

- 0.6%
- 29.2%

Disparity Index Ranges from 1.12 to 20.45
For example:

1.12

20.45

Lazos, Sylvia & Cambio de Colores, 2002
The purpose of this research is to examine the strategies newcomers employ to accumulate assets, minimize their vulnerability to risk exposure and become part of their new communities.

“Getting by and getting ahead”

The following questions are guiding the study:
1. What are the strategies Latino immigrants use to integrate into communities and lead sustainable, high quality lives?
2. What factors facilitate or impede their economic integration?
Strengths Based Model: Livelihoods, Capitals, and the Context of Reception

Livelihood Outcomes
+Building Assets: economic and social wellbeing
-Vulnerabilities: - mobility

Livelihood Strategies
capabilities – the ability to act

Community Climate
(Context of Reception)

Racial Profiling Integrating (+)
Financial Institutions

School Climate Alienating (-)
Bridging Institutions CBOs

Economic Capital (savings, assets)

Human Capital (Education, Skill, Language Proficiency Nutrition Health)

Cultural Capital
Identity & Institutions

Social Capital
networks of support: bridging and bonding
Social Capital

What is Social Capital?
- A form of capital that places value on the quality and quantity of relationships that exist within a community.
- Social Capital can assist people as they strive to meet their basic needs as well as contribute to a person’s growth and development.

Types of Social Capital
- Bonding Social Capital
- Bridging Social Capital
Social Capital

Bridging Social Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bonding Social Capital</th>
<th>Bridging Social Capital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with outside or internal factionalism</td>
<td>Inclusion (horizontal ties within the community; diverse horizontal and vertical ties to the outside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apathy; Extreme Individualism</td>
<td>Clientelism (internal and external ties are mainly vertical)</td>
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Community Social Capital Typology
Measuring Social Capital

- Social Capital and community integration.
  - Bonding Social Capital--social capital as connections within the immigrant community
  - Bridging Social Capital--strong links to other groups and institutions in the settling community
Cultural Capital

For the purposes of this research culture resources are reflected in the attitudes, values and beliefs individual newcomers share. We are especially interested in their attitudes, values and beliefs about financial institutions, social services, and the people and places they are encountering in their new communities and how they are shaped in the acculturation process.
Acculturation

- Generational Status
- Primary language spoken to communicate with others
- Degree of affiliation with majority culture (e.g., composition of peer network, Anglicization of name)
- Role conflicts with regard to familial expectations
- Value systems, customs, and orientations (religion, political affiliation, etc.)
- Level of involvement in cultural traditions or activities
- Educational level of client, family members, relatives
- Skin color
- Location raised, currently living
- Religious identity, affiliation
Unidimensional

Traditional  Acculturated
Research Process

Focus Groups
(6 groups)

Photovoice
(9 sessions)

Case Studies
(18 individuals)

Household Surveys
(900 cases)

• Recurring themes
• Social and cultural capital

• Public Display
• Community Forums

• Livelihood strategies
• Life Stories

Reports

Cluster Analysis
(Similar Strategies)
Regression Analysis
(Community Climate)
Canonical Correlation
(Asset Accumulation & Economic Assets)
Purpose of the Focus Group Process

- Develop a picture of how immigrants are integrating economically and socially
- Develop a sense of immigrant perceptions on community climate and identity
- Develop an understanding of their perspectives on culture, identity and how the immigration process has affected those perceptions.
- Develop a framework for further analysis of social relationships and their effect on economic and social integration and community climate.
Focus Group Process: Observations on the process…

- Connecting to community partners
- Diversity of the participants
- Relationship between the facilitators and the participants
- Differences between the men and women’s groups
  - Women’s Isolation
  - Perspectives on differences in culture and discrimination
  - Attitudes towards sharing in a group
- Time and Place are important
Purpose of the Photovoice

- Engage the participants in a critical reflection about the people and places where they live.
- Explore the values that are inherent in their views.
- Connect the research to the issues affecting development in the community.
- Initiate local dialogues about their places as receiving communities.
Photovoice Process: Observations on the Process so far…

- Love the places, many were farmers where they came from--many photos of the local environment
- Local bridge builders are important
- When there is a relationship with local community members it is generally good--but there are few relationships
- Level of fear is escalating
- Concerns about healthcare access
Reflections

- It appears very little integration has taken place so far socially and culturally
- The lines being drawn at state and national policy levels is having negative effects at the local level.
- There appears to be a great deal of fear.
- The communities themselves are relatively isolated and self-reliant.
- Some communities ignore federal laws and others are “souring the milk”--very confusing to the immigrant.