Latino Newcomer Livelihood Strategies and Assets – a Strengths Based Model

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http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/Assets/
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 [Assets Strengths Model] 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 (Valdivia et al. 2006).
The Latino population more than doubled in the last twenty years, growing twelve times faster than the total population.

Every Midwest state has seen its population of Hispanics grow at least 100 percent in that period.

Latinos come to the Heartland to work. They are workers, income-earners and pay taxes. An increasing number buy cars and homes. They constitute most of the new Midwesterners.
Types of capital in the research

- Individual, Cultural, Social, Human, Economic
- Acculturation & Context of Reception
Sustainable Livelihoods
Context of Reception and Acculturation

Livelihood Outcomes
- Wellbeing: Building Assets
- Vulnerability: Mobility

Livelihood Strategies

Context of Reception

Integration
Assimilation

Economic Capital

Human Capital

Cultural Capital
(Identity & Institutions)

Social Capital
(Bridging and Bonding Networks)
Incorporating Acculturation in Livelihood Strategies and the Analysis of Wellbeing

Berry’s Multidimensional Model

- **Integration**: Speaks English well and another language well at home
- **Assimilation**: Speaks English well, no second language
- **Separation**: Does not speak English well, speaks another language
- **Marginalization**: Does not speak English, speaks another language

To understand the adjustment process and how it affects income generation and wellbeing
Community Climate & the Context of Reception

Three groups of items measure context of reception:

- Social, Cultural, Environmental: 12 items
- Racism & Discrimination Stresses: 8 items
- Language Pressures: 5 Items
Context points

• Rapid growth
• Acculturation strategies
• Context of reception: Receiving community climate
• Latino Newcomers in mostly homogeneous rural communities who arrived for work and here to stay
• Focus: what the newcomers offer, and how we can engage them in the future development and prosperity of the community.
Research profile – What we did

• Research questions: “How they get by and get ahead”
  – What are the strategies Latino newcomers use to integrate and lead sustainable lives?
  – What factors facilitate or impede their process of economic integration?
  – Examine the strategies newcomers employ to accumulate assets, reduce their vulnerability to risks, improve wellbeing, and become part of their new communities.

• Mixed Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative

• Critical factors – Community climate & vulnerable – Trust [Certificate of Confidentiality]
What did we do: A mixed methods and participatory research process

Focus Groups (7 groups)

Photovoice (9 sessions)

Case Studies (16)

Household Survey (460)

Findings Products & Knowledge Sharing

Analyses: Wellbeing, Networks, Job Satisfaction, Income Earnings, Mobility, Context of Reception, Acculturation

Time line

Year 4
What are the wealth creation relevant results?

- Bilingualism – positive impact on earnings & integration
- Mobility – a negative effect on earnings
- Cultural identity – important in job satisfaction
- Anglo acculturation – important in job satisfaction
- Dominant Acculturation – Separation and Integration
- Social – Networks of support mostly of friends, isolated from mainstream networks
- Community climate – context of reception perceptions, mostly a negative effect in wellbeing
- Interactions among the capitals, acculturation and outcomes
1. Factors affecting Household Income of Latinos

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<td>Gender - Female</td>
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Acculturation (Anglo and Bicultural, and Social Capital have a Positive effect on Earnings)

On dimension of Context of Reception, Racism and Discrimination, and being a woman have a negative impact on earnings. Mobility (moving) has a negative effect.

F = 5.053; Sig < .000; Adj R² = .120; N = 444; * Only significant variables reported
2. Job satisfaction among Latinos

- Significant individual predictors of Latino/a immigrant workers’ job satisfaction were:
  - Ethnic identity
  - Anglo oriented acculturation
  - Perceived discrimination and racism in the community
3. Effect of social networks on employment: networks of information matter

Compared to Poultry processing in Sedalia:

- Those who obtain information from employers are:
  - 12% more likely to work in construction;
  - 44% more likely to work in industrial sanitation;

- Those who obtain information from friends are:
  - 12% less likely to work in Latino shops/markets;
  - 85% more likely to work in industrial sanitation

- Those who obtain information from family are:
  - 21% more likely to work in Latino shops/markets;
  - 61% more likely to work in restaurants
4. Social networks on wellbeing

• Positive influences on wellbeing:
  – Using family and friend networks, belonging in religious groups, socio-environmental context; alternative sources of income, family giving first lodging, length of residence, government programs, and cultural capital

• Negative influences on wellbeing:
  – Mobility, being female, and non-properly documented worker.

• Social networks are organized around specific industries, i.e.,
  – family sources tend to channel Latinos to family-oriented or family-run businesses;
  – friends sources tend to channel Latinos to the default industry.
Best two pieces of practical advice ...

• Collaborate with your local partners in the formulation of the problem and in the process of the research, and knowledge sharing.

• Communities might use networks in order to:
  – Improve the effectiveness of outreach programs
  – Design targeted programs to improve Latinos’ human capital and thus improving the chances of economic integration

• Job satisfaction:
  – Promote strong levels of ethnic identity in immigrant workers

• Anglo acculturation—emphasis on language usage and fluency—has positive effect on Latino’s career development.
  – Provide opportunities for English language acquisition
  – Courses need to be accessible (location, time)
  – Language CDs that can be used at home
...and best next research question

Acculturation paths matter

  Dominant path is separation among Latino newcomers in the Midwest...

What are the strategies and process that can facilitate linking Latino Newcomers and Long Time Residents?

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THANK YOU!

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For more information...

The Assets Project:  
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Articles


Under review: