Newcomers in Missouri: Latino Immigrants in Their Own Voices

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The Latino population more than doubled from 1990 to 2007, from 1.7 to 4.1 million, growing twelve times faster than the total population.

Latinos are over 6.2 percent (2007) of the people, up from 2.9 percent in 1990.

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 therefore pay taxes, and an increasing number buy cars and homes: they constitute most of the new Midwesterners.

Hispanic newcomers are settling not only in large urban enclaves, but everywhere there are jobs.

In five states, the Latino population has grown more than 200 percent: Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and South Dakota.

In absolute numbers, the states with greater growth are Illinois (one million), Indiana (216K), Michigan (201K), Minnesota (152K), and Kansas (150K).
Percent of Population 1980
Hispanic or Latino

Hispanic or Latino population as a percent of total population by county

- 25.0 to 100
- 10.0 to 24.9
- 5.0 to 9.9
- 2.5 to 4.9
- 0 to 2.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, 1980
Between 2000 and 2007:

- Total population increase: 281 K approximately (to 5.88 million)
- Hispanic population increase: 60 K (to 178 K)

Questions you may have...

- So, what?
- Why?
- Will this continue?
### Population Changes in Missouri: 2000-2007
(in thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Total pop change</th>
<th>Non-Hispanic</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 to 19</td>
<td>-10.8</td>
<td>-34.2</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 44</td>
<td>-16.3</td>
<td>-39.6</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 64</td>
<td>275.1</td>
<td>265.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 +</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All ages</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Missouri Census Data Center
Is immigration good or bad?

It is.

- Immigration is fueled by market and economic forces responding mainly to demographic changes.
- And it is up to each and all of us, newcomers and long-time residents alike, to make it an overall positive change.
  - smooth change
  - sustainable change
What are we supposed to do?

- Understand before acting (or enacting laws!)
- Think about the next generation, *every child*
- Provide a solid foundation for sustainable integration of newcomers and long-term residents
“Asset Accumulation Strategies in 3 New Settlements Communities”

General objective:
- To examine the strategies newcomers use to accumulate assets, minimize vulnerabilities, and to integrate in their communities.
- How do Latino newcomers get by and get ahead?

Approach:
- Study all assets (economic, financial, cultural, community), not only deficits
Community Climate: Context is Important

Individual Variables
- Acculturation, values, self-identity

Microsystem
- Interactions at home, school, work systems that influence individual's aspirations, confidence, risk taking

Mesosystems
- Interactions between two or more microsystems

Exosystem
- Linkages between subtypes e.g., school system policies that influence the individual

Macrosystem
- Ideological components of a given society e.g., stereotyping; class bias, structure of opportunity

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Ecological Model
Strengths Based Model: Livelihoods, Capitals, and the Context of Reception

Livelihood Outcomes
- Building Assets: Economic and Social Wellbeing
- Vulnerability: Mobility

Livelihood Strategies
- Integration
- Assimilation
- Separation
- Marginalization

Context of Reception
- (Community Climate)

Economic Capital
- (Savings & Earnings)

Cultural Capital
- (Identity & Institutions)

Human Capital
- (Education, Skill, Language Proficiency, Health, Mobility)

Social Capital
- (Social Networks, Bridging and Bonding)
Focus Groups
(6 groups)

Photovoice
(9 sessions)

Case Studies
(18 individuals)

Household Surveys
(460 cases)

• Recurring themes
• Social and cultural capital

• Public Display
• Community Forums

• Livelihood strategies
• Life Stories

Cluster Analysis
(Similar Strategies)
Regression Analysis
(Community Climate)
Canonical Correlation
(Asset Accumulation & Economic Assets)

Reports
Social Capital & 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

Challenges to Measuring Social Capital

- Measurements have focused on quantity of social relationships.
- Few measures exist that consider the structure and quality of those relationships
### Community Social Capital Typology

#### Structure of Social Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation in local community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Neighborhood connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family and friends connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Quality of Social Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proactivity in a social context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feelings of trust and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family &amp; friends connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Work connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bullen & Onyx, 2005
Strong maintenance of ties to culture of origin
- Language Use
- Traditional Gender Roles
  - *I never worked. Only my husband. He never wanted me to work.*
- Religious Practices
Acculturation, continued

- Change and adaptation to host culture
  - Desire to learn English
  - Adjusting to “American” food
  - Learning new skills to function in new society
Community Level

- Little interaction between newcomers and receiving community
  - Main contacts are with family
  - Also connect regularly with other Latino newcomers
  - Superficial connections with European Americans

- Adjustments on both sides
  - Newcomers perceive that both receiving community and newcomers are adjusting to one another
Participation in Local Community

- Employer is a primary connector in for many to insurance, loans, and educational resources.
- Church is a place of support but also where they connect and serve the broader community.
- Barriers mentioned include language skills, legal status, and access to resources.
- Perceptions of community life affect participation.
  - “This place is theirs, don’t cause trouble because these people will get angry, so this is their place and we won’t have problems, because here it’s not like Mexico. Here you are free, here you make the right choices and if you behave, the world is yours, if you behave badly, bad things will happen to you...”
Neighborhood Connections

“When we bought the house, next to us lived an American woman. She was 70 or 75 years old, and when we bought the house, she put signs up on the property division. The signs said things like, “Do not trespass,” “Do not litter.” Well she filled up the front and back with the signs. But with time, I think it was after six months, we won her over, she took down the signs and she said that the children...I mean that because she now knew us and saw that we were good people...she would say that the children could play. She would go to the house and bring us cookies, and she would sit and chat with us. I entered her house to grab whichever thing for her. When it snowed, I cleaned off her porch and the sidewalk. This is the way that we won over the woman.”
Engage the participants in critical reflection about the people and places where they live.
Explore the values that are inherent in their views.
Connect the research process to the issues affecting development in the community as they view them.
Initiate local dialogues about their places as receiving communities.
What are those things in the community that make you feel welcome and help to facilitate your integration into the community?

What are those things in the community that make you feel unwelcome and impede your integration into the community?
Photovoice Process

- Recruiting Participants
  - 8 per community

- Photos and Captions
  - Three sessions
    - Orientation & First Question
    - Review First Question & Second Question
    - Review Second Question

- Community Forums
  - Receiving Community
  - Newcomers
Community Forums
Themes
Facilitating Integration

- Sense of Place
  - Parks, Businesses, Landscapes & Skylines
- Bridging Institutions
  - Centers, Churches, Employers
- Systems of Support
  - Churches, Friends and Family & Public Services
- Sense of Belonging
  - Work, Language, Culture, Schools & Services
This photo was very pretty to me. I shot it because [this town] is very pretty from wherever you look at it. The first time that I arrived here, I told my husband, "Yes, I like it here and I will stay here." It is a small town, but very pretty and it is what I dreamed of for my children. Here you live with nature.

Also in the Latin businesses, such as the stores, restaurants and bakeries, where one can speak their language without having to be harassed or discriminated against for speaking Spanish.

For birthday celebrations they have information in Spanish and English.
They have always offered us help, like English classes, Care Mobile and information about immigration. I like to help at the church in what I can, singing during masses and I count the collection. The church tries to help us with what us Hispanics may need.

It is something that makes me feel welcome because it is a place that helps all the Hispanics and they help resolve problems like translating and others. For example, if you have court or something, [she] comes with you, interprets and it is free. I arrived here and did not find a place to rent and she got a list of houses to rent, she finds the way.
My friends and their families. They have helped me with everything whether it is with school or with something personal. They have supported me in everything and they are very honest. They are with me in the good times and in the bad times. They are three, two do not speak Spanish and the other was born in Texas. They opened the doors of their homes to me and we are like sisters. Thanks to them I have been able to move ahead.

This school is part of the Hispanic culture since not all offer the opportunity equally and it is the first place that my children went to when they were of the age to go to school. They have made us feel comfortable by being the place where our children learn the first things related to their education.
My job is an opportunity to get ahead and be better. My manager is very good and has helped me a lot. This makes me feel well and do a good job.

I took the photo because, just looking at her makes me feel good. Even though my manager and I don't understand each other, we get along very well.

Traditions are very important and it is wonderful that in this country they accept Hispanic sports and they make us feel accepted because we have something to do to enjoy ourselves.
Themes Impeding Integration

- Access to Resources
  - Health Care, Credit, Higher Education and Local Services
- Communication
  - Language and Culture
- Documentation
  - Drivers License, Insurance, Housing and Credit
- Discrimination
  - Work, Shopping, Healthcare and Law Enforcement
This picture shows that Hispanics have a barrier when they are able to go beyond high school and actually become someone. An opportunity that is hard to find in their country. I don't have the money to aspire to what I want to.

It is one of the things that does not make us feel welcome, since the cost of medical services and emergencies is very extreme, to the point where getting sick can be a risk since it affects our economy, forcing us to pay extreme costs for some very simple services and that are not to our liking, like having to pay $500 or $600 for one pill or minimal attention. And the excess is also in the lack of language for us to communicate, where they see the Latino people that do not have a social security card or Medicare, something indispensable in order to get a more exclusive service.
This photo shows a place where they used to give English classes for adults in the morning and classes in the evening and now it is closed. It is needed for the people of the town and its citizens who need to learn English to improve.

They don't accept Hispanic people for not speaking the language and for being Hispanic.

We have the need of having somebody to interpret for us when we go to banks to get some service, or when we go to restaurants and shops.
We do not have the documentation needed to buy property or a house in order to live better and not to be paying rent which is money that could serve us later on.

One can't get a license for the fact of not having documents. "...for everything you need legal documents."

We cannot have a bank account due to being undocumented and we have many problems in cashing our payroll checks of our salary.
When they see the Hispanic people, they stop them and ask them questions just for being Hispanics and they treat them bad.

They treated her bad because they withdrew credit to buy furniture, they even asked her for the credit [information] that she had from California in order to buy furniture and then in the end they did not sell her the furniture.
Reflections on the Process

- The newcomers love the places; many were farmers in their countries of origin—they took many photos of the local environment.
- Local bridge builders are important connectors to local resources.
- When there are relationships with people from the local community members the outcomes they report are generally good—but there are few relationships.
- Level of fear ebbs and flows in reaction to policy discussions.
- Serious concerns about healthcare access.
- There is a great deal of isolation among the women.
It appears very little integration has taken place so far socially and culturally.

The lines being drawn at state and national policy levels are having negative effects at the local level.
- There is a great deal of fear among immigrants.
- Some communities ignore federal laws and others are “souring the milk”--very confusing to the immigrant.

The communities themselves are relatively isolated and self-reliant when it comes to addressing issues of immigration.

Community integration can be positively affected by facilitating those things that make newcomers feel welcome and reducing the number of barriers.
The future / \textit{El futuro...}