Community Integration and Immigration Policy: The Missouri Experience

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Latinos in Missouri

- Immigration of Latinos to otherwise uniform areas of the state, both rural and urban
- In Missouri: 189% growth 1990-2007, similar to other heartland and Southern states
- Over 178,000 people, distributed in every county of the state, with some counties showing 4 to 20-fold increases
- State and local governments ill prepared to address issues related to burgeoning numbers of newcomers

OSEDA Office of Social & Economic Data Analysis
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
## Latino Growth Rates Midwestern States

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>139696</td>
<td>217123</td>
<td>77427</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
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<td>Kansas</td>
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<td>188252</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>192921</td>
<td>99727</td>
<td>107%</td>
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<td>Iowa</td>
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<td>49826</td>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>57456</td>
<td>155%</td>
<td>133832</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>53844</td>
<td>143382</td>
<td>89538</td>
<td>166%</td>
<td>205896</td>
<td>44%</td>
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</table>
Integration Challenges

- Education—population is increasing in schools faster than schools can deal with the growth
- Housing—access, availability and cost of housing is a challenge in all communities with growing Latino(a) populations
- Organizational Capacity—cities and other service providers are ill equipped to meet the change in needs and services
- Drivers Licenses—many immigrants do not have a drivers license, consequently they are not insured
Integration Challenges

- Health Care—Access and cost are difficult for many Latino families—some have health care, others don’t and those that do have difficult time understanding the process
- Language—Adults are not learning much English and/or Spanish affecting family dynamic, access to resources, and community relationships
- Civil Rights—Racial profiling and immigration status have lead to human rights abuses
Premise

—Recent developments in the cultural identity literature can help us to move beyond a deficits approach to viewing culture not 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)
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)

Cultural Capital Identity & Institutions

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

Social Capital networks of support: bridging and bonding
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

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

Reports
Communities

- Criteria
  - Diverse group of Latino(a) Newcomers
  - High rates of growth in Latino(a) Population
- Sedalia
  - Population of 20,196, 5.6% Latino(a)
  - Manufacturing/Construction/Ag process
- Milan
  - Population of 1,853, 22% Latino(a)
  - Meat Processing
- Branson
  - Population of 6,050, % Latino(a)
  - Construction/Landscaping/Hospitality
Focus Groups

- Community Climate
- Social Capital
- Acculturation
Purpose of the Focus Groups

- 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.
Procedures for Focus Groups

- Affiliated with local community connectors who recruited participants for study
- Conducted 7 focus groups
  - one for men and one for women in each community with one extra group of men included in one community
  - questions addressed economic, social and cultural integration
- Sessions facilitated in Spanish by a doctoral student
- Interviews were transcribed into Spanish and then translated into English
Focus Group Participants

- 46 Latino immigrants
  - 25 female, 21 male
- Average age 39.93 (SD = 12.11; range = 18-63)
- Average years in U.S. 12.04 years (SD = 10; range = 1-44)
- 63% were married
- Average children was 2.79 (SD = 2.18; range = 0-8)
Focus Group Participants

Education Levels

- None
- 1st-3rd Grade
- 3rd-6th Grade
- 7th-9th Grade
- High School
- College/University

The graph shows the distribution of education levels among participants. The highest number of participants have a high school education, followed by those with 7th-9th grade education.
Focus Groups: 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
Community Climate

- Connecting to comparisons with other communities
  - [We] like it here because [it is] calm and quiet. You feel more relaxed because you don’t see like on the news about gun shots in the schools.

- Welcome reception
  - There are people who are very friendly.
  - Even though you don’t know perfect English, in my experience I feel comfortable when my neighbor sees me and asks me, “Hi, how are you? How are your kids?” Things like this.
  - We feel that 75% appears to be ok with us, and 25% could be against us being here, but I am pretty confident that 75% of them support us.
Community Climate

- Perceived discrimination and racism
  - There is also racism. They know very well that you are working like this [without documents] and this is the reason they treat you like putting you down a little. They give you the hardest jobs. It’s very difficult. … they give you the hardest jobs. The ones that the Americans don’t want to do.
Community Climate

- Lukewarm, cold, or negative reception
  - ...here they don’t even talk to me.
  - ...we were the first Hispanics that arrived. There were very few Hispanics, and yes, the Americans looked at us somewhat strangely. They feared us...
  - When we bought the house, next to us lived an American woman. ... she put signs up on the property division. The signs said things like, “Do not trespass,” “Do not litter.”

- Fears of —La Migra”
  - It’s like you are always running away here. You feel worried every time you travel, and you don’t feel comfortable.
  - It doesn’t matter if you are here legally, because we have relatives [that are not] and you feel it when it happens.
Social Capital

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

الف: Types of Social Capital
الف: Bonding and Bridging Social
الف: Bonding Social Capital--social capital as connections within the immigrant community
الف: Bridging Social Capital--strong links to other groups and institutions in the settling community

الف: Social Capital and community integration.
# Social Capital

## Social Capital Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of Social Relationships</th>
<th>Quality of Social Relationships</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Participation in local community</td>
<td>1. Proactivity in a social context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Neighborhood connections</td>
<td>2. Feelings of trust and safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Family and friends connections</td>
<td>3. Family &amp; friends connections</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Bullen & Onyx, 2005
Social Capital

- 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...”
Social Capital

*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.”
Social Capital

- Neighborhood Connections
  - “Struggle to develop relationships with key community institutions that can help them sustain themselves and grow such as banks, educational institutions, health care programs.
  - Bridges in the community are critical links to community services.
  - There are many issues of trust that make it difficult to establish connections with others in the community.
**Social Capital**

- **Family and Friends Connection**
  - Resources in the community are accessed through connections with family and friends
  - “The truth is, when I arrived here I didn’t count on a job, but thanks to some relatives and Miss Jones [from a local church] that she was able to contact a company, where I started to work making 6 dollars an hour.”
  - Family connections shape perceptions of community life and opportunities. There were 37 themes in the data that describe perceptions held by immigrants based on low quality data.
Social Capital

- **Work Connections**
  - For men work is where they develop relationships within the community. Not necessarily the same for women.
  - Some employers serve as bridges to the community linking them to resources for housing, health care, and education.
  - “When I came by contract here in this job, I asked for information about everything and they gave it to me. Things like where I had to take my kids to school and such. I asked them about everything.”
  - The perceptions of the community are also shaped by the economic opportunities available.
Social Capital

-Proactivity in a Social Context
  -Little evidence of this so far except within the context of family. Parks, church, and home are important community resources for social interaction.
  -Education is a strong motivation for social interaction. Education for kids was mentioned many times as a key reason (after work) for moving to these communities.
  -The women’s sense of isolation was repeated over and over again.
Social Capital

Feelings of Trust and Safety

There are issues of trust with community institutions but several noted that they moved to the community because they felt it was safe and they were by and large welcome.

“Wherever I go, I am happy. And I do not know how to speak English. I don’t know anything, but when I go to a store to buy something, and I do not know how to say something, it never fails that someone will arrive and if they see me struggling, they lend a hand.”

Relationships with health care and law enforcement affect feelings of trust and safety the most.
Social Capital

Family and Friends

- Family networks are critical to getting by.
- There is evidence that there are pretty well developed networks of family and friends that offer support.
- “the help with the children comes from friends, I have my daughters, my mother takes care of my daughters when I am working with my wife.”
- “I also know an American lady that helps us a lot. She loves my children, and she says she’s the second mother of my children. When she can, she buys shirts for them, sweaters. It has been 2 weeks since she talked to me going to her house because she had clothes for my children. I went and she gave me 2 pants, 2 sweatshirts. She says, „They are new.„ She speaks a little Spanish.”
Social Capital

- Work Connections
  - Work connections tend to be where the men make their social connections and receive some forms of support
  - The women do not seem to socialize through work the same way that men do.
Photovoice
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

- Love the places, many were farmers where they came from--many photos of the local environment
- Local bridge builders are important
- When there are relationships with local community members they are generally good--but there are few relationships
- Level of fear is escalating
- Strong concerns about healthcare access
Community Forums
Analysis to Date

- It appears very little integration has taken place so far socially and culturally.
- The policy discussions at state and national policy levels are having negative effects on integration efforts at the local level.
- There is 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 immigrants, law enforcement and service providers.
- Addressing issues of perception will likely improve the process of integration.
Policy Implications

- Challenge to policymaking is that the issues around immigration are viewed at State and Federal levels as primarily regulatory.

- Federal Policy Challenges
  - The scope of the issue; some estimates put the number of undocumented people in the US at more than 12 million.
  - How do we deal with those who are already here?
  - Fifty percent of the population growth in the US since 2000 has been due to increases in the Latino population [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org).
  - The issue is transnational and any lasting policymaking effort will require collaboration with other countries especially Mexico.
  - Immigration is not just a US phenomena. It is happening all over the world. People are migrating from country to country at rates not seen before driven primarily by economic and political realities.
Policy Implications

State Policy Challenges

- Defining their policymaking role--what can states do that does not interfere with federal law
- Difficult to enforce laws that tie regulation to legal status. Immigration law is very complex and determining someone’s legal status is not a simple process.
- Enforcing immigration laws can conflict with other State priorities such as economic development.
- There are serious integration issues that are not being addressed related to the vast majority of immigrants that are here legally.
Policy Implications

- Local Policy Challenges:
  - Education (adult and youth)
    - costs
    - Language Acquisition of Adults is probably the single most important issue affecting integration
  - Health Care Access
    - Language and Translation
    - Literacy (understanding delivery system)
  - Integration Issues
  - Local Economic Effects (local dependencies on the labor force).
  - Rapid growth rates causes issues in access to housing and the development of other infrastructure.
Policy Implications

Going forward it seems that in order to effectively deal with issues related to immigration we have to better understand the immigrants themselves. What are their motives for migrating to places like Missouri, what are their long term intentions, how do they approach integration in the communities where they settle? We also need to better understand the larger global context in which immigration is occurring, and the social and economic factors that are driving the choices people make to immigrate.
Other Resources

❖ Pew Hispanic Center recently released a report on Latino Population Growth and Dispersion in the New Century tomorrow: [www.pewhispanic.org](http://www.pewhispanic.org)

❖ The University of Nebraska Omaha recently released a new study called —Nebraska’s Immigrant Population: Economic and Fiscal Impacts available at: [www.unomaha.edu/ollas](http://www.unomaha.edu/ollas)

❖ The Cambio Center at the University of Missouri has sponsored a conference since 2002 called —Cambio De Colores” Proceedings from the first couple of conferences, papers and presentations are available at: [http://www.cambiodecolores.org/](http://www.cambiodecolores.org/)

❖ Cambio de Colores 2009, will be held in St. Louis at the UMSL millenium student center May 18-20.