

Newcomer and Receiving Communities' Perspectives on Latino Immigrant Acculturation in Community B

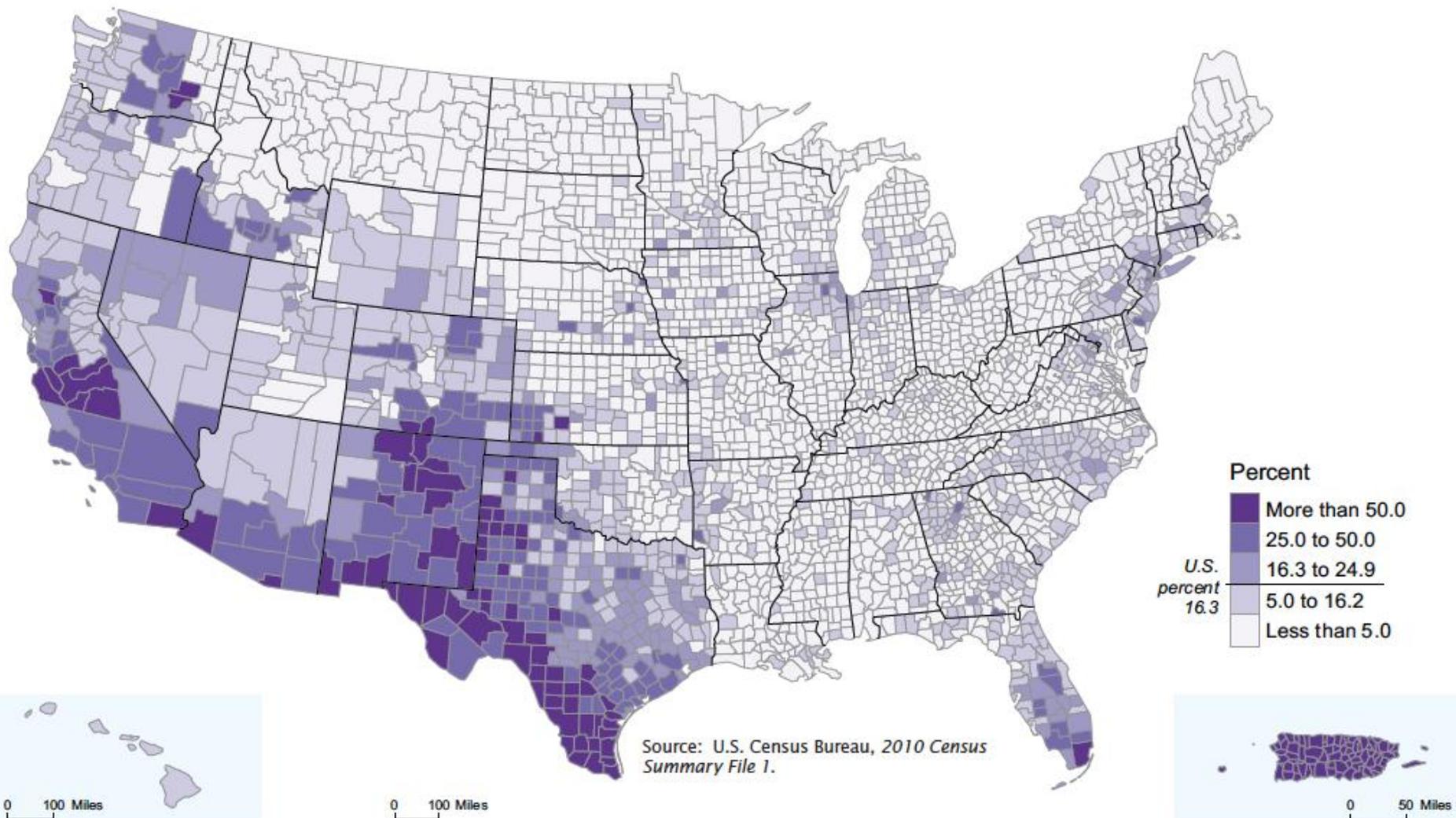
**Corinne B. Valdivia (PI),
Lisa Y. Flores (Co-PI),
Stephen C. Jeanetta (Co-PI),
Alejandro Morales,
Marvyn R. Arévalo Avalos, Sarah F. May, & Domingo Martinez**
University of Missouri

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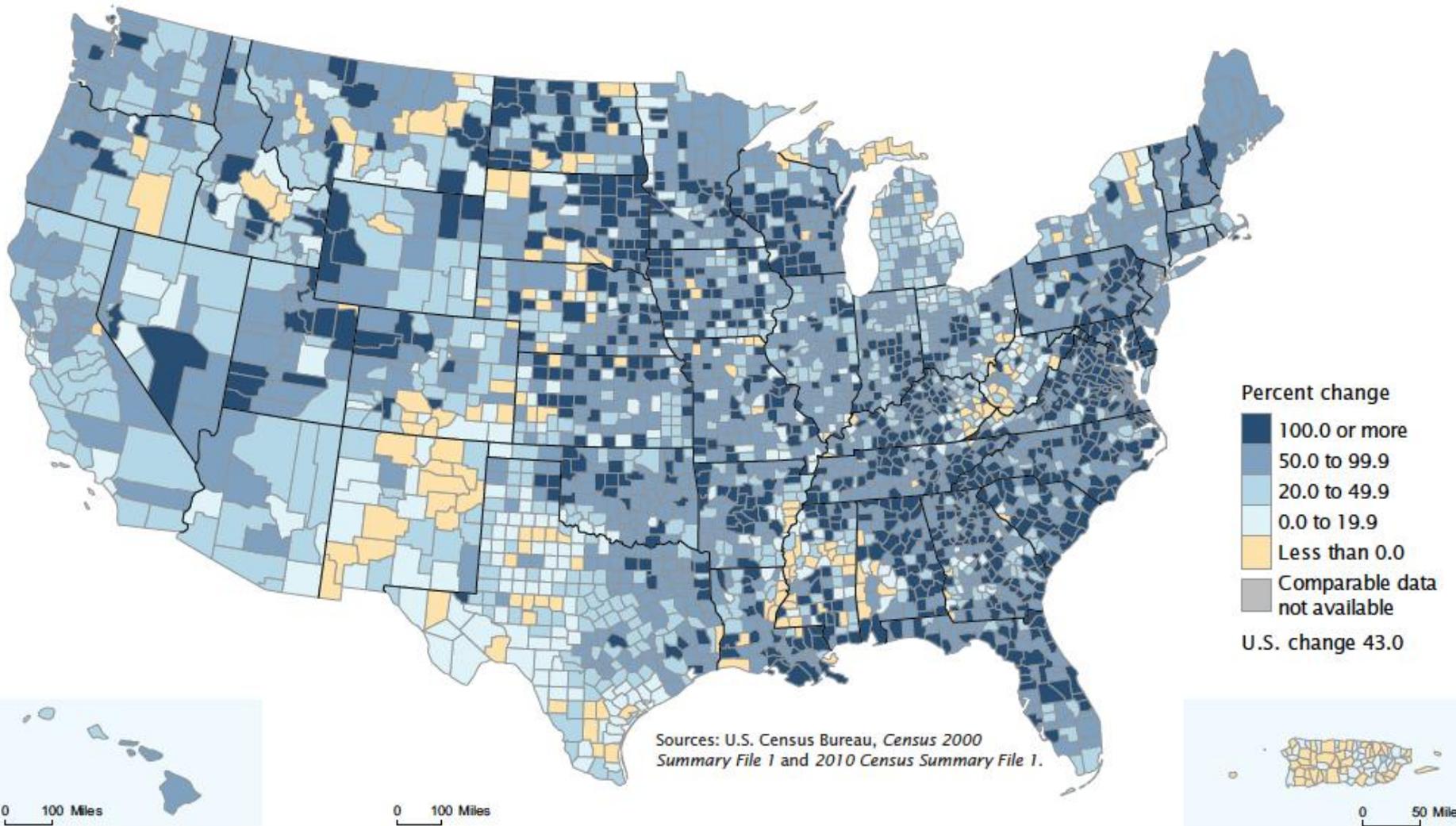
Introduction

- Rapid growth of foreign-born population
- 11% of the U.S. population, most (53%) of whom come from Latin American countries
- Changing migration patterns
 - Secondary migration to the Midwest is shifting demographics in rural communities
 - Jobs and low cost of living are major pull factors



Hispanic or Latino Population as a Percent of Total Population by County: 2012

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010



Percent Change in Hispanic or Latino Population by County: 2000 to 2010

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010

Introduction, cont'd

- Rural Midwestern communities facing challenges as a result of the shifting migration patterns
- Understanding the perceptions of members of the receiving community can provide valuable knowledge regarding integration efforts

Purpose of the Project

- To understand the perceptions of *both Latino newcomers and receiving community members* regarding the integration of Latino immigrants in rural communities in the Midwest.

Goals of the Project

- This study is part of a larger participatory action research project that seeks to examine effective strategies for integrating Latino newcomers into rural communities.

Procedures

- Worked with trusted organizations (churches, community centers) and gatekeepers in the community to access both newcomers and long-time residents
- Focus groups for newcomers were conducted in Spanish; English for long-term residents

Interview Protocol

- **Community**

- *How did you end up in this community?*
- *What is it like to live in this community?*
- *What would you like us to know about your community?*

- **Relationships**

- *Where do you find support?*
- *How are these relationships helpful to you?*
- *Tell us of opportunities you have had to interact with members of the receiving/newcomer community.*
- *How would you like to see relationships develop between receiving and newcomer communities here?*

Participants:

Receiving Community

- 16 participants (9 women, 7 men)
- **Women**
 - Average age: 61.7 years (range 30-71)
 - Average time in community: 18.7 years
 - 4 master's degree, 1 bachelor's degree, 3 associate's degree, 1 high school
 - Occupations: teacher, administrative, nurse, religious ministry, retired, unemployed
- **Men**
 - Average age: 54.8 years (range 35-68)
 - Average time in community: 24.1 years
 - 1 doctorate, 3 master's degree, 1 associate's degree, 1 some college, 1 high school
 - Occupations: law enforcement, teacher, professor, wood worker, professor, retired

Participants:

Newcomer Community

- 15 participants (8 women, 7 men)
- **Women**
 - Average age: 39.8 years (range 22-64)
 - Average time in community: 10.5years
 - 1 6th grade, 2 11th grade, 2 high school diploma, 2 some college, 1 associate's degree, 1 missing
 - Occupations: housekeeping, stay-at-home mom
- **Men**
 - Average age: 41 years (range 25-54)
 - Average time in community: 10.4 years
 - 5 9th grade, 1 11th grade, 1 high school diploma, 3 missing
 - Occupations: plumbing, cook, housekeeping, kitchen help

Data Analysis

- Themes were generated using codes
 - Seeking themes or patterns that emerged from the data
- Representative quotes are provided to describe each theme

Themes

- Community Appeal
- Integration Attitudes
- Community Progress

Theme 1: Community Appeal

- Economic opportunities
- Educational opportunities
- Small town atmosphere
- Natural landscape
- Attachment to community

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Economic Opportunities

- **Work opportunity for self or family member, better salaries, low cost of living**
- *Well, I came because of work, and I like this beautiful area. [Receiving, male]*
- *I ended up finding my dream job right here. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Economic Opportunities

- *There was the opportunity of employment. The salary was better paid. There were more job opportunities in Community B. [Newcomer, male]*
- *And the work, the work is good, and the wages. [Newcomer, female]*

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Educational Opportunities

- **Good educational system, safe schools**
- *One of the other reasons why I am here is precisely for -- they just talked about the schools – [I am here] for my family more than anything. For my children who are the ones receiving a very good education. [Newcomer, male]*
- *Well, I also like my children's education. That in schools there are no gangs, there are no groups like in other states like California or Texas. And well for them, for me that was the best because here they don't get into too much trouble. More than anything one has to think of the kids because we already lived our life, but they are the ones who [are] our future, and that is why I stay here. [Newcomer, female]*

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Small Town Atmosphere

- **Friendly people, people know one another, safe place to raise a family, can spend time with family, calm environment**
- *So it is a community where you really do know people, and they are willing to stop and be known. Now how deep those levels goes it varies by the people you are encountering, but at least you are in an area where people in Wal-Mart know you and you know them, and there is a willingness to stop and cultivate those relationships at least briefly. And so for us that is what we find, one of the things we find beautiful and attractive for this town. Is that people are not afraid to be known and they are willing to take the time to be known. [Receiving, male]*
- *I wanted to settle down and have kids and I thought this would be a good place to have kids. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 1: Community Appeal – Small Town Atmosphere

- *And we who, well, who were coming from a city so to speak, it was, when arriving to Community B it was like finding another, calmer lifestyle, and we enjoyed [it]... One of the points was that we found that our family would be able to develop, our children would be able to develop better here. [Newcomer, male]*
- *...and finding a job gave me the satisfaction of being at peace and being able to interact with my family even more, um, to have a job and to live peacefully in this area. [Newcomer, female]*

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Natural Landscape

- **Natural environment, outdoor activities**
- *I love the mountains. I love the scenery. I love the outdoors, and the lakes. I love all that.*
[Receiving, male]
- *I also have a real passion for nature and the beautiful [region], especially the rivers, so that keeps me here too.* [Receiving, female]

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Natural Landscape

- *We came from the city to enjoy the nature.* [Newcomer, male]
- *The nature. It is pretty here.* [Newcomer, female]

Theme 1: Community Appeal - Attachment to Place

- **Returning to family roots, family or friends living in area**
- *We were kind of planning to come back to the roots where my husband started out. [Receiving, female]*
- *Well, I came here because my brother lived here. I came to be with him. [Newcomer, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes

- Attitude toward Change
- Perceptions of Immigration/Immigration Policy
- Perceptions of “Other” Community

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Attitude toward Change

- **Thoughts and feelings related to growth of community and to increasing diversity in the community; desire to maintain small town values and traditions; desire to increase comfort with diversity**
- *It was a lot different then than it is now, it was slower, easier living than it is now, it is a little more dynamic now. [Receiving, male]*
- *Although it [sense of community] is not as great now, I don't think, as it was back when, in my younger days living here. I don't want to see that sense of community disappear. And I think we should all work to keep that sense of community, embrace anybody that comes here that's worth having. [Receiving, male]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Attitude toward Change

- *I guess in two to three years I would like to see us more comfortable with each other. That it wouldn't be so odd or strange or uncomfortable. You know, just that we could be together and see each other as human beings who had similar needs and all of that. [Receiving, female]*
- *Really, I said that we are very welcoming, and I do think that in most respects, but I also think that there are aspects of discrimination and a lack of acceptance for newcomers who are very different from the people who have come from here. And I'm one of those people who came from here, but I don't know that we're always open to a lot of change to a lot of new traditions, cultures, religions, languages, things of that nature. a lot of the things that make living here great are also some of the biggest challenges that we face and preserving our traditions is important to me. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Attitudes toward Change

- *That's part of it is that there is this need to see people as all the same and I think respecting diversity, respecting differences and cultures and all that. I think we need to work on that.*
[Receiving, female]

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of Immigration/Immigration Policy

- **Community economic health depends on immigrant workers; opportunity to obtain residency status; government programs depend on immigrant workers**
- *They kept a set of books for the undocumented, a set of books for the documented so they could maintain their workflow and immigration went away, and didn't come back and that's how they temporarily adjusted to that, but it was only temporary. And then later on immigration kind of got, they got the word, oh Community B has to survive economically so maybe we shouldn't cop down there so much, and that's hearsay. [Receiving, male]*
- *That they would give us the opportunity. For example I am referring to a permanent residence, something that will help us be legal here in this country, because we want to be legal in this country. [Newcomer, male]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of Immigration/Immigration Policy

- *Like—every time Americans voice their disapproval of immigration, but yet the federal government deliberately is allowing it and has been, for decades...What I do have a problem with is when the border starts crossing over...the horror that they had that they left. Not just the poverty, but the horror that—you know how you hear about kidnappings and people disappearing? [Receiving, female]*
- *And not very many people acknowledge that, that the Hispanics are putting money into our social security system and they'll never see a penny of it. But they're keeping our social security system alive. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- **RECEIVING:** increasing population in our community; close community network; appreciative; hard workers; family values; refuse to assimilate; negative perceptions; peaceful, law-abiding
- *The majority of the Hispanic people who are here seem to know each other or seem to know of each other, and they are tremendous resources to each other. And my perception is that the Spanish people are always so very gracious for anything we can do to help...And we've done really great things with our liturgy to include the Spanish people, and they are so appreciative of that. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- *I see them as very brave. I can't picture myself going to another country bringing my whole family or whatever. And trying to make it alone. Of course they do have a network, which I think helps, but I'm always—I'm just amazed at their courage and their stamina in that. And I'm also—the sense, particularly with the Hispanic population—the strong sense of family that they have is just amazing. [Receiving, female]*
- *I still believe that their refusal to learn English and integrate themselves into American society is [not] going to make them succeed—they will never be successful. I really believe that. That's it, they'll just live. They'll never be successful. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- *I listened to what a lot of other people in the English community said about them. And it was basically what the media was saying—brainwashing. And that was, you know, they’re taking jobs, they’re here illegally—a lot of negative remarks about the Latino community and Hispanic community. [Receiving, female]*
- *The Hispanics that spoke English, they didn’t have a problem. But, they are very gracious people and they’re very kind, and it’s not that I like or dislike the people, I dislike them separating themselves. I feel that they come to America for a better life. Yet they still want to live like they’re in Mexico. I feel they don’t appreciate their life here, and they’re taking our culture and spitting it back at us in our face. That’s how I feel. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- *...[before] there was a fight every night in that apartment. Well a Mexican family has moved into it, a lady is managing it. Almost everyone in the apartments are Hispanic. I don't know that they are all Mexican, and I say to him “you know I wished they would have moved there ten years ago” it's as quiet as it's ever been. [Receiving, male]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- **NEWCOMER: Some are prejudiced, racist; fearful of newcomers; non-accepting**
- *Personally I have occasionally encountered racist people. [Newcomer, male]*
- *People that want to protect their roots here, that don't want to be invaded, let's say in terms of Hispanics. They are...too conservative with their beliefs. So then what could sometimes result from there is the cultural clash of racism, that they begin to think they are being invaded, and they see us in a negative way. [Newcomer, male]*

Theme 2: Integration Attitudes - Perceptions of “Other” Community

- *But yes there are a few who judge you solely because of the color of your skin. For example, when I went to the DMV, I had everything right, everything like it should be, but they still made requests that I don't know why they were asking me those things...So, I went back another day, with my husband who was also going to move from California...they told me, okay, well you are going to have to bring your birth certificate, you're going to have to bring etcetera etcetera, and my husband said, “But why? I was born in the United States.” And the woman looked at him and said, “Oh! Okay, well never mind!” [Newcomer, female]*

Theme 3: Community Progress - Ideas for Integration

- **RECEIVING COMMUNITY:** Recognize strengths; acknowledge differences; education; take initiative as the receiving community; change self; improve access to services for everyone; involve in decision-making within the community.
- *...to find a mutual way that various groups can share their gifts and talents so that we can see it and recognize that everybody has something to give. [Receiving, male]*
- *Part of the way to understand is just learn....But if you take, just take some time to learn, you can see things from a totally different perspective, and that's where that understanding comes from. That's all it really takes, just a little bit of education and understanding. [Receiving, male]*
- *That's the only place we can control [is] to start with ourselves. And the community. [Receiving, female]*

Theme 3: Community Progress - Ideas for Integration

- *These people all say, oh well there is no difference. Yea, there is a difference. There is a different culture there, but we need to embrace each other's cultures rather than say, ew. [Receiving, male]*
- *I think that in any situation where you have large majority and small minority you gotta expect the majority to take the initiative to host the minority, not the other way around, because the minority doesn't feel the confidence, the power, the process of integrating. [Receiving, male]*

Theme 3: Community Progress - Ideas for Integration

- *I'd like to see them be part of the decision making structure, get some input, but the leaders have to welcome that input, they just can't let it happen, it won't happen, with the minority, what 6% [8.8%] did you say? [Receiving, male]*
- *I think the ultimate goal would be to make all those elements [community facilities] function as they should for every member of the community, both, the minority populations of race, but also minority populations of income, and other barriers that are keeping people from accessing that fully. [Receiving, male]*

Theme 3: Community Progress - Ideas for Integration

- **NEWCOMER: enhance English skills; create community organizations that promote cross-cultural exchanges; promote sporting activities; communicate with one another; cultural education workshops for receiving community**
- *One of our main barriers is with English, and if we end up focusing a little more on ourselves with the English. Because I think that, I have seen that the people, our friends that speak English more or less, they are like, they have a little more interactions with the people. I mean they feel more confidence to go to city hall and all that.
[Newcomer, male]*

Theme 3: Community Progress - Ideas for Integration

- *Well, a way that we can, where I have seen that the Latino interacts more with others is through sports. Well you can see that, you can realize that if you go to the parks or where there is soccer there is always going to be a group of Hispanics [and] Americans that are interacting. [Newcomer, male]*
- *Like, give a speech/talk/information session to American people about what we do. What is our system, because we base ourselves more in work and the home needs, and in our social lives sometimes. And sincerely, we are really interested in learning English. Because we already have Spanish ability, right? [Newcomer, female]*

Discussion

From what you have seen in this presentation, what was most relevant to you?

What did you find most challenging?

What are your overall impressions of what we've learned in the project so far?

What else would you like to learn about this issue?

Next Steps

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Action plans

For More Information...

- The Integration Project: *Immigrant Integration & Sustainable Rural Development: Linking Receiving & Newcomer Communities*

<http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/Integration/>

- The Assets Project: *Asset Accumulation Strategies in 3 New Settlement Communities*

<http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/Assets/>

- University of Missouri Cambio Center

– <http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/>

Lisa Y. Flores, Ph.D.
University of Missouri
FloresLY@missouri.edu