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**Understanding
Vulnerable
Populations: An
Exploration of
Data Sources and
Research Methods**
HUMAN MOBILITY



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Using Datasets

- Data we used comes from the Understanding America Study's (UAS) Coronavirus in America Survey conducted by the Center for Economic and Social Research (CESR) at the University of Southern California (USC)
 - Large dataset consisting of over 140,000 observations for many variables
- When using datasets that were collected by another organization or group, sometimes creativity in using survey questions for variables is required
 - Example: We used what language the respondent took the survey in as a measure of their language proficiency or comfortability with secondary languages



Motivations for Study

- US as leader of COVID-19 cases and deaths around the world; more severe impacts on communities of color
- Gap in what is known about the extent to which the public perceives risks associated with infectious disease outbreaks (H1N1 swine flu pandemic, Ebola outbreak, SARS and Avian influenza (bird flu) epidemics, COVID-19, etc.)
 - Increasing evidence of greater threats posed by COVID-19 on Latino/a communities; however, less is known particularly about how identification and migration status influences perceptions of risk and harm
- COVID environment in Nebraska
 - State government fighting against local mask mandates
 - Meatpacking plant epidemics



The Reality of the Situation

- Racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to have health insurance and more likely to have health conditions that put them at greater risk
- Racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to have insecure means of income
- Minority populations tend to have disproportionately high hospitalization rates associated with COVID-19 while also being more likely to abide by regulations or change behavior to stop spread of disease
 - Some reasons given—struggle to get PPE, dominating presence in service industry jobs, having to take riskier jobs to leverage vulnerable economic situations, cultural factors such as multi-generational homes
- Public perception of health risks is influenced by multiple factors
 - Feelings of dread, comprehension of situation complexity, uncertainty about effects, familiarity with risk, possibility of solving situation by oneself
- Perceptions of risk is a strong determinant of behavior

Discrimination and Distress

- Several studies have linked experienced and perceived discrimination to adverse mental health outcomes and higher perceptions of health risk
- Experienced discrimination has been correlated with higher scores of depression on the CES-D depression scale as well as linked to lower levels of subjective well-being and high distress
- Can lead towards stigmatization which is a concept that can be tested



Stigma

- Concept defined by the CDC as a form of discrimination based on fears around disease and death that specifically impacts communities of color and those that have been sick with COVID-19
- Stigma can cause significant reduction in public health measure compliance—distrust in public institutions that makes it more difficult to reach people in distress
 - Compounded by Latino/a's and immigrants' higher likelihood to avoid contact with educational or health care services due to increasing number of raids, federal immigration enforcement, and immigration surveillance at all levels of government disrupting daily lives
- Health-related stigmas generally have more significant adverse effects on racial and ethnic minorities



Socioeconomic Situations

- Some studies have found reasons for increased likelihood of Latino/a communities contracting infectious disease is due to socioeconomic situations in the country of residence
 - Employment status, financial security, immigration status, language difficulties, access to medical services, etc.
- Immigrants are more likely to travel back and forth between home and host country which can cause travel-related contraction
- Specifically, those of Mexican heritage have reported sending remittances back home to support family and friends which could cause primary and secondary economic tensions within families
- First-and-second generation immigrants tend to face more challenges economically and culturally compared to third-generation immigrants



Major Variables

Dependent Variables

- Risk of infection
- Risk of dying
- Risk of job loss
- Risk of no money

Independent Variables

- Hispanic/Latino
- Immigration Status

Control Variables

- Identity
- Trust
- Anxiety
- Discrimination/Stigma
- Language

Research Questions

- **Do Latinos and Latino Immigrants perceive higher risk to their health and economic means during the COVID-19 Pandemic?**
 - H1: Latino/a individuals report a higher chance of economic and health effects of COVID-19 compared to non-Latino/a individuals
 - H2: First- and second-generation migrants report a higher chance of economic and health effects of COVID-19 compared to non-immigrants
 - H3: Latino/a individuals who are also first or second-generation migrants report a higher chance of economic and health effects of COVID-19 compared to other individuals

Perceived Risk of Infection Findings

- Model 1 with no control variables identifying as Hispanic/Latino was associated with greater perceived risk of infection
 - Association was no longer present when controlling for alternative explanations in Model 2
- Being a first- or second-generation immigrant does not appear to be associated with greater perceived risk of infection in Models 1 and 2
- Models 3 and 4 suggest that identifying as a first-generation Hispanic/Latino individual is associated with a 19.1% increased perceived risk but does not hold at standard thresholds of statistical significance
- Other variables such as anxiety, discrimination, and taking the survey in Spanish were positively correlated with perceived risk of infection
- Inconclusive results, so further analysis by subgroups was conducted
 - Identifying as Mexican associated with 16% increase in perceived risk of infection
 - Identifying as Cuban associated with decrease in perceived risk of infection

Perceived Risk of Dying Findings

- Results from Model 2 with all covariates included suggest that identifying as Hispanic/Latino is associated with a 0.256 increase in perceived risk of dying of COVID-19
- Consistent with earlier results, no generational nativity status is statistically different from not being an immigrant.
- Turning to Model 4, the interaction between Hispanic/Latino and nativity appears to be positively related with perceived risk of dying
 - It appears as the combination of being Hispanic/Latino and a first- or second-generation is related to increased perceived risk of dying from COVID-19
- Similar results on control variables—**anxiety, discrimination, Spanish language, age** increased perceived risk
 - Some variables are associated with decreased perceived risk of dying—**having health insurance, identifying as White, greater household income, identifying as male, and education**
- Subgroup analysis
 - First-and-second generation Mexican individuals report increased risk of dying
 - Third-generation Central/South American individuals are associated with increased perceived risk of dying

Perceived Risk of Running out of Money Findings

- In Model 1, with no interaction with generational status and identifying as Hispanic/Latino, identifying as Hispanic/Latino is associated with a greater perceived risk of running out of money
- Model 2 finds that being a first or second-generation immigrant is associated with a greater perceived risk of running out of money due to COVID-19
- Control variables are similar to previous findings—Anxiety, identifying as Native American are positively correlated; higher household income, higher age, and trust in President Trump are negatively correlated

Perceived Risk of Losing Job Findings

- In Model 3, with no interaction with generational status and identifying as Hispanic/Latino, identifying as Hispanic/Latino is associated with a greater perceived risk of losing one's job in the next three months
- Model 4 finds that being a first or second-generation immigrant is associated with a greater perceived risk of running out of money due to COVID-19
 - 53.7% increased perception of risk
- Control variables are similar to previous findings—Anxiety, identifying as Native American, and trust in CDC are positively correlated; Identifying as White, having health insurance, higher household income, higher age, and trust in President Trump are negatively correlated

Conclusions and Summary

- General support for the hypothesis—especially when it comes to economic risk perceptions
 - Mixed results when it comes to perceived health risks that get stronger as subgroup analysis is conducted
- Generally, models breaking down heterogeneity in the Hispanic/Latino community suggests a complex relationship between race/ethnicity and immigration on health risks
- Supports calls by political scientists for greater attention to the heterogeneity between different Hispanic/Latino communities in politics
- Relatively low explanatory power indicating other variables can be analyzed in the future
 - Geographic location as a possible variable as the federalist system of the United States government means that states may have wildly different responses to COVID-19 that can effect risk perceptions

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