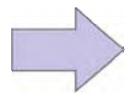# Engaging the Resources of New Immigrants: Social Relationships that Contribute to Community Integration

Community Development Society
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
Tuesday June 24, 2008

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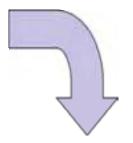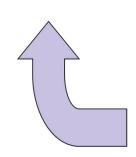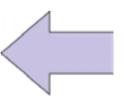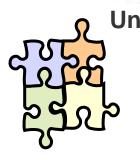Anne Dannerbeck, State of Missouri Court System

Changes in the state

University of Missouri System

CAMBIO CENTER
University of Missouri

Knowledge, Data, and Outreach

Research

Project Design

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)

Findings Products Information
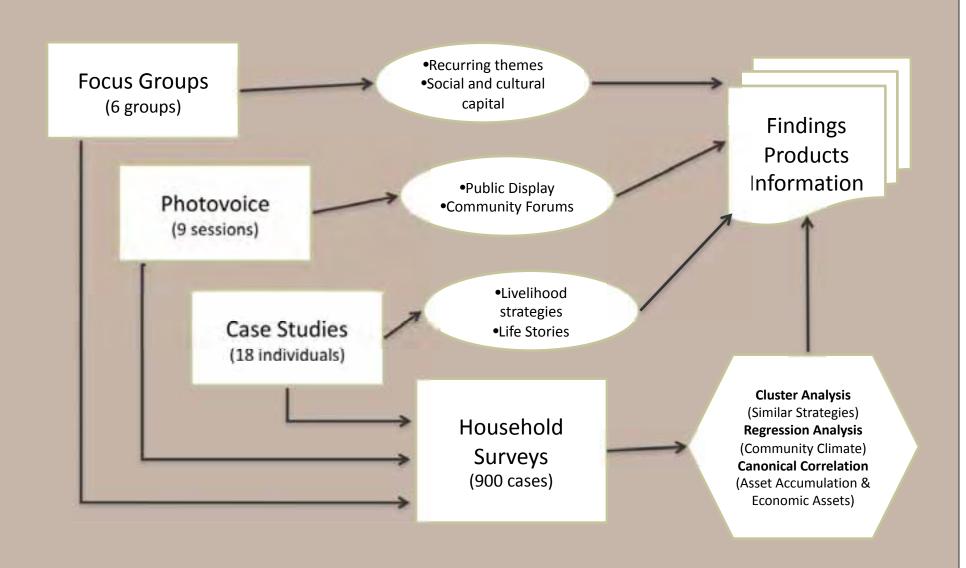
Strengths Based Model:
Livelihoods, Capitals, and the Context of Reception

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

Economic Capital
(Savings & Assets)

Cultural Capital
(Identity & Institutions)

Livelihood Strategies

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

Social Capital
(Networks of Support Bridging and Bonding)

Community Climate
(Context of Reception)

Integrating

Alienating

Focus Groups

Acculturation

Community Climate

Social Capital

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)

Communities

- **Criteria**
  - Diverse groups of Latino newcomers
  - Experienced high rates of growth in Latino population
- **Community A***
  - Population of 20,196; 5.6% Latino
  - Manufacturing/Construction/Agricultural Processing
- **Community B***
  - Population of 1,863; 22% Latino
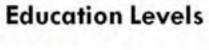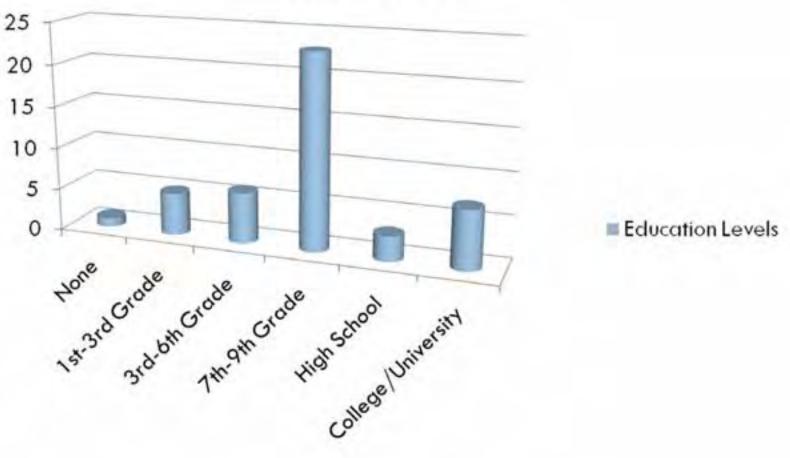 - Meat Processing
- **Community C**
  - Population of 6,050; 4% Latino
  - Hospitality/Landscaping/Construction

Procedures

- 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 in Spanish and then translated into English

Focus Group Participants

Qualitative Analysis: Grounded Theory

- ATLAS.ti software

- Open coding: 2 members of the team individually coded each interview line-by-line

- Met jointly to come to a consensus for coding units

- Axial coding will be used to identify recurring themes

Community Climate

- 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, continued

- 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, continued

- 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.*

Community Social Capital Typology

Structure of Social Relationships	Quality of Social Relationships
1. Participation in local community 2. Neighborhood connections 3. Family and friends connections 4. Work connections	1. Proactivity in a social context 2. Feelings of trust and safety 3. Family & friends connections 4. Work connections

Bullen & Onyx, 2005

Preliminary Analyses: Bridging

- 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..."

Preliminary Analyses: Bridging

- 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."

Preliminary Analyses: Bridging

- Neighborhood Connections (continued)
  - 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.

Preliminary Analyses: Bridging

- 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 Elvira [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.

Preliminary Analyses: Bridging

- 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.

Preliminary Analysis: Bonding

- 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.

Preliminary Analysis: Bonding

- 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.

Preliminary Analysis: Bonding

- 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. When she can, she buys shirts for them, sweater. 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."

Preliminary Analysis: Bonding

- 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.

Next Steps

- Community Forums
- Household Survey
- Synthesis of the Focus Group Data