

Perspectives of Work among Mexican Immigrants

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Abstract

In this pilot study, four Mexican immigrants who have lived in the United States from one to five years were interviewed about their experiences with work in the U.S. Interview data were analyzed using consensual qualitative research methods (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). Themes associated with their work experiences were motivation for working in U.S., barriers to working, access to working, attitudes toward work, conceptions of work, work goals and expectations, work climate, and information for others. Implications of the results for vocational psychologists and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Perspectives of Work among Mexican Immigrants

The continuing and rapid growth of the Latino community in the United States ensures their growing representation in the U.S. labor force at a level never before seen in this country. Unfortunately, marked employment disparities have been noted among racial and ethnic groups in the U.S. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2003). Specifically, Latinos are overrepresented in “service occupations” (20%), “operators, fabricators and laborers” (21%), and agricultural “wage and salary” workers (30%). These figures do not reflect low-wage, undocumented workers who are essential to the competitive U.S. business market. Clearly, Latinos and Latino immigrants have changed the face, culture, and labor force of the U.S, and are contributing significantly to the economy of this country, with the majority of them employed in service and manual jobs.

Swanson and Gore (2000) point out that links among socioeconomic status, educational attainment, and occupational level have led to a “continuous cycle of impoverished, poorly educated, and underemployed [people of color]” (p. 249). This is certainly evident for Latinos and Latino immigrants in the U.S., who are among the poorest and least educated in the country. One of the first steps toward addressing the social inequalities prevalent among Latinos and moving this group toward occupational and educational parity is to generate knowledge that provides a better understanding of their experiences in educational and work settings.

Latino Immigration

The impact of Latino immigration to the U.S. is a reality that cannot be ignored. At no other time in U.S. history have we seen the topic of immigration receive as much attention as it has in recent years. Although the topic of immigration has surfaced at various times in U.S. history, the issue has never been as divisive and contentious as it is today. At the center of this debate on immigration policies is the welfare and future of the Latino population.

At 41.3 million people, Latinos are the largest racial/ethnic minority group in the U.S., comprising 14% of the U.S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2005). Latinos comprise the majority of the foreign-born population, with 53% (18.3 million) of foreign-born individuals coming from a Latin American country. However, these figures may underestimate the number of undocumented Latino immigrants living and working in the U.S. Most foreign-born Latinos (10 million) are from Mexico, followed by El Salvador, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Colombia (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 2005).

Reasons for Migration

Latinos leave their families and home countries to migrate to the U.S. for a myriad of reasons (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, Gallardo-Cooper, 2002). These motivations vary from seeking educational and financial opportunities to escaping political turmoil and war. Many Mexicans migrate to the U.S. with the hope of providing their children a better future (Suro, 1999). In addition, Mexicans migrate to the U.S. when they feel that their opportunities in Mexico are limited. Specifically, when there is underemployment in their native homes, Mexicans may decide to migrate to the U.S. to sustain their families (Suarez-Orozco & Paez, 2002).

However, a recent study contends these findings. Kochhar (2005) finds that the majority of undocumented migrants from Mexico were employed in their home country before they migrated to the U.S. Thus, the commonly held belief that Mexican immigrants fail to find work in their home country does not seem to be the primary reason for their migration. Kochhar (2005) argues that additional factors may include wages, job quality, long-term prospects and perceptions of opportunity. It may not be the possibility of finding a job in the U.S. that brings Latino immigrants, or specifically Mexican immigrants, to leave their home country, but the

prospects for better wages, enhanced quality of work and the belief that more opportunities are available in the U.S.

Researchers have suggested that a “culture of migration” may develop in some Mexican communities (Kandel & Massey, 2002). In these communities, people have come to value foreign wage labor along its associated behaviors, attitudes and lifestyles, and as migratory behavior extends throughout these communities, migration become normative and expected among the members of the community.

Theoretical Framework

To provide a contextualized and holistic understanding of the experience of Mexican immigrants’ work experiences, we use the psychology of working as a theoretical framework (Blustein, 2001; 2006) for the present study. This approach assumes that individuals in a society may hold varied perspectives about work and their work identities. In addition this framework focuses on dimensions of class and race/ethnicity that may be relevant to and informative about the work experiences of a broad range of individuals in the U.S., including the Mexican immigrant work experience. The methodological implications of the psychology of working framework include studying the individual’s work experience, conceptions and expectations of work, barriers to working because of ethnicity and immigrant status, and stereotypes and/or discrimination associated with work experience. This suggests that it is not only necessary to study the Mexican immigrants’ work experience, but also the cultural and social implications of their work. The psychology of working theory provides useful structure that focuses on issues that are salient for Mexican immigrant workers and recognizes the importance of context in studying their experience.

Purpose of the Research

Although studies have examined the Latino immigrant experience (Kandel & Massey, 2002; Kochhar, 2005; Suro, 1999), few have focused on their work experiences. By focusing on the work experiences of Mexican immigrants and using the psychology of working as a framework, this project seeks to fully understand Mexican immigrants' experiences in the workforce in the U.S. and to highlight critical factors in their career development. The study aims to assess the Mexican immigrants' work needs, and to better understand their perspectives on work in the U.S. Specifically, their perceptions of work, expectations for work in the U.S., past and current experience with work in the U.S., and goals and barriers encountered in the workforce will be explored. In conducting these interviews, we hope to understand the specific cognitions, beliefs, and values that Mexican immigrants working in Missouri hold about work. Examining conceptions of work is critical because the perceptions that Mexican immigrants hold about work can potentially impact their decisions about integrating into the community and can inform employer work policies. The knowledge gained from these interviews can provide much needed information about Mexican immigrants that can enhance local community interventions and also provide information about the opportunities that they create for the local, state and national economies. We hope to advance the current knowledge of Latino immigrants' career and life paths by focusing on the lived work experiences of a sample of Mexican immigrant workers and to ground the information obtained in the study in a contextual and environmental perspective.

Method

Participants

Descriptions of the participants are reported in Table 1. All participants were Mexicans who had immigrated to the United States within 5 years at the time of the interview. Three were

male and one was female. The mean age of the participants ranged from 24 to 33 years with a mean age of 27.75 years ($SD = 4.11$). With regard to relationship status, two were married, while the other two were single. The average number of family members living in the U.S. with the participant was 2.5. The hours worked per week in the US ranged from 30 to 54, with a mean of 40.87 ($SD = 8.35$). The average hourly income was \$8.41 per hour ($SD = \0.52) and the average monthly income was \$1201.00 ($SD = \2.31). Time spent working in the U.S. ranged from 1.5 to 5 years with a mean of 2.56 years ($SD = 1.66$). Participants averaged less than a year at their current job. Finally, two participants were educated through middle school, one completed two years of college, and one had a bachelor's degree.

Researchers

The research team consisted of a group of 8 women researchers: a 36-year old Mexican American professor; three 25-year-old Mexican American doctoral students; one 30-year old Mexican American masters student; a 25-year old White doctoral student; a 26-year old Chinese doctoral student; and a 36-year old White masters student. All team members are in counseling psychology, with the exception of the 30-year old Mexican American masters student who is in Sociology/Women's Studies. Three of the members of the team are bilingual. One student has been in graduate school for 5 years, one for 4 years, two for 3 years, and three for 1 year. Of the Mexican American team members, one is first generation, three are second generation (with one self-identifying as first generation), one is third generation, and one is fourth generation. One team member is a foreign national. Team members' research interests and experience include Latino psychology, Latino cultural values, career development of Mexican Americans, international students' career development, Latino psychosociocultural issues, Mexican American education and experience, immigrant generations, and multicultural issues.

Measures

A demographic form was completed by the participants to obtain information on gender, age, relational status, country of origin, income, family size, education, and length of stay in the U.S. In addition, a semi-structured interview (see Appendix A) was conducted to learn about participants' experiences with work in the U.S. Specifically, questions addressed participants' definition of work, meaning of work, work history, work experiences, work skills, work barriers, work expectations, and reasons for working in the U.S. Before closing the interview, participants were asked if there was anything else they would like to share and were asked about their experience with the interview.

Procedure

Recruitment. Our recruitment efforts focused on local Latino community institutions such as a Latino-oriented community center ("*Centro Latino*"), churches with Spanish-language services, markets that catered to Latino clientele, restaurants and other community services that Latinos frequent such as laundromats and discount department stores. Members of the research team posted flyers in Spanish and English that described the study, incentives, and a contact number for more information. Additional recruitment efforts included word-of-mouth and personal contacts in the Latino community to identify potential participants and inform them of the study. Interested participants contacted a member of the research team. To date, the latter form of recruitment (word-of-mouth) has generated all the participants for the study. Participants were offered a \$20.00 gift certificate to a local grocery store as an incentive to take part in the study.

Interview procedures. Interviews were conducted in-home in an attempt to increase participants' comfort level with the interview process. In-home and familiar settings such as a

central informal meeting place increases *personalismo* (being personable, personalism) with Latino research participants. Participants had the option of having the interview conducted in Spanish or English, again with the goal of increasing participants' comfort during the interview process and with the study.

Interview teams were comprised of a bilingual (fluent in Spanish and English) interviewer and another member of the research team who acted as an observer. The observer recorded field notes during the interviews, noting information about the setting in which the interview took place and non-verbal behaviors of the participant. This information was helpful in personalizing the interviewee (recording physical characteristics, idiosyncratic gestures, etc.) and in understanding the context of the interview situation (how the interviewer and interviewee situated themselves physically, whether the interviewee exhibited signs of anxiety or ease during the interview, etc.).

To date, all of the participants indicated a preference that the interview be conducted in Spanish although at least two of the interviewees spoke some English. The interviewers engaged in *la plática* (small talk) with interviewees before the interview began that served to reduce any anxiety or stress about being in an interview situation. The interviewer presented both verbal and written informed consent information to participants prior to the start of each interview. We also addressed questions about the project, concerns that their wages would be affected by participating in the study, and suspicions about governmental agencies (i.e., immigration) knowing about their immigration status or earnings. Participants were assured that the information provided to in this study was confidential and that they would remain anonymous, and that the researchers would not report any information about wages or immigration status to

government officials. The interviews took approximately an hour to an hour and a half to complete.

Transcription. Interviews were translated and transcribed in teams of two. One of the transcribers included the interviewer and the other was another member of the team. The interviewer verbally translated the interviews to a team member for English transcription.

Data analysis. We followed consensual qualitative research (Hill, Thompson & Williams, 1997) methods to analyze the data. Prior to beginning the analysis, the analysis team had a discussion about recognizing each person's opinion throughout the analysis process to ensure that, while there were people in the analysis team that were at varying levels in their experience and education, all team members were comfortable agreeing or disagreeing with anyone in the group so that a true consensus has been reached. The members of the analysis team, as well as an additional research team member not involved in the analysis, individually generated domains that may be important to the study. These domains we based on assumptions and knowledge we had about Latino immigrants and their career experiences as well as the interview protocol. Through discussion, the team developed an initial set of 13 domains, which included the following: barriers to working, access to working, skills, attitudes related to work, conceptions of work, career aspirations/goals, information for others, benefits to working, outcomes/experiences, work climate, motivation for coming to the U.S., work values, and work days.

Next, each member of the team coded data for one interview into each of the domains, and then met as a group to explain the interpretation of each statement and to reach a consensus as to how to code the data. This process was repeated for a second interview. The domains were adjusted by adding one domain, dropping three domain, and combining two domains into

existing domains, leaving a total of 9 domains for subsequent coding. The final set of domains included barriers, access, attitudes towards work, conceptions of work, work goals, information for others, work climate, motivation for coming to the U.S., and American stereotypes of Mexicans. Team members were then placed into smaller groups of two to complete the final coding of the remaining interviews. Once all of the interview data was coded into domains, members individually abstracted the data, or developed core ideas. Core ideas are created to summarize the data content for an individual domain for each interview. The team then met to discuss the core ideas and to gain consensus that all information captured from each domain was included in the core idea.

The next step of the analysis included establishing categories based on the core ideas that were generated across the cases. Individual team members brainstormed categories for each domain independently and then met as a team to arrive at a consensus on the categories and their wording, as well as the assignment of the core ideas to categories.

Results and Discussion

Because the sample for the pilot study was small, we could not use the conventional labels for describing how representative each category was for the sample. We decided to use *general* to describe categories that applied to 3 or 4 cases, and *variant* to describe categories that applied to two cases. Categories that applied to only one case are not reported. See Table 2 for the general and variant categories that emerged for each of the domains in the cross-analysis.

Motivation for Working in U.S.

In general, the participants were motivated to seek work in the U.S. for economic opportunities. Participants indicated a desire to make money through working in the U.S. and believed that earning opportunities were better in the U.S. than in Mexico. Variant reasons for

working in the U.S. were to support family, to pursue educational opportunities, and because the participant had connections (family, extended family, friends) that were living in the U.S. when they came.

Barriers to Working in U.S.

Several categories emerged for barriers to working in the U.S. A general barrier included lack of English skills, which participants felt impeded their communication with employers, opportunities for advancement, and the type of work they could do. Participants expressed frustration at not being able to effectively communicate. Participants also generally indicated that being treated unfairly by co-workers or employers was a barrier to their optimal functioning in the workplace. Participants perceived a hierarchy at work, where Mexicans were treated poorly if they were non-citizens or if they were in non-labor positions.

Half of the participants indicated that lack of proper documentation to work, lack of support from others, demanding work, limited access to opportunities, uncertainty about future, and limited resources also made it difficult for them to work in the U.S. Some expressed a desire to take advantage of learning opportunities in the U.S., but were unable to access these opportunities due to a demanding work schedule or lack of transportation.

Access to Working in U.S.

The support of family and family networking in the U.S. to locate a job was identified as a general facilitator to working in the U.S. A few of the participants indicated that possessing minimal fluency of English and having other contacts in the U.S. who assisted in locating a job allowed them access to work in the U.S.

Attitudes toward Work

Although all of the participants felt that work was hard, they also generally indicated that they liked to work. Half of the participants thought that their work was boring due to the routine and repetitive nature of their job, were willing to do whatever is needed at work, and liked learning at work.

Conceptions of Work

Consistent with Blustein's (2006) taxonomy of working, all participants expressed that work was a means to survive. Participants regarded work as a necessity to sustain oneself and family and to meet basic needs (food, clothing, and housing). Another general category included participants' beliefs that honesty and integrity, hard work, and learning were valued in the work place. Participants believed that demonstrating these behaviors at work would result in positive rewards, such as promotions.

Several variant categories emerged to describe notions of work for Mexican immigrants in our study. Specifically, participants believed distinct work roles and responsibilities were determined based on one's gender (men, women) and age (adult, children). These participants indicated that work was an adult's responsibility while children's work was to learn, and that certain types of job were appropriate (and inappropriate) for men and women. Participants also indicated that work was a means to achieving other personal goals and interests.

Work Climate

Participants generally described both positive and negative treatment at their work and working in a job that posed physical risks. Having a good relationship with their immediate supervisor/boss and co-workers who looked out for one another, receiving good pay, and ease of locating jobs were reflective of the positive work experiences among these Mexican immigrants. The negative incidents described by the immigrant workers suggest a need to reduce inequities in

the workplace based on ethnic background and immigration status. For example, one participant who worked in construction described several occasions in which s/he was lured away from a construction job to another job with promises of better pay that weren't met. Participants described feeling "cheated" by both bosses who paid less than what they promised or who did not pay at all for the work completed, and by middle persons who took half of their pay for locating the job. Other negative work environments included instances of racial/ethnic discrimination and sexual harassment, and no opportunities for advancement. Undocumented Mexican immigrants have no recourse for handling negative experiences at the workplace, and it appears that some employers may use their status as undocumented workers to take advantage of these workers. The participants also mentioned that their job entailed some degree of dangerousness and that they experienced job-related injuries.

Variant categories that described the climate at work included: working with other Mexicans; receiving incentives for good work; and having highly demanding work days. In addition, they experienced a general work climate in the U.S. that allowed immigrants to locate a job with relative ease. These participants indicated locating work soon after they arrived in the U.S.

Work Goals and Expectations

All of the participants indicated a desire to gain additional educational training and work skills. In general, they hoped to advance at work and to improve their English skills. Participants also generally reported that while they sought to work, they had no goals for obtaining a certain type of job and expressed feeling satisfied that they were able to locate a job in the U.S. Consistent with the psychology of working's premise, these immigrants seem to represent a group of workers who work to work, but experience little volition in their job options. This was

apparent in their experiences locating work, where several described working through a middle person who located (any) job for them; these frequently included jobs that required little prerequisite training or skills. Two variant categories described by participants was their goal to support their family through their work and to make more money.

Americans' Stereotypes of Mexicans

No general stereotypes of Mexicans held by Americans were found. However, two participants indicated that they perceived Americans to have a general negative view about Mexicans and believed that Americans thought that all Mexicans are laborers. The participants seemed keenly aware of Americans' perceptions of Mexicans through first-hand experiences or by observing the treatment of other Mexican immigrants.

Information for Others

Although there were no general categories of information for others, several variant categories emerged from the data. Participants indicated that they wanted others to: recognize the diversity that exists among Mexican immigrant workers; understand and respect Mexican culture, traditions, and holidays; be aware of issues of non-English speaking workers; acknowledge that Mexicans are hard workers; recognize limitations experienced based on immigration status; and understand Mexicans' needs to be appreciated and recognized by their employers.

Implications

Our findings build on recent studies that have applied Blustein's (2001; 2006) psychology of working perspective to understand work perspectives (Chaves et al., 2004) and relational influences in career development (Blustein et al., 2001; Schultheiss, Kress, Manzi, & Glasscock, 2001). In addition, results of the current study provide a preliminary framework for

appreciating the experiences of recent Mexican immigrants in the world of work. The data suggest several themes that are prominent in describing aspects of their career development in the U.S. and provides important detail about their work experiences.

Following the recommendations for counseling psychologists to act as social justice agents to remove existing institutional and structural barriers (Vera & Speight, 2003), the results of the current study provide several implications for vocational psychology research and practice. Using information gleaned from this study, vocational psychologists can educate employers that commonly hire Mexican immigrant workers and advocate on behalf of these workers' needs in the workplace. Contrary to commonly held stereotypes of Mexican workers, participants consistently described themselves as hard workers and expressed a desire to advance at work and life in general. These workers seek opportunities for enhancing their skills (i.e., English language skills, relevant work abilities); companies can assist in these efforts by offering professional development training workshops for Mexican immigrants at the job site, or by allowing these workers opportunities to take advantage of training opportunities offered in the community. In addition, Mexican workers desire to be acknowledged and rewarded for their hard work, and employers should implement incentives in the workplace that recognizes the efforts of Mexican workers.

Vocational psychologists can also provide workshops for companies (for managers at all levels as well as lower level employees) to enhance multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills in the workplace. Work climate issues can improve for all workers of diverse backgrounds by enforcing culturally sensitive practices and behaviors on the job. Finally, vocational psychologists could offer workshops for Mexican immigrants, particularly for those brand new to the U.S., that orients them to customs, norms, and rules in the world of work in the U.S., and

educates them on their rights and responsibilities in the workplace as well as work policies related to sexual harassment and non-discrimination. To be effective, these efforts for reaching out to the immigrant community would ideally occur in their living communities, churches, or community centers in consideration of possible transportation limitations and would be offered at times when workers would be available to attend (i.e., non-working hours). Finally, vocational psychologists can work to remove institutional barriers by advocating for policy changes on immigration and by supporting policies that protect immigrant worker rights at work.

Because these findings are based on preliminary data, future data needs to be collected. Future research should continue to study the experiences of Mexican immigrants in the workplace to replicate and extend these findings. Further research also needs to be done on understanding how Mexican immigrants cope with the challenges they experience at work.

Limitations

Some limitations to the study should be noted. First, these findings are based on the experiences of four Mexican immigrants and the results should be viewed as preliminary until we are able to interview additional participants for the study. Hill and colleagues (1997) recommend between 8-15 participants for studies employing their qualitative methodology. This study is ongoing and our findings are likely to change with the addition of more participants. In addition, adjustments to the domains and coding may be made after the data is audited, which is scheduled to begin after APA.

Due to the concerns of undocumented immigrants living in the U.S., our initial recruitment methods were ineffective in identifying participants for the study. That is, posting flyers around town in Spanish and English did not generate inquiries to the study. We altered our recruitment strategies by making personal contacts with recent Mexican immigrants and

extending an invitation for them to participate in the study in person. In addition, we used personal contacts to identify other Mexican immigrants living in the community. The team is brainstorming additional ways to get the word out about the study to the community and increase participation.

Conducting interviews in a second language posed some challenges in the current study, particularly with the translation. Some concepts in the interview questions were difficult to translate into Spanish, particularly those that focused on work-related stress, barriers, and strengths and weaknesses. These difficulties with the literal translation of some terms helped us to make modifications to our interview protocol to improve understanding and cross-cultural relevancy. In addition, although we could not translate some Spanish sayings (i.e., “*Con la camisa bien puesta*” literally translates as “With your shirt on right” and “*Y esas son experiencias*” literally translates as “And those are experiences”) and concepts directly into English, we made our best efforts at capturing the meaning behind the participants’ responses.

Another drawback to the study included the sample. All of the participants were living in the same community, a predominantly White mid-size city located in the Midwest, and all of the participants knew one another. The work and daily living experiences of these Mexican immigrants may be influenced by the community in which they live. Although the Mexican community has grown considerably in the recent years, it still remains relatively small and the larger receiving community is still transitioning to the increasing numbers of Mexican immigrants moving to the area. As such, the community and its employers may be less prepared to meet the needs of the Mexican workers than other areas in the U.S. that have longer histories and a substantive number of Mexican immigrants living in the community.

Conclusion

The findings of this study present rich data regarding the experiences in the world of work among a sample of recent Mexican immigrants living in the Midwest. Undocumented Mexicans have consistently been immigrating to the U.S. in search of work over the years, and the U.S. has come to depend on the efforts of these workers in many occupational fields, particularly those jobs characterized as painstaking and tedious. However, in spite of their presence and our reliance on their contributions to our economy, we came across no studies that gave voice to this group of workers. In an effort to better understand their approach to working in the U.S., we discovered that they shared many common experiences and beliefs about work, yet also incurred events that were unique to a few of them. The data indicated distinctive patterns in the world of work for these participants that were associated to their status as undocumented workers.

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*Table 1**Participant Descriptions*

Participant	Age	Gender	Relationship Status	Years in US	Years of Education	Income/Monthly	Years Working in US
1	33	Male	Married	5.0	6	\$1200.00	--
2	29	Male	Single	1.5	16	\$1200.00	.08
3	25	Male	Married	1.5	6	--	1.5
4	24	Female	Single	2.3	14	\$1204.00	.5
Mean	27.75	-	-	2.56	10.5	\$1201.33	.69
SD	4.11	-	-	1.66	5.26	\$2.31	.72

Note. All participants were Mexico.

Table 2

General and Variant Themes of Mexican Immigrants' Work Experiences in the U. S.

Domain	General (3-4 cases)	Variant (2 cases)
Motivation for Working in U.S.	Economic opportunities	Support family in Mexico
Barriers to Working	English skills Unfair treatment	Education Connection to U.S. Proper documentation Lack of support Work demands
Access to Working	Family support and networking in U.S.	Limited access to opportunities Uncertainty about future Limited resources
Attitudes Toward Work	Work is hard Likes to work	English skills Other networking contacts in U.S. Work is boring due to routine Likes learning at work

Conceptions of Work

Work for survival/necessity	Willing to do what is needed at work
Integrity, high quality work, and learning are valued and rewarded in the work place	Men, women, and children have distinct work roles/responsibilities
	Work for personal interests and goals

Work Goals and Expectations

Gain more educational training/skills	Support family
Advance at work	Make more money
Improve English	
No goals/plans/expectations for specific work	

Work Climate

Positive experiences at work	Incentives
Negative experiences at work	Working with/for other Mexicans
Job is dangerous	Job is demanding
	Ease of finding work

Americans' Views of Mexicans

--	General negative views about Mexicans
	Mexicans are only laborers

Information for Others

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Recognize diversity among Mexicans

Americans should understand and respect

Mexican culture, traditions, and

Holidays

Americans should be aware of issues

related to lack of English skills

Mexicans are hard workers

Mexicans experience limitations based on
immigration status

Mexicans want appreciation and support
from employers

Note. N = 4 Mexican Immigrants.

Appendix A

Interview Protocol

- **Currently, what do you do and where do you work?**
 - Please describe all previous jobs you've held since moving to the U.S.
 - What is your work day like?
 - What kind of work did you expect to do in the US?
 - Are you satisfied with your work?
- **Why did you decide to come to the U.S.? to Missouri?**
 - If job: What were your expectations about jobs in the U.S.? in Missouri?
 - Were your expectations met?
 - How did you find your current job?
 - What resources or help did you have when you were looking for a job?
 - What resources would have been helpful when you were looking for a job?
- **What are your experiences with work in the US?**
 - Please describe any positive experiences you've had at work.
 - How are you treated at work (by peers, management, clients)?
 - Please describe any negative experiences you've had at work.
 - How are you treated at work (by peers, management, clients)?
 - What is difficult about your work?
 - What don't you like about your work?
- **What work skills do you possess?**
 - What are your work related strengths? How about your work related weaknesses?
 - What would your boss say that you do well?
 - Are there areas you would like more training in?
 - Do you have other skills that you don't use at your current job?
- **What barriers have you encountered at work?**
 - What is difficult about work?
 - What prevents you, if anything, from working?
 - What barriers do you expect to encounter in the future?
- **What do you find the most meaningful about your job?**
 - What do you enjoy most about work?
 - What do you get (or hope to get) from work?
 - What are your work-related goals?
- **What is your definition of work?**
 - What does work mean to you?
 - Why do you work?
 - What did you learn from your family about work?
 - What are you teaching your child/children about work?
- **What do you want employers to know about Latino employees?**
 - What is the most important information they should know about Latinos?
- **Is there anything else you would like us to know about your experiences with work in the U.S./Missouri?**