

LATINOS IN MISSOURI

**Occasional Paper Series
Department of Rural Sociology
University of Missouri-Columbia**



**Latino Immigration and Meatpacking in the Rural Midwest:
An Inventory of Community Impacts and Responses**

***Latinos in Missouri* Occasional Paper Series, No. 2
Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia**

**Steven A. Hennes
Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia**

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The *Latinos in Missouri* occasional paper series grew out of the writing experiences of graduate students in Rural Sociology 406: The Sociology of Globalization. Students in the class were required to write term papers on issues related to the growth of the Latino population in the state as an aspect of globalization. Typically, the papers were developed over the semester by making contact with Latino immigrants for in-depth interviews, although some papers make use of secondary data such as the U.S. Census. Each of these papers was reviewed by two of the student editors listed above. Student editors then returned the papers to the author with their suggestions. After these revisions were incorporated, I edited each paper one more time, returning it to the author with my final editorial comments. When these changes were made, the papers were posted to our website for downloading.

While these are graduate student class papers and limited in length and scope, they do represent a substantial amount of work on the part of the authors that generally goes well beyond a typical class requirement. They were written in the hope that they will be read and used by policy makers, agency personnel and service providers, teachers, community leaders, and anyone concerned with the well-being of Latino immigrants in the state, and indeed in the nation.

Many thanks to the student authors and editors who worked on these papers, and particularly to those individuals who shared generously of their time to provide the information gathered here.

Dr. Elizabeth Barham (BarhamE@missouri.edu)

Latino Immigration and Meatpacking in the Rural Midwest: An Inventory of Community Impacts and Responses*

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Steven A. Hennessy**
Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses Latino immigration to the rural Midwest as one micro effect of the macro process of economic globalization. Impacts of Latino immigrants moving into rural communities, and what communities have done in response to immigration are identified from case study literature and other sources. The author presents a summarized inventory of community impacts and responses, compares these trends to recent demographic changes in Missouri, and identifies opportunities for research and policy development in areas of community and economic development.

Introduction

This paper addresses how increasing numbers of Latino immigrants have impacted communities of the rural Midwest, and how communities have collectively responded in terms of support services, community programs, and public policies. Since the 1960s, the U.S. meat processing industry, which is dominated by processing giants like Iowa Beef Packers (IBP 1997), Cargill's Excel Corporation, and Con-Agra's Monfort, Inc., has increasingly sited its processing facilities in rural areas (Broadway 2000; Hedges et al 1996). The ruralization of the meat processing industry has brought about a number of dramatic social, economic, and cultural changes in small communities of the Midwest. Changes have been introduced most notably by an influx of immigrant laborers and their families from many parts of the world. Population figures for the Midwest show the greatest number of newcomers in the last two decades have come from Mexico, Central America, and South America (Wells and Bryne 1999). While discussions encompassing the entire immigration issue are important, this paper focuses on meatpacking, a major source of employment for immigrant workers, and Latino immigrants, the largest group of newcomers to the region.

Employment in meat processing plants is the main draw for Latino immigrants to the rural Midwest. Meat processing companies bring additional jobs to communities, in some cases substantially increasing the number of local jobs overnight. Meatpacking is dangerous work, however, and the low-wage, low-skill jobs on production lines offer few incentives for locals.

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** Steven A. Hennessy (hennessy@missouri.edu) holds a Professional Master's Degree in Rural Sociology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. The author would like to thank Dr. Elizabeth Barham, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia, for her comments and support.

As a result, companies have come to depend heavily on immigrant workers to fill in the labor gap, sometimes even resorting to direct south-of-the-border recruitment (Barboza 2001; Cook 1999; Cooper 1997).

Though many Latino immigrants are skilled laborers, they typically arrive with very few resources and must rely on family members, community programs, and other forms of local assistance. They are also confronted with immediate language and cultural barriers, which make access to resources and assistance problematic. Consequently, communities come face-to-face with meeting the needs of a growing population that is culturally rich but economically poor. Local governments are forced to find short-term service solutions while beginning to grapple with long-range issues of public service planning and provision.

Case studies of Midwest communities where meat processing plants have located demonstrate that communities generally experience similar changes and challenges associated with an influx of Latino immigrants. Scholars also identify similarities in responses different communities make to the Latino immigrant population (Broadway 2000; Broadway et al 1994; Wells and Bryne 1999). Similarities in impacts felt by communities and responses they make suggest there are larger patterns at work, providing grounds for theoretical development and testing.

Research Questions

With this background on meatpacking and Latino immigration, the research questions addressed are two-fold: 1) Do rural Midwest communities experience similar social, economic, and cultural impacts due to meatpacking and Latino immigration, and are there similar community responses associated with these impacts? 2) Do Missouri communities exhibit similar impacts and responses due to meatpacking and Latino immigration?

It is hypothesized that an analysis of several case studies of meatpacking and Latino immigration in communities around the Midwest will yield similarities in impacts and responses. It is also hypothesized that evidence gathered from similar communities in Missouri will show consistencies with other Midwest cases. The rationale behind these hypotheses is explained further in the literature review section.

By addressing these questions, the objective of this paper is to assemble an inventory of community impacts and responses from the rural Midwest, thereby building upon the work of researchers who have documented the effects of meatpacking and Latino immigration on rural communities. This is accomplished by identifying important impact and response themes that will guide researchers in conducting more in-depth analyses. The inventory is also intended as a practical learning tool for communities facing local economic development decisions about the meatpacking industry. Communities understanding the costs and benefits associated with a particular industry are able to make better choices about industrial attraction and siting (Drabenstott et al 1999). For communities where a meat processing plant is currently a major employer, the experiences of other communities presented here may help point the way forward for future economic development and public service decisions.

Macro-Theoretical Framework

Immigration in the Global Scheme

To understand the impacts Latino immigration has on local communities and the basis from which they respond, it is important to recognize the macro or global factors that are behind this trend. What global forces and processes help explain the rise of Latino immigration in the rural Midwest?

Heilbroner and Milberg (1997) describe the process of globalization as the worldwide expansion and integration of economic activity. Economic globalization has involved coordinated efforts on the part of global institutions, multinational corporations, and nation-states to establish a global market economy. According to McMichael (1996), the foundations of globalization were originally set down by the "development project." The basic goal of the development project was to replicate the Western model of development throughout the world.

In the 1960s and 1970s, multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), advanced the development program by formulating programs and policies intended to raise Third World standards of living. Western technology and investment were extended to poorer countries in major proportions. These attempts at development largely failed, however, because the technologies introduced were incompatible with the social and cultural systems of non-Western societies. Over time, Third World countries that had bought into the Western model of development accumulated debts, only widening inequities and deepening dependencies upon the industrialized world (McMichael 1996).

Multilateral agencies then sought to relieve these inequities through a different strategy. In the 1980s and 1990s, the development project was reformulated into the "globalization project" with the goal of establishing one global economy in which all nations participate (McMichael 1996). Through structural adjustment loans and industrial privatization, state economies were restructured in order to repay their debts. This restructuring activity altered social and economic relations between countries, bringing short-term relief but only exacerbating the reliance of Third World countries on the West.

The social consequences of state restructuring were severe, especially for Mexico and countries of Central and South America. For example, in the 1980s, more than 80 percent of state-owned companies in Mexico were dissolved or privatized to relieve outstanding debts. As a result, thousands of Mexicans lost their jobs as well as their access to basic services (McMichael 1996). Drastic changes in the Mexican labor market help explain why immigration of Mexican workers to the United States has been so prevalent in the last twenty years.

In addition to multilateral agencies, states have aided the globalization process by enacting measures to expand trade and protect the interests of multinational corporations engaged in world market competition (Heilbroner and Milberg 1997). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) are examples of policy measures through which the U.S. government has regulated immigration in accordance with global economic interests. While couched in terms of protecting free trade and removing

barriers to economic growth, these measures have increased the flow of immigrant labor into the U.S. economy.

Simultaneously, multinational corporations have arisen as dominant actors on the world stage. With advances in technology, markets have become increasingly more penetrable and interconnected, granting multinationals greater flexibility in how they finance and organize production (Heilbroner and Milberg 1997). Heightened mobility of labor and capital has propelled the globalization of production, with firms able to set up operations nearly anywhere in the world. To contain costs and remain competitive, many firms have resorted to a cheap labor strategy. While some have secured cheap labor by moving production into overseas markets, others have maintained domestic production and "imported" immigrant labor into the country. In this sense, the globalization of production has fueled both the supply and the demand for immigration.

These forces have collectively contributed to the process Heilbroner and Milberg (1997) call economic globalization. With the increased global mobility of people and money, social and economic relations are undergoing major redefinition. Worldwide social and economic restructuring is having profound impacts on the lives of individuals, the health of communities, and the wealth of nations. In the context of globalization, community impacts and responses associated with meatpacking and Latino immigration in the rural Midwest are considered as local manifestations of a much larger process.

Micro-Theoretical Framework

Local Implications of Immigration

Rural society offers an important lens through which to observe the micro effects of globalization. The effects of an increasingly global marketplace can be seen across various sectors of the modern rural landscape and economy. The corporatization of family farming and the marginalization of extraction industries such as mining and forestry, for example, are causes for alarm for those concerned with rural society. In many heartland communities of the United States, the meat processing industry is bringing the effects of globalization closer to home. This is occurring mainly in the form of a more diversified labor force. Rapid influxes of Latino immigrants and their families into rural communities exhibit one important side effect of the global market economy when labor is assumed to be mobile, and is treated as such.

As one form of labor mobility, immigration is an illustration of Polanyi's (1944) concept of "fictitious commodities" in capitalist economies. Labor in the capitalist market system is an abstract commodity that is assigned a price and is governed according to supply and demand. That is, labor is separated from the human beings to whom it belongs and as a result is appropriated without regard to place, nature, or conditions of work. Unless regulated by state intervention, commodified labor is assumed to be mobile. The downside to this treatment of labor is that the people whose labor is commodified easily become targets for exploitation.

The problems of commodified labor and exploitation are borne heavily by immigrants, first, geographically, in the form of displacement; second, economically, in terms of low wages; and third, physically, in terms of adverse and unsafe working conditions. Psychological and

emotional factors are also part of the strain associated with immigration. Immigrant laborers are forced out of their home countries for economic survival, only to find living and working conditions in the new country untenable. The overall well-being of immigrants and their families may marginally improve, but with trade-offs between new economic gains and new health and safety risks. From the community's perspective, as the number of low-wage workers in the area grows, a new socio-economic class is created. A whole set of issues associated with newcomers gradually emerges with reverberations felt throughout the community (Hackenberg and Kukulka 1995). Local institutions, including banks, schools, churches, hospitals, and social service agencies, are either directly or indirectly affected. The smaller the community, the more amplified the effects. Local governments that may have originally provided subsidies to attract a meat processing plant to the area may soon find themselves struggling to organize a response (Broadway et al 1994).

In addition to socio-economic changes, the arrival of immigrants also alters the racial and ethnic composition of a community, presenting new challenges perhaps unlike any local residents have previously encountered. The introduction of new languages, norms, and traditions diversifies the community's social and cultural landscape. For instance, differences in religious customs, child-rearing practices, and diets tend to surface immediately (McKinnis 1984). These can provide terrific opportunities for community learning and enrichment for people of all ages, or they can be sources of misunderstanding, which lead to dissension and conflict (Wells and Bryne 1999; Burke and Haslett 1996). How communities view and address issues of cultural diversity from the outset determines how soon and how well immigrants are able to adapt to the community.

These are just a few of the many implications immigration has for newcomers, long-time residents, and community leaders, offering a more localized look at the effects of globalization. Now the discussion turns to the case study literature on meatpacking in the rural Midwest and examining how these implications have played out in actual communities.

Literature Review

Midwest Meatpacking and Latino Immigration

Recent literature on the meat processing industry in the Midwest mainly spotlights small rural towns where the effects of immigration have been most pronounced. Case studies on communities like Garden City, Kansas; Lexington, Nebraska; and Storm Lake, Iowa, depict tensions developing between communities and large corporations over time (Broadway et al 1994; Cooper 1997; Cook 1999; Grey 1995; Gouveia and Stull 1995; Hackenberg and Kukulka 1995; Katz 1996). Magazine articles and newspaper stories are also quick to underscore the pros and cons of meatpacking plants sited in rural communities (Carl 1997; Hedges et al 1996; Katz 1996).

A major theme arising from the literature is the trade-off communities make between new economic benefits and new costs associated with the arrival of the meatpacking industry. Meat processors bring substantial income and investment to a rural area, helping to sustain local and regional economies. For instance, in Storm Lake, Iowa, IBP paid \$36 million in wages, purchased \$400 million in hogs, and paid employees \$900,000 in profit-sharing benefits in 1995

alone (Hedges et al 1996). With meatpacking plants injecting additional income and investment into local economies, retail and service sales increase. Downtown stores and shops are more likely to remain in business or expand, and new establishments appear. Local governments are able to collect more in tax revenues (Broadway et al 1994). Like a good neighbor, meatpacking employers may fund language programs for workers, pay for child care facilities, or make charitable contributions to local causes and organizations (IBP 1997; Leonard 1999).

On the other hand, meatpacking towns sustain new and additional costs. Local governments often extend lucrative incentives to processors to move in, above and beyond the costs of necessary infrastructure. The local government of Finney County, Kansas, for example, held out ten years of property tax relief totaling \$3.5 million and \$100 million in industrial revenue bonds (Broadway et al 1994). Because production jobs in meat plants are low on the pay scale, the number of families living on low incomes grows disproportionate to the total number of families. As a result, per capita income in the community may actually decrease (Broadway et al 1994). By economic development standards and measures, this represents a negative rather than a positive effect on quality of life in the community. In addition, the larger the percentage of immigrant workers in the labor force, the more likely an increase in the percentage of income leaving the community to support extended families back home. Although no studies could be found that document changes in per capita income or leakages of income from meatpacking communities, these costs exemplify how economic development decisions about the meat processing industry are never easy or straightforward.

Another theme in the literature besides cost-benefit trade-offs is a general lack of community preparedness for changes brought about by Latino immigration. A rapid expansion of Latinos in the labor force largely catches communities by surprise. Neither meat processing plants nor communities have fully anticipated the effects of this shift or planned for the successful integration of workers and their families into the community (North Central Regional Center for Rural Development 1999). Consequently, most community responses tend to be remedial at the outset (Wells and Bryne 1999). For instance, citizens in Garden City, Kansas, and Storm Lake, Iowa, were facing housing and education crises shortly after meatpacking plants opened there (Broadway et al 1994).

However, a few communities have anticipated these changes and have taken a more proactive approach. In Lexington, Nebraska, for instance, community leaders began to prepare soon after IBP declared it was opening a plant in 1988. They assembled a community impact study team, held public meetings, and traveled to visit leaders in other meatpacking towns. Rogers, Arkansas, also adopted this approach, forming a multicultural forum to alleviate local concerns and address emerging issues (Fults 1999a). In another case, the anticipated changes were met with a different kind of response. Citizens in Spencer, Iowa, were familiar with what had happened after a plant located in a nearby town and chose to turn down the meat processing industry altogether. Over a thousand people turned up at a town meeting to demand that the city overturn a decision to host a Monfort meatpacking plant (Hedges et al 1996). In most cases, however, the public response to meatpacking has not been as strongly opposed.

The legal status of Latino immigrants is another significant theme brought out by the case studies. At the 220 meatpacking plants in Iowa and Nebraska, the Immigration and

Naturalization Service (INS) estimates that 25 percent of the workers are illegal aliens (Hedges et al 1996). Worker legality creates tensions and rifts within communities. Citizen perspectives vary widely over whether tax dollars should be used to subsidize non-citizens, and agencies puzzle over who they should and should not serve. The citizenship issue is further exacerbated by sporadic federal enforcement of immigration laws. INS checks on meat plants in the Midwest have successfully tracked down and deported hundreds of undocumented workers. However, inconsistent monitoring has caused some to question whether spotty performance by the INS has catered to the capitalistic interests of corporations (Cook 1999).

Most discussion of impacts and responses in the literature centers on education, health care, housing, and law enforcement. It is in these areas that community resources become the most taxed and that service provision becomes the most complicated. Language and cultural differences are the greatest barriers immigrants face in meeting basic needs and obtaining access to services (Wells and Bryne 1999). Community agencies and organizations have addressed these problems by providing language and/or multicultural training for existing staff, hiring new bilingual staff, contracting with translators, and converting forms and publications into Spanish. English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs tend to be established or expanded, and adult education programs in Spanish typically enroll more students.

Overwhelmingly, the literature suggests that towns have adopted strategies of integration for new Latino families rather than strategies of isolation or marginalization (Broadway et al 1994). Most citizens agree that the labor resources and cultural diversity immigrants bring to the community are beneficial despite the additional costs involved. Fear and discrimination by long-time residents, however, are also realities within communities. In some cases, citizen groups have put up resistance to immigration, using community organizing tactics to challenge corporations and government on issues of equity and justice (Fults 1999c).

In summary, the literature identifies trade-offs communities make between costs and benefits associated with local meatpacking employment. After a meatpacking plant arrives, communities are typically caught in a reactionary mode to immigration issues. A growing immigrant population adds additional burden to community resources, especially in areas of family support and development. The legal status of Latino immigrants and their families, not to mention language and culture issues, exacerbate the provision of goods and services for basic needs. Despite these challenges, most communities prefer response strategies that encourage long-term integration. These themes from the literature form the basis for a categorical inventory of changes and responses in communities due to meatpacking and Latino immigration. The inventory serves as a methodological tool for answering the first research question, and as a baseline for addressing the second research question.

Methods and Sources

Case Studies

The basic method used for developing an inventory of community impacts and responses was content analysis. Case studies of small Midwest meatpacking communities experiencing major changes as a result of meatpacking and Latino immigration were analyzed. Case study

communities included Garden City and Dodge City, Kansas; Lexington, Nebraska; Storm Lake and Perry, Iowa; and Rogers, Arkansas.

Content analysis yielded a grouping of theme areas or categories across case studies. Within each category, an inventory of recurring community impacts and responses was compiled. Community impacts and responses included significant changes, trends, actions or events attributable to Latino immigration.

The inventory is organized into categories of local government, housing, education, health care, social services, law enforcement, and religious and civic life. Within each category, impacts and responses are arranged chronologically in a probable order of occurrence. This provides an illustration of how events tend to develop or evolve in a community over time.

There are several limitations to the inventory method as outlined. Qualitative analysis of individual case studies does not allow the extent or magnitude of each impact to be reported. Information about the number of communities experiencing an impact, or the degree to which communities experienced an impact, is lost. Some impacts, such as an increase in school enrollment, were prevalent across all communities, whereas other items, such as methamphetamine trafficking, were more incidental. Likewise, the level of impacts, such as an increase in demand for health services, naturally varied between communities but was significant enough in each place to be of public concern. The inventory also groups changes that communities would normally consider positive with those considered negative, without distinguishing between the two. This leaves out certain information about the context of each case, but contributes to the objectivity of the inventory by refraining from subjective judgments about the nature of impacts. It also allows the reader to get a better grasp of the complexities accompanying many of the issues.

Because of these limitations, the inventory will not be accurate or generalizable for all meatpacking communities where Latino immigration has occurred. However, the inventory is adequate for providing an overview of the issues that are *likely* to emerge in a community within the first two years after the meatpacking industry arrives. Moreover, it provides a multi-faceted look at the means and methods by which communities have tended to seek solutions to these issues (see the table on Page 14).

Personal Interviews

Primary and secondary data were collected on Latino immigration in rural Missouri for purposes of comparison to the inventory. Central Missouri was selected as the geographical area of study. Although reliable population statistics on Latino immigration in Missouri were not available at the writing of this paper, Central Missouri is a University Outreach & Extension service area encompassing 14 primarily rural counties. It is recognized as one of the fastest growing areas for Latinos in the state (Fults 1999b). Personal interviews were conducted with five informants from the Central Missouri region working at local, county, and regional levels.

Potential informants were identified through preliminary interviews with University researchers, University Outreach & Extension specialists, and other professionals familiar with communities and Latino immigration in the study area. Informants were selected on the basis of

their understanding of local and regional conditions, their professional knowledge and work experience with the Latino immigrant community, and their various roles in facilitating or providing public services. Interviews were conducted face-to-face on campus or in community settings using an interview guide with open-ended questions. Questions focused on the context of community reception to Latino immigrants, and on impacts and responses informants had noted in each of the inventory category areas. Answers to questions were recorded using handwritten field notes, and were later word processed for content analysis. The goal was to obtain a cross-section of perspectives on meatpacking and Latino immigration from people in various public leadership positions in the region.

News Articles and Public Testimony

News articles highlighting immigration issues in rural Missouri offered further evidence for comparison. Written testimony from five public hearings of the Missouri Legislature's Joint Interim Committee on Immigration (JICI) was also consulted. A wide range of testimony on the status of Latinos and the adequacy of basic services was given to the legislative committee by citizens, local and state officials, educators, business professionals, and community advocates from throughout the state (JICI 1999). Content analysis was used on typed testimony proceedings to identify themes and extract illustrations for the various inventory categories. For this project, proceedings from the committee's public hearings represented the most recent and comprehensive source of dialogue on public policy issues related to immigration in the state.

This combination of primary and secondary data provided a cross-sectional view of Latino immigration and its incumbent changes and impacts within the study area and the state.

Results

In this section, the results of the data analysis are summarized within the categories of housing, education, health care, law enforcement, and religious and civic life (Table 1).

Housing

An influx of immigrants into communities has placed a strain on local housing. A lack of available rental units has meant workers and their families have had to settle for unsafe, inadequate shelter. The cultural tendency for Latinos to live in large households of extended families has caused tension with neighbors and landlords. Informants also report a significant number of Latino immigrant families purchasing homes, a trend that is more acceptable to longtime community residents. This suggests the goal of many Latino families is financial stability and long-term residency, which contradicts stereotypes of immigrants as transients. Informants also point to the movement of Latino immigrants from processing plant to processing plant and from community to community. While in many cases this is due to the high turnover of meat processing employment, it also reportedly involves the upward mobility of Latinos from meat processing to manufacturing and other skilled trades.

Table 1: Latino Immigration: An Inventory of Community Impacts and Responses in Meatpacking Towns of the Rural Midwest¹

Impacts on Communities	Responses of Communities
Local government	
?? Questions, complaints, and information requests	?? Information clearinghouses
?? Court cases	?? Learning trips to meatpacking communities
	?? Bilingual staff hires
	?? Recruitment and appointment of Latinos
	?? Investments in infrastructure
Housing	
?? Lack of affordable housing	?? Temporary subsidized housing
?? Homelessness	?? New rental arrangements (“by the head”)
?? Overcrowding	?? Area housing studies
?? Hazardous, unsafe conditions	?? Homeless shelter startups
?? Homeownership	?? Credit and mortgage education
	?? Starter home packages
Education	
?? Overall enrollment	?? Temporary classrooms
?? School meal costs	?? ESOL program expansion
?? Low English proficient students	?? Bilingual staff and paraprofessionals
?? ESOL program costs	?? Multicultural teacher training
?? School dropout rates	?? Adult Learning Centers
	?? Bond issues to build/expand schools
Health care	
?? Demand for health services	?? Health worker hires
?? Immunization (tuberculosis)	?? Caregiver translators
?? Emergency room visits	?? New medical clinics for the under/uninsured
?? Uninsured and underinsured patients	
Social services	
?? Clients served	?? Subsidized transportation
?? Welfare and Medicaid cases	?? Furniture and clothing donations
?? Emergency food services	?? Pro bono accounting and legal counsel
	?? Worksite day care centers
	?? Interagency service coalitions
Law enforcement	
?? Immigration and legal documentation	?? Bilingual officer assignments
?? Traffic violations	?? Document translations
?? Violent and property crimes	?? Officer language training
?? Substance abuse, spousal and child abuse	?? Additional hires
?? Methamphetamine trafficking	?? Public education to dispel “myths”
Religious and civic life	
?? Church attendance	?? Summer literacy camps for children
?? Charitable giving	?? Financial literacy training
?? Racial strife and tension	?? Community multicultural forums
?? Food, arts, music, cultural events	?? Immigrant family sponsorships
	?? Anti-immigration activism

¹ Garden City and Dodge City, Kansas; Lexington, Nebraska; Perry and Storm Lake, Iowa; and Rogers, Arkansas.

Education

Within schools, increased enrollment has resulted in larger, more crowded classrooms, putting added pressure on teachers, and deterring student performance. In Noel, Missouri, for example, the number of Latino elementary students rose from 25 to 100 in three years (Katz 1996). Schools around the state have hired new bilingual staff and teachers. Where resources will allow, new tutoring programs have been established and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs expanded. Educators are now calling on the state legislature to provide more funding and technical assistance to support these efforts (JICI 1999).

Health Care

The strains of immigration are also being felt within the health care system. Doctors and health care workers are seeing a rise in the number of Latino patients, the majority of whom are uninsured or underinsured. According to public testimony, in Warrensburg, Missouri, the demand for immigrant care increased by 67% between 1997 and 1998. In Pettis County, Missouri, the number of health department contacts with Latinos jumped from 96 to 422 between 1998 and 1999 (JICI 1999). Hospitals, health departments, and clinics are in greater need of bilingual staff to address a growing trend in patient language differences. In response to an increased need for immigrant care, Sedalia, Missouri, has established a community clinic for uninsured and underinsured immigrants with time donated by several local physicians.

Law Enforcement

Related to health and well-being, informants also identify increased incidences of drug and alcohol abuse in the community due to immigrant Latinos. Drunk driving offenses have reportedly risen in many areas. Other driving violations, such as failure to wear a seat belt and lack of auto insurance have escalated, mostly due to immigrant unfamiliarity with state laws and regulations. Increased police and court caseloads are causing law enforcement officials to beef up their budgets and hire bilingual officers.

Religious and Civic Life

As in other cases, Missouri communities with a large Latino population see increases in church attendance and charitable giving. Many larger churches are now conducting services in Spanish or providing translation services for those who have difficulty with English. Bilingual clergy have quickly stepped in as advocates and assumed visible roles in the community for addressing the basic needs of Latino immigrant families. A pastor in Trenton, Missouri, for instance, has been instrumental in helping Latino families acquire donations of used furniture and clothing from the community (Cook 1999).

Other Similarities

Consistent with case studies of other communities, informants indicate that language and cultural differences are the primary barriers to integration. Since Latino immigrants come from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, even by Latin American standards, differences within local immigrant communities are as real as those between immigrants and community residents. Low literacy levels compound problems of communication between groups. According to

informants, communication problems are encountered every day at the local utility company, the social service agency, and the grocery market.

Informants also comment on how changes associated with the arrival of meatpacking plants have caught Missouri communities by surprise. Like other cases in the Midwest, only a handful have been able to respond proactively. Sedalia has developed a multicultural forum that involves over 70 community leaders. Jefferson City organized a multicultural action team to visit Roger, Arkansas and hear firsthand from local officials and community residents about their experiences. These mechanisms have provided a way for communities to engage in critical dialogue between leaders, citizens, and the immigrant community (Wagar 1999).

Environmental problems associated with the meat processing industry are another set of issues that are not as apparent in the literature reviewed on other Midwest towns as they have been in the Missouri news media. Stream pollution, dried up wells, and even more dangerous threats to people, livestock and wildlife have been a part of the Missouri experience. The town of Dresden, for example, was forced to evacuate after an anhydrous ammonia leak at the Tyson Foods operation near Sedalia in 1999 (Leonard 1999).

Despite these problems, informants emphasize the experience of most Missouri communities with meatpacking and Latino immigrants as being short-lived but largely positive. Some public sentiments view Latino immigrants as a drain on local resources. However, townspeople have generally accepted these newcomers and have gone to great lengths to welcome families moving in. The majority of communities in Missouri have responded in ways consistent with communities elsewhere by seeking strategies of integration.

Informants do cite a need for greater awareness of immigrant issues on the part of local leaders and decision-makers. Community organizations and social service providers are closer to the needs of the people, and are viewed as vital sources of information and ideas as communities consider alternatives.

In summary, community impacts and responses to Latino immigration in Missouri parallel those in other Midwestern states with striking similarity. Especially within areas of housing, health care, education, and law enforcement, the effects that informants describe Latinos having on communities are highly similar to those in other states. For these reasons, it is concluded that the hypotheses proffered for both the first and the second research questions are correct. There are definite similarities in the way small Midwest communities have experienced and responded to meatpacking plants and Latino immigration, and the evidence gathered from Missouri communities only further validates this point.

Discussion

The discussion now turns to why these commonalities exist, and what they mean for the future of community leadership, learning, and public policy in the Midwest.

A number of reasons may be posited for why similar patterns of impact and response have occurred. Similarities are partly due to the size of the communities involved. As indicated earlier, the smaller and more isolated communities are, the more pronounced the effects of a

large group of newcomers on the area. Likewise, the smaller the community, the fewer the options local residents have for organizing a response.

Another reason for commonality related to community size is the social organization of small communities. Small rural communities proportionally do not have the same organizational base or level of resources as metropolitan areas. Hence, communities are forced to think creatively and work collaboratively when responding to the import of newcomers.

Community background and context factors also determine much of the nature and extent of impacts and responses. The Midwest region is vastly different in its ethnicity, culture, history, economics and ecology. Yet when compared to other regions of the United States, it is largely a homogenous region. Rural Missouri, like surrounding states, is widely known for its production agriculture, which has historically been organized into small, mostly white, farming communities. Many of the communities affected by meatpacking and Latino immigration are of this tradition. Consequently, similarities between the backgrounds and contexts of the case study communities account for similar kinds of collective experiences and reactions.

Finally, as pointed out earlier, through their entire histories, many communities have not encountered an influx of newcomers who are as "different" in language, norms, and customs as Latino immigrants. The basic differences between Latinos and long-time Midwesterners virtually produce the same initial challenges everywhere. At the forefront, there is unfamiliarity, fear, and discrimination. Accepting and embracing change can be a slow process. Adjustment and integration is a longer process.

In terms of what similarities in impacts and responses mean for the future, the common experiences between Missouri communities and other Midwest examples are too significant to ignore. Correlations in experience create openings for additional learning. Researchers may choose to systematically investigate the nature and implications of social, economic, and cultural changes communities experience. Missouri policy-makers and community leaders may recognize the incentives for taking a more informed approach to public decision-making. In parts of Missouri and surrounding states, program and policy models are emerging for cross-cultural learning, community collaboration, immigrant worker rights, and adult and youth leadership development. Monitoring the work of other states in these areas increases the likelihood that Missourians will replicate the successes and avoid the pitfalls encountered elsewhere. As the meat processing industry makes deeper inroads into rural Missouri, the experiences of neighboring rural states like Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Arkansas will be highly instructive for public service planning and delivery.

Public policy formulation at state and local levels should begin with a thorough understanding of what viable options exist for participation in the global marketplace. Dialogue at all levels should challenge leaders and citizens to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of macro strategies, such as: 1) strengthening local communities; 2) competing globally; and 3) building a more collaborative global economy (InterAction 2001). At a micro level, dialogue should take into account what existing research has established on the integration of immigrants and their families into communities. Strategies for: 1) engaging immigrants in defining their own needs; 2) working with existing leaders within immigrant groups; and 3) incorporating solutions into

existing community structures may be logical starting points (McInnis 1984). State and local leaders may find community development programs fostering leadership development, civic education, and community and economic planning to be invaluable tools in the process.

Conclusion

In terms of small Midwest communities and their economic development decisions, the meat processing industry poses obvious dilemmas. Economic globalization will continue to be a source of supply and demand for immigration to the United States. Communities adopting a "strengthen local communities" approach to globalization will have to decide whether they will support the growing demand for a labor force of low-skill, low-income workers. They will have to determine whether the economic benefits to the community outweigh the social, cultural, and economic costs to immigrants and their families, and ultimately the community.

These choices also raise more fundamental questions about labor as a commodity in the world marketplace. The experience of Midwest communities with meatpacking and Latino immigration suggests that the notion of labor mobility does not mitigate the problem of poverty. In anything, it suggests that it worsens it. Coming back to Polanyi's argument, if labor mobility in a global economy simultaneously generates prosperity and poverty side-by-side, to what extent is this dichotomy acceptable, and who decides?

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