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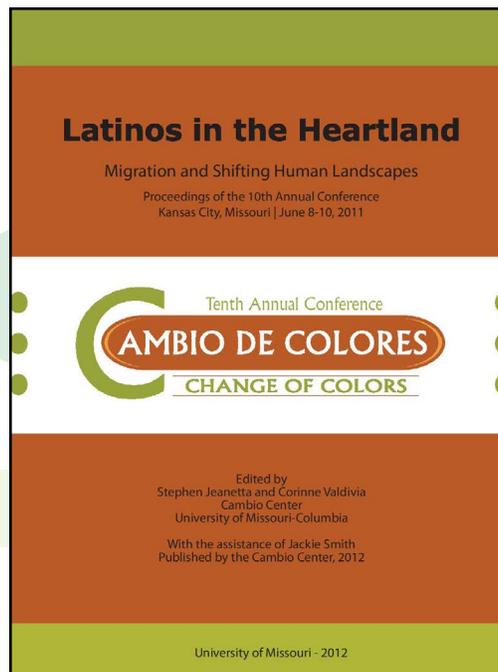
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The Policy Dimensions of the Context of Reception for Immigrants (and
Latinos) in the Midwest

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Keywords: immigration legislation, immigrant integration, ethnic inclusion

Among whites, females were more likely to participate in interactions than males. The greatest number of observations of interethnic interactions (including those between employees and customers) occurred on the Square, in areas around the school and in local businesses. While social interactions do not necessarily lead to having a more positive view point of another ethnic group, they are often the first rung in the ladder of social integration, which can benefit immigrants and non-immigrants alike (Cattell et al, 2007; Putnam, 2000). Research such as this is an important step in documenting that this process is occurring. Additional research is needed to understand what these social interactions might mean and to uncover additional indicators of social interaction.

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► The Policy Dimensions of the Context of Reception for Immigrants (and Latinos) in the Midwest

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Abstract

Latino/as comprise approximately 16.1% of the nation's population (Grieco, 2010). Approximately 37.2% of Latino/as are foreign-born, comprising approximately 6.0% of the nation's population. Nationally, the number of Latinos/as living in the United States grew by 37% since the year 2000. A robust component of that growth was immigration. Immigration to the United States is not a new phenomenon; however, recent waves differ from previous immigrant influxes in significant ways. Immigrants are now coming predominantly from Latin American and Asian countries (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Singer 2002); and, they are no longer moving to and staying in the traditional gateway cities or states (Cadge et al., 2008). For example, the geographical distribution of Latino immigrants now include towns and cities of

less than 100,000 people located in rural areas in the Northwest, Northeast, Southeast or Midwest regions of the country (Singer 2002, & Cadge et al., 2008).

The focus of this paper is recent legislation in Midwestern states initiated in response to immigration. More specifically it looks at the emergent legislative environment and how it shapes the context of reception for Latinos and Latino immigrants. The context of reception provides a useful conceptual frame for describing the broader environments in which immigrants and other newcomers to Midwestern town and cities endeavor to make a living. Recent enacted legislation is a reflection of concrete efforts to influence how immigrants should be or are being received into the community; whether they should be excluded, ignored or integrated. The research question to be addressed here is: What state-wide policy legislation shape the contexts of reception for Latino immigrants across the Midwestern states? All state legislatures in the Midwest have passed laws addressing immigration in their states. According to Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001) a context of reception can be encouraging, passively accepting, or exclusionary.

In this paper, the enacted legislation in the Midwest relating to immigration has been organized according to three similar categories; integrating, exclusionary or neutral. Of the policies that were enacted in 2009 and the first half of 2010, forty-four laws were found to be integrating, and thirty-nine laws were exclusionary; twelve laws were neutral. States like Illinois, Michigan, and Kansas have passed provisions that were considered to be encouraging people from immigrant backgrounds to integrate with the mainstream population. Legislation in Nebraska, Iowa and North Dakota are examples laws that are exclusionary from the mainstream by way of immigration status or perhaps meant to dissuade immigrants from moving to the state on a permanent basis. In the middle, laws enacted in states like Wisconsin, Minnesota and Ohio were almost evenly split in their policy between integrating, excluding or neutral. The data suggests that while the Midwest is somewhat more integrating than exclusionary in regards to the context of reception, it is still 'on the fence' when it comes to their context of reception as determined by enacted state policy.

Introduction

The Latino/a population is the second largest ethnic group in the United States, exceeded only by white Americans (Casas & Ryan 2010). The 2000 Census set the Latino/a (Hispanic) population at 35.3 million, or approximately 12% of the total U.S. population (U.S. Census Bureau 2000). The 2010 Census set the figures at 50.5 million, reflecting an increase of 43.1%, or more than four times the nation's overall population growth rate of 9.7% (U.S. Census Bureau 2011). Overall, Latino/as comprise approximately 16.4% of the nation's population (Ibid.). Approximately 37.2% of Latino/as are foreign-born, comprising approximately 6.0% of the nation's population. Nationally, the number of Latinos/as living in the United States grew by 37% since the year 2000 (Grieco 2010). A robust component of that growth was immigration.

The focus of this paper is recent legislation in Midwestern states, initiated in response to immigration. More specifically, it looks at the emergent legislative environment and how it shapes the context of reception for Latinos and Latino immigrants. The context of reception provides a useful conceptual frame for describing the broader environments in which immigrants and other newcomers to Midwestern towns and cities endeavor to make a living. Context of reception consists of three principal dimensions: 1) government policies; 2) labor markets; and 3) ethnic communities (Portes & Rumbaut 1996). According to Portes and Rumbaut, government policies are the most relevant of the three because they shape the reality that the other dimensions operate, via exclusion, passive acceptance, or active encouragement (1996). Recent enacted legislation is a reflection of concrete efforts to influence how immigrants should be or are being received into communities, whether they should be excluded, ignored or integrated. The research question that is addressed is, "What state-wide policy legislation shapes the contexts of reception for Latino immigrants across the Midwestern states?"

Midwest Demographic Context:

For our purposes, the Midwest, also referred to as the North Central region of the United States,

includes the 12 states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the overall population of the Midwest was 66,929,001 in 2010, comprising 21.7% of the nation's population (308,745,538). While the nation's population increased by 9.7%, the region's population increased by only 3.9%.

Overall, between 2000 and 2008, there was a 13.9% increase in the number of foreign-born persons in the Midwest. Wisconsin (59.3%), Nebraska (45.8%), Minnesota (38.8%) and Missouri (38.8%) experienced the greatest percentage of growth in their foreign-born populations. Michigan had the smallest increase, while both North Dakota and South Dakota experienced declines in their foreign-born populations.

Although the majority of Midwestern states experienced an increase in their foreign-born population, the region's overall percentage of the population of foreign-born remained relatively low, less than eight percent. Illinois, the state with the largest percentage of foreign-born residents, could attribute its almost 14% increase to the Chicago metro-area, which has been, and remains, a traditional destination for new immigrant families (Cadge et al. 2008; Singer 2002). The remaining states in the Midwest had foreign-born populations of less than seven percent in 2008. Minnesota (6.8%), Kansas (6.1%) and Nebraska (6.0%) had the next largest percentages. South Dakota had the lowest percentage (1.9%).

State Policies:

This paper examines bills enacted (or reached governor veto) in the 12 Midwestern states between January 2009 and June 2010. During this time period, 96 laws relating to immigration were passed. Illinois was the state that passed the most laws, with 29, and Wisconsin passed the fewest, with one. The majority of the laws passed dealt with employment, licensing and identification, education, public benefits and health services.

Enacted State Policy - Integrating, Passively Accepting, or Exclusionary:

According to Portes and Rumbaut (1996, 2001), a context of reception can be encouraging, passively accepting, or exclusionary. The enacted legislation in the Midwest relating to immigration has been organized according to three similar categories; 1) integrating; 2) exclusionary; or 3) neutral. A policy was considered integrating if it focused on programs, initiatives or funds for projects that help immigrants acclimate to the United States or protect immigrants' human rights regardless of immigration status. Policy was considered to be exclusionary if it focused on the restriction of people from certain services, benefits, education or employment opportunities based on immigration status. Policies that were considered neutral dealt with changes to fiscal year limitation, or clarification of federal law enforcement agencies via policy.

State By State Analysis of Context of Reception:

Analysis of the state legislation in combination with the demographic context in each state, suggests that states' contexts of reception varies on a continuum between significantly inclusive to significantly exclusionary.

Significantly Inclusive:

While no state was fully inclusive (i.e. no exclusionary bills during the time period), Illinois is by far the most inclusive state in the Midwest. With 29 bills and the largest percentage of foreign-born residents in 2008 (13.9%), Illinois is clearly responding in a primarily inclusive manner towards immigrants. Of the 29 bills analyzed, 15 were inclusive, six were exclusionary and eight were either neutral or undetermined. Much of the legislation involved funds appropriation for immigrant supportive programs and grants to immigrant organizations.

Moderately Inclusive:

The bills analyzed here suggest that North Dakota is a moderately inclusive state. According to the

demographic data, North Dakota was not impacted much by immigration during this time period, but yet still developed three inclusive bills, including a human trafficking law. North Dakota's foreign-born population in 2008 was only 2.2%, ranking 11th out of the 12 Midwestern states. In addition, it experienced a 1.5% decrease of its foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008.

North Dakota also introduced two exclusionary bills, both focused on requiring proof of legal status. North Dakota is categorized as moderately because three out of five of the bills introduced are inclusive, including one related to human trafficking. Only six of the 12 Midwestern states have a bill related to human trafficking on the books (Human Trafficking Data Collection and Reporting Project; Online Resource Center).

Michigan is also categorized as moderately inclusive. It ranked fifth among Midwestern states in 2008 percent-foreign-born, but only 10th in percent-change in foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 (+11.4). Michigan passed four relevant bills during the examined time frame. Three were inclusive and one had both inclusive and exclusive elements. Thus, Michigan's policies are primarily inclusive, with a clear emphasis on meeting the needs of migrant laborers and their families.

Inclusive-Neutral:

Two states, Kansas and Ohio are categorized as neutral to inclusive. These states are primarily neutral, but show slightly stronger signs of inclusiveness than exclusiveness.

Kansas, for example, had the third highest percentage of foreign-born residents in 2008 (6.1%) and introduced seven bills. Three were inclusive, two exclusive and two neutral. Ohio introduced only two relevant bills during this time period and both were inclusive in nature. Ohio ranked ninth among Midwestern states regarding the percent of its residents that were foreign-born in 2008 (3.8%) and seventh in percent-change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 (+25.5%). However, it proposed the fewest number of bills of any of the 12 Midwestern states, suggesting the immigrant and immigration related issues are not a great concern within the state. Thus, while Ohio introduced relatively few bills, these bills were fairly inclusive, placing this state in the inclusive/neutral category.

Neutral:

Of the 12 Midwestern states analyzed here, South Dakota and Wisconsin demonstrated the most neutral positions with regard to state legislation. South Dakota is also the state least affected by migration demographically. In 2008, only 1.9 percent of South Dakota residents were foreign-born, the smallest percentage found in any of the 12 states. South Dakota also experienced a 6.6% decrease in its foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008. As one might expect, the state introduced very few immigration related bills, only two. While both bills are exclusionary, their depth and impact are limited. These bills suggest that immigration is not a great concern to policymakers in South Dakota, which makes sense, given the demographic data.

Similarly, Wisconsin only had one bill that was immigration-related, A75, an omnibus bill that includes both inclusive and exclusionary elements. Interestingly, the impact of immigration on the state of Wisconsin is significantly greater than on South Dakota. While it ranked sixth out of the 12 Midwestern states in 2008 percent-foreign-born (4.5), it experienced the greatest increase in its foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 of any Midwestern state (+59.3). It is interesting that despite this dramatic population growth, very little immigration legislation was introduced. Thus, Wisconsin, along with South Dakota, demonstrates the most neutral position among the Midwestern states.

Exclusionary-Neutral:

Two states, Minnesota and Indiana, are categorized as exclusionary-neutral. Legislation in these states is fairly evenly distributed between inclusive and exclusionary, but the exclusionary bills are slightly greater in number or impact.

Minnesota, for example, introduced eight bills related to immigration during the examined time period. Three were categorized as inclusive, four as exclusionary and one bill included both inclusive and

exclusionary elements. Regarding the demographic context, Minnesota ranked second behind Illinois in the percent of its population that is foreign-born in 2008 (6.8%). In addition, it ranked third in the 2000-2008 percent-change in its foreign-born population (+38.8). Thus, Minnesota introduced slightly more exclusionary bills than inclusive, putting it in the exclusionary-neutral category.

Indiana ranked seventh in 2008 percent-foreign-born (4.0) and fifth in the percent-change in its foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 (34.3). In 2009-2010, Indiana introduced six bills related to immigration. Three were exclusionary, two inclusive, and one with elements of both. Thus, Indiana is also categorized as exclusionary-neutral, since the exclusionary bills slightly outnumber the inclusive ones.

Moderately Exclusionary:

One state, Missouri, is categorized as moderately exclusionary. The bills introduced in these states include both inclusive and exclusionary elements, but are somewhat more exclusionary either in number or depth. The demographic context again is important. Missouri ranked 10th out of the 12 Midwestern states in percent-foreign-born in 2008 (3.6). It ranked fourth in the percent-change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 (+38.8%). Thus, with eight bills introduced, Missouri's policymakers appear to be responding more to the increase in the foreign-born population than to the overall percentage. Four of the bills are categorized as exclusionary, two are inclusive, and three are neutral or include both inclusive and exclusionary elements.

Overall, Missouri is categorized as moderately exclusionary because its exclusionary bills outnumber its inclusive ones, and the exclusionary bills passed are quite a bit more extreme than those states categorized as exclusionary-neutral. For example, one bill blocks undocumented immigrants from obtaining financial aid and puts a burden on colleges and universities in the state to annually prove that they have not given any aid to undocumented students. Another bill places the study of immigration enforcement issues under the purview of the Joint Committee on Terrorism and Bioterrorism.

Significantly Exclusionary:

Two states, Iowa and Nebraska, fall into the significantly exclusionary category. These states introduced primarily exclusionary bills regarding immigration. Iowa, for example, introduced six bills in during the examined time period. Of the six, only one was inclusive. Four were exclusionary and one neutral. This exclusionary stance appears even stronger within the context of Iowa's demographic data. The state ranked eighth out of the 12 Midwestern states in the percent-foreign-born in 2008 (3.8). It also ranked eighth in the percent-change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008 (+25.1). Thus, the legislative response seems disproportionate to the demographic impact of immigrants in the state. Of the exclusionary bills, most were focused on verifying legal status of workers and service applicants.

Similarly, bills introduced in Nebraska during this time period were primarily exclusionary. Nebraska ranked sixth among the 12 Midwestern states in the percent of its population that was foreign-born in 2008 (6.0). Compared to the other states, Nebraska ranked third in the percent-change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2008. For example, compared to Iowa there is a somewhat stronger demographic impact of immigration on the state.

Like Iowa, Nebraska's exclusionary bills focus primarily on verifying the status of workers and benefit seekers. Three bills are categorized as neutral and the single inclusive bill, introduced in Nebraska during the examined period, creates the Commission on Latino-Americans.

Conclusion

State level immigration policy and context of reception in the Midwest region of the United States are complex issues. The context of reception is influenced by more than state legislative policy. The state of local economies, geographic location, history, and culture, are also influencing and may also be motivating the policy proposals and enactments. However, these policies create the space within the other dimensions of context that reception operate. Policy, economic and social aspects work together to

send a message and have the power create an environment where immigrants are incorporated into or marginalized and excluded from mainstream services and society.

State policies regarding immigration issues are also connected to, and have implications for, the growing native-born Latino/a populations in many Midwestern states. Exclusionary immigration policies suggest a resistance to the increasing racial/ethnic diversity found in many of these states. This resistance is concerning given the demographic analyses that predict that the Midwest will continue to experience increasing diversity in the coming years fueled primarily by a quickly growing Latino/a population.

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► Naturalization: The Official Integration

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Abstract

While the nation has focused on the border and questions about the undocumented, the local population of both immigrants and the receiving community experience the issue of newcomers by their integration, participation levels in various civic organizations and impact on the political process. Often neglected is the importance of naturalization and the pathways toward it. This presentation explores the concept of citizenship, its benefits and the barriers immigrants face when attempting to naturalize. Who facilitates the naturalization process and how? What is the role of the federal government and what is