

LATINOS IN MISSOURI: THE MEDIA ROLE IN THE ACCULTURATION PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The influx of Hispanics into the United States is significant and will most likely continue to be important for some time to come. Many immigrate to Missouri and attempt to settle there, to form a home and to integrate themselves into the greater community, the larger culture that contains them. The process of acculturation may require the help of acquaintances, friends and relatives. But, clearly media available to Latinos play, I contend in this work, a pivotal role to help Hispanics find the entrances and exits within the maze that is, in the eyes of a foreigner, a new culture.

Within the greater framework of “uses and gratifications” and “acculturation” theories I investigate the effect that ethnic media has on the process of acculturation in Latinos. I conducted a survey on this population residing in Missouri from various origins, educational levels and time of residency. The empirical results suggest that, for the population under study, Spanish language media plays a pivotal role in the process of acculturation and that its importance decreases, as expected, over time.