

Public Abstract

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Title:IMPACT OF SOCIAL NETWORKS ON WELL-BEING: EVIDENCE FROM LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN NON-URBAN MISSOURI COMMUNITIES

This study investigates the impact of social networks on Latino immigrantâ€™s well-being in rural areas of Missouri using the sustainable livelihoods approach. This approach states that householdsâ€™ livelihood strategies are influenced by their assets, perceptions about local society and the conditions of the community. This research used household survey data specially designed for this purpose. The impact of social networks on well-being was done in three steps. First the characteristics of households most likely to use social networks were assessed. Second, the impact of social networks on employment was investigated. And thirdly, the impact of social networks on well-being was assessed. Results show that having good English skills increases the probability to join social networks. The sources of information have a statistically positive influence on the type of job an immigrant obtains. Finally, it was found that family and friends social networks have a significantly positive impact on. The socio-environmental context of reception has a significantly positive impact on well-being. This research is novel in the rural economic development literature given that it introduces new concepts and strategies to study well-being and also informs potential shifts from income-based measures to more subjective-based and realistic measures when it comes to assess well-being.