

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

By

Pedro Valentim Dozi

Dr. Corinne Valdivia, Dissertation Advisor

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation analyzes the impact of social networks on Latino immigrant's livelihoods strategies and outcomes. Using the Sustainable Livelihoods framework, this dissertation hypothesizes that social capital such as bonding, bridging, and linking have positive impacts on Latino immigrant's well-being in rural areas of Missouri. It is hypothesized further that these social resources are conditioned by acculturation and the context of reception, which might reduce or enhance the impact of social capital on well-being. A three step approach is used to test this general hypothesis using Latino immigrant household survey conducted in three areas of rural Missouri as primary source of data. The first step uses a binomial logit regression to assess the characteristics of households with the highest propensity to participate in social networks. The second step uses multinomial logit to assess the impact of networks on occupation. The third step uses the Heckman two-step procedure to assess the impact of social networks on well-being. Results show that Cultural capital and good English ability increase the probability of joining social networks; while discrimination and language pressures decreased the probability of joining networks. It was also found that social networks have significantly positive impacts on livelihood strategies such as employment – sources of information influences where a newly arrived immigrant ends up working. Finally, bonding, bridging, and socio-environmental context have significantly positive impact on well-being.