The importance of social networks on Latino Immigrants' Wellbeing in Rural Missouri

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Context
- There are changing patterns of Latino immigration:
  - Settling rural vs. urban areas
  - Mostly males
  - Staying for a longer period of time in the communities.
- Recent concerns expressed on this pattern shift:
  - What are the benefits to local communities?
  - How are immigrants sustaining their wellbeing?
  - What is the importance of social networks on wellbeing?
  - This is the main topic of this study.

Analytical Approach
- The SLSM provides a framework for the study of wellbeing:
  - The models is based on access and control of assets (or "capitals").
  - These capitals are: social, cultural, economic/financial, and human.
  - It analyzes assets' contribution to livelihood outcomes.
- The model is ideal for the assessment of wellbeing:
  - Incorporates community context variables, appropriate because:
    - Of the differences in culture, race and country of origin.
    - It evaluates how capitals interplay in order to sustain wellbeing
- "Context of reception" is subjective, i.e., individuals
  - Indicate how they perceive the region;
  - Evaluate how the community perceives them; and

Empirical Approach
- The study uses Structural Equation Modeling:
  - To define the Latent variables:
    - Social Network (SK), Human (HK), cultural (CK), economic (EK), and Subjective Wellbeing (SWB)
  - To carry out the analysis of the impact SK on SWB
    - Two types of latent variable analyses were conducted:
      - Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA); and
      - Path Analysis (PA)
- Two hypotheses guided the study:
  - (a) Is there a single dominant form of SWB and SK or are there multiple indicators of both?
    - CFA was used to identify the most relevant indicators of both factors.
  - (b) SKs have a significant and positive impact on SWB.
    - PA measured the impact of SK on SWB, using factors identified in (a).
The study set up

- **Area of interest:**
  - Region A: a diversified employment community; and
  - Region B: a one main employer community
- **Variables used:**
  - Dependent: Subjective Well Being (SWB):
    - Satisfaction with life scale
  - Human capital:
    - Language (both English and Spanish) skills and education
  - Financial/economic capital:
    - Wage earnings and alternative sources of income
  - Cultural capital:
    - Bidimensional acculturation scale.
  - Social (network) capital (SK):
    - Membership in informal and formal groups, family residing in the area previously, and use of community services

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**Results and Implications**

**CFA for SWB:**
There is no single dominant indicator of SWB, which confirms the first part of hypothesis (a). All results are significant at 1% level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent dependent variable</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Std. Estimate</th>
<th>Unstd. Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Well Being</td>
<td>Will not change anything in life</td>
<td>-.605</td>
<td>-.428</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved important things</td>
<td>.615</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Satisfied w/ life</td>
<td>-.788</td>
<td>-.749</td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life conditions are excellent</td>
<td>.773</td>
<td>.997</td>
<td>.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Life is close to ideal</td>
<td>.666</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>.132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**CFA for Social networks:**
The second part of hypothesis (a) is confirmed that there is no single dominant factor for social networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Std. Estimate</th>
<th>Unstd. Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>Social Group participation</td>
<td>-.497</td>
<td>-.709</td>
<td>.213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Informal Group participation</td>
<td>-.565</td>
<td>-.414</td>
<td>.278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family member present</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.882</td>
<td>.281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Community Brokers</td>
<td>-.494</td>
<td>-.373</td>
<td>.419</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social and informal group participation are considered as bridging SK; Family members represent bonding; Community brokers represent linking.

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**Results (PA for region A)**
Only financial and social networks variables are significant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent dependent variable</th>
<th>Exogenous latent variable</th>
<th>Std. Estimate</th>
<th>Unstd. Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Well Being (SWB)</td>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>-.534</td>
<td>2.041</td>
<td>2.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context of Reception</td>
<td>-.345</td>
<td>1.723</td>
<td>1.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural capital</td>
<td>-.394</td>
<td>-.433</td>
<td>1.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social capital (SK)</td>
<td>-.419</td>
<td>-.395</td>
<td>.323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Capital</td>
<td>-.397</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td>1.453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>-.534</td>
<td>2.041</td>
<td>2.737</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Results (PA for Region B)**
PA for the Impact of SKs on SWB in Region B:
The effect of SK on SWB here is even larger than in the previous community:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latent dependent variable</th>
<th>Exogenous latent variable</th>
<th>Std. Estimate</th>
<th>Unstd. Estimate</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective Well Being (SWB)</td>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>1.388</td>
<td>4.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Context of Reception</td>
<td>-.497</td>
<td>1.354</td>
<td>3.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural capital</td>
<td>-.313</td>
<td>.375</td>
<td>.589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social capital</td>
<td>-.703</td>
<td>9.339</td>
<td>4.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial Capital</td>
<td>-.391</td>
<td>1.815</td>
<td>3.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Human capital</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>1.388</td>
<td>4.128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications: SK and SWB indicators’ results

- In terms of individual elements that make up SK:
  - Bonding SK; and bridging SK have the largest importance (effect) on SWB in these regions.

- SWB results suggest that:
  - SWB is more important in region B;
  - Since SWB increases in degrees (Likert scale), so as SK increases by one std. unit (i.e., increase in size of the network) SWB in region A increases by .410 standardized units.
  - This std. units are enough to move an individual’s perception from neutral to positive feeling about own SWB.

Implications: SK effect on SWB

- Possible reasons for the disparity in results is that region B Latinos tend to be:
  - Male, young, single, uncertain of their future, less educated, and most likely to move on to other places.

- Region A offers a different scenario. Comparatively:
  - The gender balance is not as skewed; has older individuals; more married people; and many have expressed a desire to stay in the community longer.

- Region A people would tend to see themselves as active members of their town and willing to participate in its development.
  - Become part of the “creative class”

Concluding: the smaller the region the higher the impact of SK.

Thank you.
Questions?
Comments and/or suggestions are welcome.