

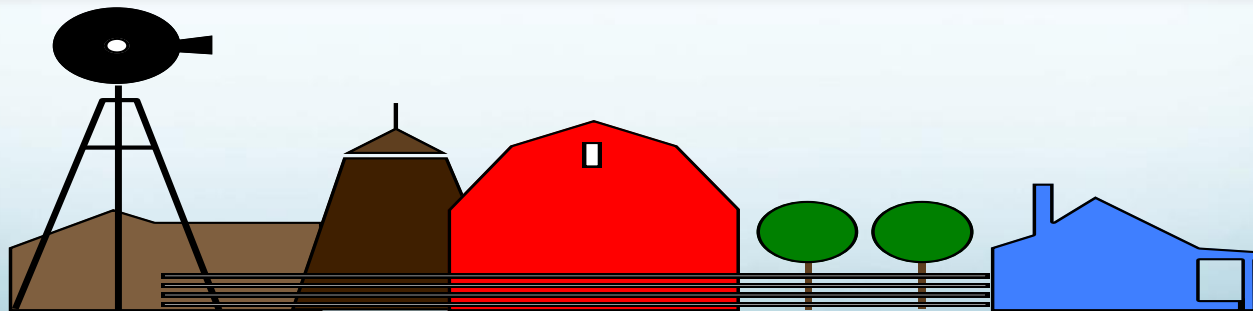
# Exploring Beginning Latino Farmers and Ranchers' Willing to Become Involved in Community Activities in Rural Missouri

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**Presented by**

**Eleazar U. Gonzalez Ph.D.  
Stephen Jeanetta Ph.D.  
David O' Brien Ph.D.**



# Objectives

This paper seeks to explore a community path for Latino farmers and ranchers who are willing to take leadership roles and participate in community projects.

It also seeks:

- to document to what extent Latino farmers and ranchers are willing to lead and become involved in future community projects.
- to explore the farmers' level of perception in regards to their willingness to hold leadership roles and to be involved in their communities. We will relate those perceptions through a cultural integration and a cultural assimilation research approach.
- to create a farmer and rancher theory based on them becoming gradually integrated or culturally assimilated into their local rural communities.

# Methods

- **Qualitative data**

30 Latino farmers were interviewed face to face in Southwest MO.

- **Two educational workshops**

Twenty end of session evaluations

Symmetrical ordinal data

- **Cultural integration and assimilation approaches**

All participants were legally documented.

# Demographic Profile of Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Southwest MO

- **Immigration Status**
  - All farmers who participated in the workshops were documented.
- **Age**
  - Their ages ranged from 30 to 65 years old. (1/3 of the U.S. farmer population is over 65 years old). Latino farmers involved in the workshops averaged 48 years old.
- **Formal Education**
  - They averaged 6.5 years of formal education
- **Time living in the United States**
  - Participants in the workshop averaged more than 30 years of time spent in the U.S. Many moved from large metropolitan areas to small farms in Southwest MO.

# Demographic Profile of Latino Farmers and Ranchers in Southwest MO

- **Employment**
  - All of them have a full-time job and practice farming as a part-time job
  - They are employed at meat packing plants and local businesses. There were no full self-employed farmers.
- **Farming/Ranching Activities**
  - 100 % of participants practice livestock activities. Some of them mixed livestock with gardening practices. Their farms range in size from 10 to 148 acres of land.
- **Membership in Community Organizations**
  - None of them belonged to a local organization. During the workshop, we helped them to subscribe to local livestock monthly magazines.
- **English Communication**
  - Only three farmers could read, write and speak fluent English out of the 18 participants in the workshops.

# Exploring Community Involvement Indicators

In the next 6 months, how willing are you to:

Not  
Willing

Reluctant

Somewhat  
Willing

Moderately  
Willing

Very  
willing

1. to be more engaged in community leadership roles.
2. to form new connections in their community.
3. to display more tolerance when working with others.
4. to develop a community action plan.
5. to implement a community project.



# Results

- End of session survey: there were 140 answers to each indicator.
- Education consisted of two workshops of ten sessions with 9 participants in each.

Latino community involvement indicators	Higher % of farmer responses were “very willing” to involve themselves in community activities in the next 6 months.
To be more engaged in community leadership roles	46
To form new connections in their community	43
To display more tolerance when working with others	51
To develop a community action plan	53
To implement a community project	48

# To what extent Latino farmers face a cultural integration or a cultural-assimilation approach?

- **Integration**

“People’s norms, beliefs, and values make up a collective consciousness, or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. The collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration.”  
*Durkheim E.*

It is generally assumed that these binds allow new immigrants to maintain some of their customs and values while adopting other in the receiving society.

- **Cultural–Assimilation**

“is a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life.”  
*Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burges*, cited by Gordon M. (1964). “the gradual process whereby cultural differences tend to disappear.” *Gordon M. (1964).*



# Discussion

- To facilitate Latino farmers community involvement by bridging their willingness to involve in leadership roles and community activities in the broad society.

“Civic participation has a wide range of meaning in different cultures and immigrant communities. Build on the cultural definition of the term to develop strategies that fit better with the values of the immigrant community.”

(Association for the Study and Development of Community, 2002)

- English language communication and weak ties to formal institutions are challenging Latino farmers and ranchers community involvement.

Achieving a common goal might answer the call for community involvement. Example. The answer to proposition 187 in California was the creation of the San Antonio Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition. “organizational activity spurs civic engagement and the influence of organizational activities does not shape attitudes.” (DeSipio L. 2002.)

# Conclusions and Implications

- **Leadership roles**
  - **Latino farmers in Southwest MO who are willing to take leadership roles are challenged by cultural and English communication constraints which limit their integration into the broader community. Potential and real involvement in community projects is observed through secular organizations which also facilitate community involvement.**
  - **Creating non-secular organizations to fill the formal gap between Latino farmers and ranchers and the broader community will help Latino farmer and rancher to integrate, and eventually, to culturally assimilate future generations of Latino farmers.**

## Conclusions and Implications

- **Community Involvement**
  - **In these 2 communities, Latinos are a minority population. Latinos involvement with the broader community is not significant and is still influenced by the challenges of communicating in a language that is secondary.**
  - **Latino farmers and ranchers involved would bridge with an organizational structure that could fit with the Latino farmer and ranchers' current levels of cultural integration.**

## Conclusions and Implications

- Their motivation to participate in community activities might be tied to the way the survey was presented them, as well as the influence of the workshops which were conducted in the Spanish language.
- They are far from becoming assimilated into the broad community. Latino farmers and ranchers are still in an integration process.
- Their willingness to participate in local community projects among participants might obey to the need of a organizational structure that become the spoken-leader for them.

# Questions and Observations

## knowledge

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