

Cambio de Colores  
Change and Integration Plenary  
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St Louis, Missouri

**"Today's Local Latino Perceptions  
of Community Climate"**

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**Purpose for the Photovoice**

- Engage the participants in critical reflection about the people and places where they live.
- Explore the values that are inherent in their views.
- Connect the research process to the issues affecting development in the community as they view them.
- Initiate local dialogues about their places as receiving communities.

**Guiding Questions**

- What are those things in the community make you feel welcome and help to facilitate your integration into the community?
- What are those things in the community that make you feel unwelcome and impede your integration into the community?

**Photovoice Process**

- Recruiting Participants
  - 8 per community
- Photos and Captions
  - Three sessions
    - Orientation & First Question
    - Review First Question & Second Question
    - Review Second Question
- Community Forums
  - Receiving Community
  - Newcomers



**Community Forums**



**Themes  
Facilitating Integration**

- Sense of Place
  - Parks, Businesses, Landscapes & Skylines
- Bridging Institutions
  - Centers, Churches, Employers
- Systems of Support
  - Churches, Friends and Family & Public Services
- Sense of Belonging
  - Work, Language, Culture, Schools & Services

## Sense of Place



This photo was very pretty to me. I shot it because [this town] is very pretty from wherever you look at it. The first time that I arrived here, I told my husband, "Yes, I like it here and I will stay here." It is a small town, but very pretty and it is what I dreamed of for my children. Here you live with nature.



Also in the Latin businesses, such as the stores, restaurants and bakeries, where one can speak their language without having to be harassed or discriminated against for speaking Spanish.



For birthday celebrations they have information in Spanish and English.

## Bridging Institutions



They have always offered us help, like English classes, Care Mobile and information about immigration. I like to help at the church in what I can, singing during masses and I count the collection. The church tries to help us with what us Hispanics may need.



It is something that makes me feel welcome because it is a place that helps all the Hispanics and they help resolve problems like translating and others. For example, if you have court or something, [she] comes with you, interprets and it is free. I arrived here and did not find a place to rent and she got a list of houses to rent, she finds the way.

## Systems of Support



My friends and their families. They have helped me with everything whether it is with school or with something personal. They have supported me in everything and they are very honest. They are with me in the good times and in the bad times. They are three, two do not speak Spanish and the other was born in Texas. They opened the doors of their homes to me and we are like sisters. Thanks to them I have been able to move ahead.



This school is part of the Hispanic culture since not all offer the opportunity equally and it is the first place that my children went to when they were of the age to go to school. They have made us feel comfortable by being the place where our children learn the first things related to their education.

## Sense of Belonging



My job is an opportunity to get ahead and be better. My manager is very good and has helped me a lot. This makes me feel well and do a good job.



I took the photo because, just looking at her makes me feel good. Even though my manager and I don't understand each other, we get along very well.

Traditions are very important and it is wonderful that in this country they accept Hispanic sports and they make us feel accepted because we have something to do to enjoy ourselves.

## Themes Impeding Integration

- Access to Resources
  - Health Care, Credit, Higher Education and Local Services
- Communication
  - Language and Culture
- Documentation
  - Drivers License, Insurance, Housing and Credit
- Discrimination
  - Work, Shopping, Healthcare and Law Enforcement

## Access to Resources



This picture shows that Hispanics have a barrier when they are able to go beyond high school and actually become someone. An opportunity in which their country it is hard to find. I don't have the money to aspire to what I want to.



It is one of the things that does not make us feel welcome, since the cost of medical services and emergencies is very extreme, to the point where getting sick can be a risk since it affects our economy, forcing us to pay extreme costs for some very simple services and that are not to our liking, like having to pay \$500 or \$600 for one pill or minimal attention. And the excess is also in the lack of language for us to communicate, where they see the Latino people that do not have a social security card or Medicare, something indispensable in order to get a more exclusive service.

## Communication



This photo shows a place where they used to give English classes for adults in the morning and classes in the evening and now it is closed. It is needed for the people of the town and its citizens who need to learn English to improve.



They don't accept Hispanic people for not speaking the language and for being Hispanic.



We have the need of having somebody to interpret for us when we go to banks to get some service, or when we go to restaurants and shops.

## Documentation



We do not have the documentation needed to buy property or a house in order to live better and not to be paying rent which is money that could serve us later on.



One can't get a license for the fact of not having documents. "...for everything you need legal documents."



We cannot have a bank account due to being undocumented and we have many problems in cashing our payroll checks of our salary.

## Discrimination



When they see the Hispanic people, they stop them and ask them questions just for being Hispanics and they treat them bad.



They treated her bad because they withdrew credit to buy furniture, they even asked her for the credit [information] that she had from California in order to buy furniture and then in the end they did not sell her the furniture.

## Contradicting Themes

- There were contrasts both within communities and across communities
  - Within Communities
    - Healthcare
    - Access to Certain Facilities and Resources
  - Across Communities
    - Healthcare
    - Law Enforcement

## Reflections on the Process

- The newcomers love the places; many were farmers in their countries of origin—they took many photos of the local environment
- Local bridge builders are important connectors to local resources
- When there are relationships with people from the local community members the outcomes they report are generally good—but there are few relationships
- Level of fear ebbs and flows in reaction to policy discussions
- Serious concerns about healthcare access
- There is a great deal of isolation among the women

## Reflections on the Process

- It appears very little integration has taken place so far socially and culturally
- The lines being drawn at state and national policy levels are having negative effects at the local level
  - There is a great deal of fear among immigrants.
  - Some communities ignore federal laws and others are "souring the milk"—very confusing to the immigrant.
- The communities themselves are relatively isolated and self-reliant when it comes to addressing issues of immigration
- Community integration can be positively affected by facilitating those things that make newcomers feel welcome and reducing the number of barriers