

¿Quién Soy?: Identity Construction and Cultural Adaptation in Mexican Immigrants

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ABSTRACT

Latino population has increased and has begun to spread wide across the nation, there has been a transition of population moving from cities to small rural communities. This research investigates how aspects such as language, culture, and social environment impact and construct the identity of the participants in small rural communities. Using the data collected and the social identity theory, we are able to determine and see how their identity is constructed based on those factors.

Throughout history, immigration has been a permanent and long standing issue in the United States. Recent migrant groups have struggled to be fully accepted in mainstream society. Despite opposition to immigration, flow of migrants has continued and slowing trends and demographics have changed. More immigrants are coming from Mexico and other Latin American countries as opposed to European countries. As a result, Latinos are one of the fastest growing immigrant groups and have revolutionized immigration history in the United States. The geographic distributions and new settlement into new areas, social environment, cultural and language differences have influenced the way immigrants lead their lives and construct their identities in the outer suburban and non-metro communities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Demographic Changes and New Trends

Latinos are the fastest growing migrant group in the United States surpassing any other group in history and all other minority groups in the United States. Dvorak (2009) argues that Latinos now make up 13 percent of the nation's demographic total. Whether immigration is legal or illegal, Latinos have more than doubled their presence in the U.S. in the past two decades. However, Latinos are not only coming to this country in significant numbers, they are also spreading across the United States and reaching places that had not been explored before, such as Midwest rural areas. Mexican immigrants in particular are the dominant group that has shifted and gone from urban areas to small communities. Massey (2008) found that geographic transformation has been particularly dramatic in the case of Mexicans, the nation's largest immigrant group. The new

settlement path that recent Mexican immigrants have taken has scattered them in suburban areas in the Midwest. Thus, this integration leads to more ethnically and culturally diverse communities and transforms the way rural or suburban communities were once established.

Barriers, Challenges, and Issues Faced by Mexican Immigrants

Mexican immigrants who settle in suburban and non-metro areas in the United States are subject to high levels of discrimination due to changes in demographics, growth in population, and cultural and language differences. One of the barriers that immigrants face is lack of acceptance and negative response from members of the community, which impacts immigrants greatly. Grey and Woodrick (2005) found that 20% of the population in a Midwest community were against immigration influxes. Motivated by concerns that immigrants will lower wages in jobs and create more inflow of migration, community members believe new comers are bad in their community. This creates biases; resentment, misconceptions, obnoxious and intolerable sentiment towards immigrants. Grey and Woodrick (2005) found that members of the community conclude that newcomers are bad for their community and immigrants only come to take jobs from the Americans. These misconceptions and biases lead to stereotypes and creating a belief that migration decreases the quality of rural life. Therefore, one of the issues immigrants face is the rejection from community members.

Other barriers that immigrants face are language and cultural differences. Research by Public Agenda (2003), found that 71% of Mexican migrants did not speak English when they first migrated. One of the reasons of Mexican migration is to achieve a

higher standard of living. A lack of English language skills prevents them from achieving that goal. Lack of language also prevents immigrants from attaining better employment, education, being accepted, interacting, associating, and being involved in community. Portes and Rumbaut (1990) found that immigrants also faced overt discrimination after moving to the United States because they are not able to participate in the life of larger community; Immigrants don't get an education and better job opportunities, get access to health care, social services, better housing and job conditions. Thus, language and cultural differences feed into the discrimination many immigrants face.

Public Agenda (2003) also found that Mexican immigrants specifically see more discrimination than do other foreign-born adults because of financial and language barriers. Mexican immigrants come from poor, low-income, small farm communities and do not know the language. The financial and language barriers they face are higher, and clearly, reports of discrimination resonate with them. Similarly, Farkas, Duffett, and Johnson (2003) found that three-quarters of Mexican immigrants say there is discrimination against immigrants in the United States, compared with 57 percent of other immigrants. Mexican immigrants are more likely than any other immigrant group to face discrimination in the United States. Lack of cultural sensitivity in communities and lack of language skills subjects Mexican immigrants to prejudices and discrimination.

Identity in a foreign land

Immigrants leave their homeland and come to a new place where they are unfamiliar with the culture, language, and social aspects of the country. However, they gradually assimilate into mainstream culture and create a new identity, distinct from the

identity they previously held. Alejandro and Ruben (1990) explain that acculturation involves shedding the old and assimilating the new; hence, a necessary trade-off between the native language and the dominant culture occurs. New standards of living and constant exposure to new culture inevitably exposes immigrants to the American politics, laws, institutions, traditions, culture, language, and practices. Those new cultural elements are involved in the construction of a new identity that is no longer based on values and other aspects of their home land. Gordon (1964) found that acculturation becomes a pattern that extends beyond the acquisition of the English language; acculturation to the dominant culture goes even further, thus impacting the way individuals dress, their outward emotional expression, and personal values. Acculturation also influences individuals to make minor modifications in cuisine, recreational patterns, speech, names, and sources of artistic inspiration. There is loss of culture and values, but also acquisition of new cultural aspects and social values that immigrants experience once they have entered the dominant mainstream culture.

Latino Diaspora

As a result of the high numbers of Mexican immigrants in the United States, symbolic and cultural aspects that represent Mexicans have been adapted by the dominant culture. Mexican immigrants are able to remain close to their home land because of the Latino diaspora occurring in the United States. Zuñiga and Leon (2005) found that accommodations have been made as Latinos share leisure spaces, services, schools, and workplaces with the dominant culture, accommodations such as providing services in Spanish, ESL classes, mass in Spanish, celebrate cultural events in community amongst

other things. Also, because Latinos are an important part of consumers, local merchants strive to bring and welcome them into their stores. Because immigrants are settling in nontraditional areas, moving beyond the traditional gateway states, they have become a big source of economic contribution, investment, and cross cultural trade. Dominant culture is being exposed to different aspects of Latino and Mexican culture all across the spectrum. Zuñiga and Leon (2005) found that cuisine, music, language amongst other factors are being integrated into the dominant culture as exemplified by Mexican restaurants, now in rural areas and other towns and cities that sell authentic foods, passages and icons of historical Mexican history (5 de Mayo), TV channels, radio stations, newspapers, cinema amongst other things. There are Mexican symbolic and material aspects that are being integrated in the dominant culture in our contemporary times. As a result, there is a mutual exchange and adaptation of Mexican cultural aspects. The dispersion and exposure to cultural differences, traditions, new values, and ways of living have allowed the dominant and immigrant group to benefit and have cultural gains.

Overall, there is a lack of up-to-date research regarding construction of Mexican immigrant's identity, no previous research that focuses on the impact of language, culture, and social environment as part of identity construction for Mexican immigrants residing in small rural areas has been done. Previous research helps create broader understanding on how those changes can influence both communities, either integrating or assimilating to each other's culture, barriers that Mexican immigrant's face, and the impact of the growth in immigrant population and settlement in rural areas can have on individual's identity. The communities where the research will be conducted are unique communities

because there has been a growth in Mexican immigrant population over the years, they are small rural communities, and internal changes have occurred due to the inflow of immigrants, such factors will help determined how Mexican immigrants construct their identity in small rural areas.

THEORY

According to Tajfel and Turner (2003), social identity theory is composed of three elements: categorization, identification, and comparison. These three elements explain how a person categorizes oneself in a social group as an individual in society, and how one constructs a social and personal identity. This theory will be applied to understand how Mexicans immigrants construct their identity in small rural areas.

According to Abrams and Hogg (1999), categorization, identification, and comparison are “processes involved in social identity formation, [and] namely self categorization and social comparison, produce different consequences” (p. 285) that help develop those identities. Abrams and Hogg (1999) explain in regard to self-categorization that there are two distinct groups, the in-group and out-group (p. 284). The in-group is where people classify themselves, identify or belong to and the out-group where others classify the individuals. The in-group and out-group are crucial in structuring the identity of an individual because this helps understand and define why and where an individual is classified in a particular group, and most importantly, how an individual fits in the particular context in which he/she is placed. In the process of self-categorization “there is an assimilation of self to the prototype and thus the self is transformed: self-perception, beliefs, attitudes, feelings, and behavior are now defined in

terms of the group prototype” (Abrams and Hogg 1999:284). Self-categorization allows individuals to define themselves by group norms, such as how should group members think, feel, behave, and act, instead of identifying oneself by individual characteristics. Self-categorization is one of the most important aspects of the social identity theory because it allows an individual to develop a sense of identity based on a group identity.

The second element of social identity theory is identification. During the process of identification the individual may belong to the in-group or out-group. This helps identify “people’s awareness of their own social group and the positive and negative values that are related to their membership in that group” (Oakes 2001:35). People who are categorized as part of the in-group will be the “us,” while people placed in the out-group will be categorized as the “other.” This creates distinctions between groups: “[it] produces a perceptual overestimation of intracategory similarities, as well as overestimation of intercategories differences” (Castro 2003:40). During the identification process, individuals not only understand and notice the differences and similarities between groups, but also start to perceive and define themselves as members of a specific social category and group. Castro (2003) mentions that “group-based self-definitions are regulated by those accentuated principles (similarities and differences)... Furthermore, social identification are not only relational, but also evaluative, and are determined by the need for positive self-esteem” (p. 40). Individuals not only seek to identify themselves, but also seek to attain a positive evaluation, to be perceived in a positive and favorable manner as a whole. Thus, the process of identification helps establish one’s self categorization, and helps an individual identify and perceive themselves as an actual part

of a group, creates membership, and creates a feeling of belongingness based on how similar or different individuals are in a particular group.

The third element of social identity theory is social comparison. Tajfel and Turner (2003) explain that in order to form social categorizations and identification there must be other groups that allow for a comparison. Castro (2003) says that “a group becomes a group in a sense of being perceived as having common characteristics or a common fate mainly because other groups are present in the environment” (p. 40). By comparing one’s group to other groups, one is evaluating the abilities, opinions, cultural ways, and other differences between the groups. During social comparison, there are “intergroup situations [in which] individuals tend to differentiate their social group from others in a way that positive outcomes of comparison contribute to maintain a positive social identity” (Castro 2003:40). The intergroup is the “us,” and will view themselves positively when compared to other groups. According to Castro (2003), “since individuals obtain self-esteem benefits through favorable social comparisons, it is assumed that there is a general tendency to perceive in-groups as positively distinct from other relevant out-groups” (p. 41). The comparison allows individuals to build their esteem based on how they are viewed and how they view themselves in different social contexts. Regardless of the social context, the individuals will always seek to be perceived in a positive manner compared to other groups.

These three elements allows for understanding of the development of social and individual identity construction based on different social contexts and experiences that individuals encounter. Social identity theory can be applied to specific groups, including

Mexican immigrants in the United States. Hurtado, Gurin, and Peng (1997) mention that “the process Mexicans in the United States undergo is similar to that of other immigrant groups. Their social identities are constructed from the knowledge individual members have about their group’s experiences” (p. 244). Those experiences are impacted by different social structures and are also based on the effects of self-categorization, social identification, and social comparison. During self-categorization, immigrants categorize themselves based on nationality, language, race, religion, and other cultural or ethnic differences. For example, Mexican immigrants, upon arrival to the United States, self-categorize based on race, language, ethnic and other cultural aspects between two groups: Mexicanos (Mexicans) (the in-group) and the Estadounidenses (United States citizens) (the out-group). According to Padilla and Perez (2003), “we are motivated to identify with social groups with which we feel kinship and to separate from groups of which we do not feel a part...to remain detached through a manifestation of distinctiveness” (p. 43). Mexicanos feel connected with members who are similar to them; therefore they will identify with other Mexicanos in their particular area and associate more with those people who are like them and with whom they share cultural aspects.

With respect to identification, Quintana and Sculls (2009) mention that “Latinos must develop an identification and sense of identity in the context of stigmatization and oppression...and also, the sociocultural context of Latinos, which involves rich and diverse origins and complex sociological process” (p. 81). Given this context, Mexicanos develop their identity in the United States and in the particular areas where they reside. However, other external factors also influence their categorization, such as discrimination

or oppression. Those factors are not personal characteristics; rather they are created because of the social group to which they belong. Previous research by Hurtado, Gurin, and Peng (1997), showed that Mexicanos identify themselves with “two nationality identities...one, a binational identity... “Mexican Americans, descendents from Mexico” [and] the other is nationality identity, panraza, includes broad Latina Americans” (p. 256). Thus, in the identification process, the individuals are the claimers of their own identity. In this case, Mexicanos identify themselves as Mexican Americans or whatever group they identify with in their social setting. In addition, Mexicans are constructing their identity by being categorized in all social contexts, by creating membership to a group, and claiming their own identity.

In addition to the identification process, social comparison is a way to establish and acknowledge the differences between groups based on comparisons that exist within that social environment. From those comparisons, groups are able to “favorably compare their in-group against an out-group” (Padilla and Perez 2003:43). The comparison serves to create a sense of high self-esteem for a particular group. For example, because Mexicanos are the minority in United States, by forming their own group’s and identity, having membership in that group, and by comparing to other groups, they are able to develop high self-esteem. According to Quintana and Sculls (2009), “Mexicans who were strongly identified with their ethnicity became more involved in Latino cultural activities, thereby increasing their social and psychological identities with Latinos, which also increased the esteem within that group” (p. 88). Once Mexicans come to the United

States and categorize themselves in a particular group, a group that shares similarities, then they can claim that identity based on their own categorization.

By applying social identity theory to the identity construction of Mexican immigrants in rural areas, my research will increase understanding of social and individual's identity construction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

My sample consisted of twelve participants, with four women and eight men. All 12 participants are from Mexico and have been migrating or residing in this country since 1977. Average age of participants is 42 years old and the average time they have been in this country is for 19 years. Participants were selected through a gatekeeper. Selection of participants is based mainly on their age and their migrant status.

Procedure and Materials

In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted during the months of September and October 2010. During the interview process the participants were asked 27 open-and-close ended questions. A copy of the question asked is attached in the Appendix.

Interviews were conducted in Spanish. Some interviews were tape recorded, depending on how comfortable the participant felt, and transcribed to take into consideration every comment made. If the participants chose not to be tape-recorded I took brief notes and then expanded the notations after the interview was done.

The questions asked information regarding the participant's personal background, experiences and challenges they face in the town in which they reside based on the

culture, language, and social interactions, and how those factors shape the Mexican immigrants identities. The questions also focused on how the immigrants associate with members of the community who are not from the same ethnic group and also how they associate with members of their same ethnic group.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths of the research are my familiarity with the community and being an insider in the communities. Being an insider gave me background information about the culture and participants. Also, being fluent in Spanish was a big advantage in the research because I was able to communicate and understand the participants. Being fluent in Spanish and because the participants had knowledge of who I was made it easier for participants to be more open and disclosed personal information.

One of the weaknesses in the research is the loss of words in translation. During the interviews some of the participants found it difficult to answer the questions because of the wording. By translating the question that I asked the participants from English to Spanish and also translating the comments that participants made from Spanish to English, there was a loss in originality. Therefore, translation became one of the biggest disadvantages in the research. Another weakness is that some of the participants did not know me well, thus they were not as open to share and respond to the questions.

FINDINGS

Background Information

All 12 participants have been migrating or residing in this country since 1977 and are between the ages of 35-52. Five of the participants came for the first time to the

United States when they were between the ages of 16-18 years old. The other participants were older than 20 when they first came to the United States. All the participants came to this country looking for better jobs, because of family and poverty, for a better economic situation. Most of the participants settled in ethnic communities in big cities prior to moving to the small rural communities where they live now. Four of the participants have been in their community for about 10 years. Two participants have been in their communities for 6-8 years. Other participants have been in their community for about 12-27 years. All participants are Mexican immigrants coming from Guerrero and Michoacán, two neighboring states in Mexico. Some of the participants know some English, most are not fluent in English. Most of the participants came to these towns because of family members, to unite with family, or to look for better paying jobs.

Adaptation to American Culture

Once participants settled in their communities they had to adapt to the dominant culture in order to fit in and adjust to the community. In particular, participants had to introduce new customs into their life style such as new holidays, foods, climate, traditions, new values, cultural aspects and follow laws amongst other things in order to integrate. According to one of the participants “raising kids is different, there are different values; we celebrate other customs such as Halloween, Thanksgiving, Fourth of July that we did not previously celebrate.” Another participant said that “little by little we are still adapting, learning English, learning new ways” of the dominant culture.” Another participant noted that by “learning language, going to school, communicating, building relationship with members of the community” he has learned to adapt to the culture.

However, some participants find it hard to adapt, especially when it comes to the language.

Furthermore, one participant discussed how there were changes in the food, since they could not get Mexican food. The participant said “we changed the taco for the Big Mac and suffered because of the food differences,” also “instead of tortillas, we ate bread and had a lot of sandwiches.” Some of the participants noted that they are adapting to the changes forcibly and through time. Another participant said “by following traditions/culture” he has been able to adapt to the dominant culture. Participants have to adapt to the changes they are experiencing in order to feel more comfortable, to fit into the community, and in order to survive.

Mexican/ Latino influence over American Culture

Despite the fact that participants have adapted aspects of the dominant culture, there have been aspects from the Mexican culture that have been integrated and become part of the American culture. One participant noted that:

When we first arrived in the town, there were not many Mexicans or Mexican food, restaurants, nothing. We had to go to Chicago to buy all tortillas, peppers, all that in Chicago. About three to five years later, more people came from California to work in the fields; then that’s when the Mexican stores opened.

One participant mentioned “and that’s how Americans became familiar with taquitos, burritos, tortillas, chile, some of the Mexican food. Now we celebrate 5 de Mayo, they know the sombrero, and listen to Mexican music.” Some other participants echoed the same thing “American stores started buying peppers, beans, tortillas, cheso fresco, other Mexican products, more Mexican stores opened, and restaurants.” Some of

those products were suddenly part of the merchandise that was available for Mexican/American costumers in the American stores.

Another way in which Mexican culture was introduced and influenced the American culture was through language. One participant noted that “at work, supervisor learned Spanish to communicate with workers” and “other American people knew some basic Spanish words such as hola, como estas, que pasa.” Some people became familiar with some Spanish words. In those aspects, Mexican culture had influence over dominant culture in those towns.

Staying close to home

Although participants have been in this country for a long time, this research showed ways in which participants remain connected to their homeland. Most of the participants mentioned that through telephone talking to family and because of family, being updated is how they remain close to home and also through the television news channels. One of the participants mentioned “traditions, holidays, music, Mexican dishes” is a way to stay connected to homeland. Most of the participants noted that food and language is a primary way to stay connected to their homeland. One participant mentioned that “through soccer, sports, we stay with the same things, foods are the same, language, family.” Another participant said “holidays, we don’t celebrate them the same, the ones that we can’t celebrate such as Posadas, we just remember what they are, and what it is, but we try to remember those things to stay close to home.” Some ways in which the participants stay close to home is by keeping communication with family members and retaining the values and traditions.

Language Barrier

In terms of barriers, this research found that one of the problems that participants face immediately after entering the country is the language barrier. Nine out of twelve participants said language was one problem they faced in this country and in their community. One of the participants mentioned:

Makes you sad, gets you nostalgic, if I understood myself with other people I would be comfortable, you get nervous because you have no relationship [with other people], language is definitely the primary reason as to why one finds itself in a bad situation here. With the language I would be comfortable in any job. I wouldn't be frustrated because I don't know what they tell me, they tell me to do something and I don't know what they mean, language is the primary problem.

Another participant said "it makes you feel inferior, defeated, small, also you are dependent on people in order to communicate with Americans." One participant mentioned "at work they make you feel like you are an idiot, illiterate, and ignorant simply because of the language difference...it's a big problem, when you try to speak English some people pretend they don't understand you, it's very hard." Thus, language is definitely a big barrier for the participants that do not speak English.

Another problem that most participants mentioned was that due to the lack of English language they are not able to build relationships and interaction is limited between members of the community and participants. Because of language barriers participants are not able to communicate, participate, and be involved in activities in the community. One participant mentioned "it's hard because we cannot understand each other and we cannot build relationship with them. One time I had someone come to my

house because they wanted to get a haircut, but I couldn't really help him because I didn't know what he wanted. I was scared and nervous." Another participant said:

we have no relationship, the only relationship I can have with them is when we greet and smile to each other, you can try to build relationship with little English that you know, if we could converse we would live better together, but since we don't understand each other we can't, the only thing we can do is greet and smile without having a conversation and having a real relationship.

Participants are limited on the relationship, communication, and interaction they have with members of the community because of their lack of English language.

DISCUSSION

Coming to this country and settling in rural communities puts a strain on participants. Results of the research suggest that there is in fact an impact in the way participants live their life in small rural areas based on factors such as language, culture, and social environments. The information presents ways in which participants construct their identity and previous research echoes the results of the current findings.

Upon arrival to the small rural communities, participants have to adapt to the dominant culture in order to integrate. Participants add or change aspects of their previous identity so that it reflects the new identity of the community where they currently reside. Once participants are in communities where their language, food, culture, traditions are no longer practiced, because it is not part of the dominant culture, they have to adapt to the new culture voluntarily or forcibly. The exposure to the new culture experienced by the participants causes them to begin to celebrate holidays, grasp other American values, changed aspects of their foods, and even learn Basic English amongst other things. Participants learn new ways when they started living in those communities

such as new values, traditions, language, and other common practices and add those aspects as part of their new life and identity. As a result, adaptation to dominant culture becomes part of their new identity.

Furthermore, participants adapt cultural values and traditions from the dominant group in their community. However this becomes a mutual acculturation process as the dominant culture also integrates Mexican cultural aspect. Upon arrival to the communities, participants drove to Chicago in search of buying Mexican groceries. After the growth of the Mexican community in those towns, research found that Mexican culture became more visible and part of the dominant community. Mexican culture became more accessible to the participants because Americans began to integrate those cultural aspects to the community, such as Mexican groceries and Mexican restaurants. Mexican food is one of the most essential aspects of Mexican cultural identity. Mexican cultural aspects were not an integral part of the dominant culture and did not previously exist where participants live, this reflects, to an extent, an acceptance, integration and accommodation of Mexican community in small rural areas. Having their Mexican culture as part of the American culture, shape the way participants live their life in small rural areas and how they construct their identity based on those factors.

Despite the fact that there has been adaptation and integration, from the participants into dominant culture and vice versa, participants still remain connected to their homeland. Some aspects in their life have changed because they are in a foreign land. The connection they have with their native land is crucial because it helps recover part of what they lost in the process of migration, adaptation, and integration. Also, helps

remain in contact with their values, people, and culture. Most participants stay connected to their homeland through family, memories, by retaining some of the cultural aspects such as cuisine, language, and values. Participants never fully lose their first identity if they remain connected to their homeland and roots. The connection to homeland is very important because it helps bring a group together who share similarities in values, despite the fact they are far apart from their native land.

For language barrier, research found that participants are limited in many ways; they cannot build relationships in the community, communicate in general with the dominant population, get better jobs or more opportunities, and are not able to speak on their behalf. Participants feel less of themselves and people make them feel less because of language differences. Previous research reflects similar findings, it shows how language unable immigrants from fully integrating and being accepted in the community and forming part of the larger society. Language acquisition would allow participants to feel more comfortable in their community and allow them to build relationships and a bigger community. Research proves how lack of language, relationship building, and their sense of community can impact the identity of the participants in a positive or negative way.

In addition, we are able to see how much the life of the participants has changed and been influenced by aspects from the dominant culture and vice versa, and how the environment in which they are constructs their identity. However, a big part of the identity process is how individuals define or categorize themselves in a particular context, environment or place. With social identity theory we will get whole notion and

understanding of identity construction of Mexican immigrants in small rural areas. First is self-categorization, participants categorize themselves as Mexican, a category that is distinct from Americans because of the language difference, culture, and nationality. Between the two groups, participants are the in-group and Americans are the out-group. The in-group is where the participants feel connected, where they share similarities and experiences with other people. This is very important in how the rest of the identity develops because it demonstrates all the factors that develop and construct their identity. The second step is identification: Participants develop their identity in small rural communities and in the United States based on the experiences, changes, and barriers they face. And create membership, belongingness, and identification to the in-group. Social comparison is the final step, the participants compare themselves and other groups in the community, the dominant group (Americans) compared to the participants (Mexican). The participants become the “us” and the Americans become “they” and that is how they build their esteem based on how they are viewed and how they view themselves in different social contexts compared to other groups. Now we can see how it really is that their identity is constructed. Based on those factors, social context, environment, experiences and changes, participants create their identity. Participants have adapted to changes, faced barriers in language and other things, incorporated some aspect of their culture to the dominant group’s culture, thus this has created a whole new identity based on this social context in which they are living now. If participants were to move to another area, based on their experiences, conditions, and changes, they would develop a new identity based on that social context.

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APPENDIX
ENGLISH AND SPANISH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

English Interview Questions

1. How old are you?
2. Where are you originally from?
3. How many years have you been in this town?
4. What year did you migrate to the United States?
5. How did you decide to migrate to the United States?
6. How did you end up in this particular town?
7. Describe some challenges you have faced in this country?
8. Describe any problems you face in this town?
9. Describe the environment of this town?
10. Describe how you think you are perceived in this town, being that you are from a different ethnic background?
11. Describe the interaction you have with members of this town who are not from the same ethnic background as yours?
12. What is the relationship you have with members of this town who are not from the same ethnic background as yours?
13. What are the ways in which you associated with members of this town who are not from the same ethnic background as yours?
14. Describe what resources are available for you in terms of healthcare and public assistance?
15. Describe your relationship with members of your same ethnic group?
16. How have you managed to maintain a connection with your homeland?

17. What are some customs that you still retain from your homeland?
18. Where is your true home?
19. Describe some changes that you have undergone by coming to this country?
20. How have you adjusted to the changes you have undergone?
21. How has living in this town impacted your life so far?
22. What are the ways in which the language differences have impacted your life?
23. Describe the ways in which the cultural aspects of this town, aspects that are different from your ethnic culture, have impacted your life?
24. How has migrating to this country shaped your life?
25. In what ways have the social environment from this town changed the way you live your life?
26. Do you consider yourself as a member of this town?
27. Is there anything else you would like to contribute?

Spanish Interview Questions

1. ¿Cuántos años tiene?
2. ¿De donde es originario usted?
3. ¿Cuántos años tiene usted en este pueblo?
4. ¿Qué año emigro para los Estado Unidos?
5. ¿Cómo decidió emigrar a los Estados Unidos?
6. ¿Cómo llegaste a este pueblo en particular?
7. ¿Describa cualquier problema que usted enfrenta en este pueblo?
8. ¿Describa algún problema que enfrenta en este pueblo?
9. ¿Describa el ambiente en este pueblo?
10. ¿Describa cómo cree que lo perciben en este pueblo, siendo que usted es de un origen étnico diferente?
11. ¿Describa la interacción que tiene con los miembros de este pueblo que no son de la misma etnicidad que usted?
12. ¿Cuál es la relación que tiene con los miembros de este pueblo que no son de la misma etnicidad que usted?
13. ¿Cuáles son las formas en las que usted se asocia con los miembros de este pueblo que no son de la misma etnicidad que usted?
14. ¿Describa qué recursos están disponibles para usted en términos de salud y asistencia pública?
15. ¿Describa la relación con miembros de su mismo grupo étnico?
16. ¿Cómo ha logrado mantener una conexión con su tierra natal?
17. ¿Cuáles son algunas costumbres que todavía conservan de su tierra natal?
18. ¿Dónde está su verdadero hogar?
19. ¿Describir algunos cambios que ha sufrido al venir a este país?

20. ¿Cómo se ha ajustado a los cambios que ha sufrido?
21. ¿Hasta hora, como le ha impactado su vida al vivir en este pueblo?
22. ¿Cuáles son las formas en las que la diferencia del idioma han impactado su vida?
23. ¿Describir las formas en que los aspectos culturales de esta ciudad, aspectos que son diferentes a los de su cultura étnica, han impactado su vida?
24. ¿Al migrar a este país, como eso ha construido su vida?
25. ¿De qué manera el ambiente social de este pueblo cambió la manera en que vives tu vida?
26. ¿Se considera usted como miembro de este pueblo?
27. ¿Hay algo más que te gustaría colaborar?