

Pride and Prejudice on the Prairie:

The Role of Community Pride in the Acculturation Strategies of Immigrants and Long-term Residents of a Rural Community in Nebraska

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Focus of the Study

- Immigrants
 - New paths of immigration lead to rural towns (Saenz & Torres, 2003)
- Rural Communities
 - Struggle with changes due to immigration (Grey & Woodrick, 2002)
- Acculturation Processes
 - Studied in urban areas, not rural areas

Acculturation Models

- Berry, et al. (1989): Immigrant Acculturation
 - integration, assimilation, separation, marginalization
- Bourhis, et al. (1997): Long-term Resident Acculturation
 - integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion
 - individualism

Acculturation Outcomes

- Consensual
 - Convergence in strategies
- Problematic
 - Slight divergences in strategies
- Conflictual
 - Major divergences in strategies

Community Identity

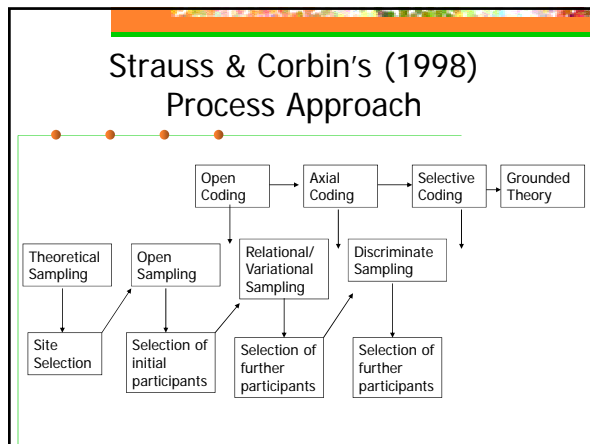
- Rapid immigrant influx perceived negatively in smaller communities
- Small communities have shared history and culture spanning generations
- Changes to status quo met with resistance

Purpose

- The purpose of this study was to extend existing theory on cultural adaptation processes by examining this phenomenon in a rural community context using grounded theory methods of qualitative inquiry.

Grounded Theory

- Systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate or extend a theory (Creswell, 2005)
- Strauss & Corbin's (1998) Process Model
 - Sampling
 - Theoretical, Open, Relational/Variational, Discriminate
 - Data Collection
 - Interviews, Observations
 - Data Analysis
 - Open, Axial, and Selective Coding



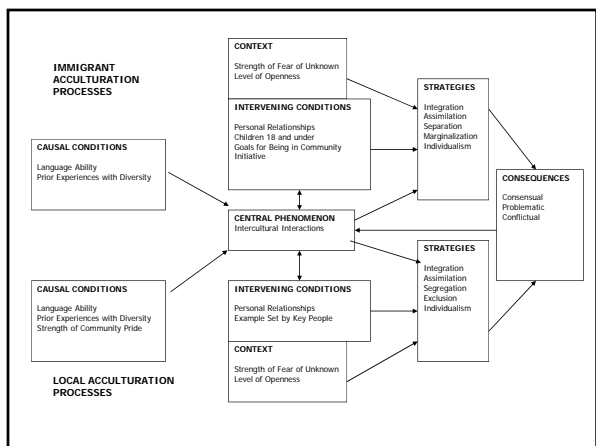
Setting and Participants

- West Point, NE
 - 2006: Pop. 3,660 – 12% Hispanic (440 people)
 - 1990: Pop. 3,244 - .02% Hispanic (6 people)
- 24 community residents
 - 12 local residents
 - 12 immigrants

Results*

*Strauss & Corbin (1998)

- Central Phenomenon
 - The major storyline out of which theory is developed
- Causal Conditions
 - Pre-existing factors which greatly influence the central phenomenon
- Context
 - Conditions which influence strategies taken by participants
- Intervening Conditions
 - 'Mediators' which affect the strategies taken by participants
- Strategies
 - Actions which result from the central phenomenon
- Consequences
 - Outcomes of employing the strategies



Conclusions

- Language skills and prior experiences with diversity lead to more positive interactions for immigrants and locals
- Locals with strong community pride based on traditions have more negative interactions

Pride

- Very strong in West Point
 - People with abundance of pride also exhibited strong identity with the community
- Negative relationship between pride and positive views on immigrants
 - Overwhelming sense that 'they' were ruining 'our' community

Examples

- "It's one of the better if not the best small community...it's like Mayberry, that's what it is."
- "We're a German town with a few Bohemians...I don't know why the store wants to sell those Mexican products, I guess they have to...when I see one coming down the aisle, I go the other way."

Examples

- "This an agricultural community full of winners. We have a lot of pride and we don't stay down long."
- "There are just a lot of problems with the Mexicans. They don't learn English, they're always working on their cars and drinking, and they just aren't friendly...I guess I'm not friendly either."

Examples

- "I think our town has a lot of pride. It's 150 years old, rich with German heritage and a leader in agriculture."
- "The Hispanics just don't get involved in anything. They won't help in the community...they just want to take jobs and send the money back home. Not too neighborly in my opinion."

So What?

- Pride is indicative of group identity
- Immigration is perceived as a threat to the group identity
- When immigration is perceived as a threat, negative interactions will be the norm
 - Problematic or Conflictual Outcomes

Recommendations

- Work to develop empathy
 - Reduce 'otherization' of newcomers
 - Explore the immigration experiences of the past & relate them to present
- Create multicultural coalitions
 - Work to improve community together
 - Create new symbols of community

Conclusions

- Personal relationships, children under 18, initiative, and goals for being in the community mediate the intercultural interactions and acculturation strategies of immigrants

Conclusions

- Personal relationships and examples set by key people in the community mediate the intercultural interactions and acculturation orientations of local residents

Recommendations

- Acculturation
 - Begin to compare rural vs. urban processes
- Community leadership
 - Get 'reputational' leaders involved
 - Find ways to foster interethnic relationships
- Extension
 - Language ability crucial
 - Focus on families with children 18 and under

Limitations

- Not generalizable to other communities
 - Experience could be different for other communities
- Latinos were only immigrant group present in West Point
 - Experience could be different for other immigrant populations

Future Research

- Goals for being in community, gender, acculturation, and ethnic identity
- Civic engagement, motivation, acculturation, and ethnic identity
- LMX, acculturation, ethnic identity, OCBs

Question & Answer Time!