



Mechanisms of Latino Migrant Retention: Lived-In Experiences from the Third Age and Implications for Health



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Theoretical Framing

- Traditionally, there was an assimilationist paradigm to describe migrants' changing process.
- Transnationalism "from below."
- We use transnational theory to guide our analyses, with an emphasis on social ties.

Past Research

- Immigrant acculturation is patterned by legal status, SES, push/pull factors, and destination.
- Immigrant experiences before migration and after arrival are important factors in health outcomes.
- Segmented assimilation has been explored but mechanisms of retention remain less understood.

Sample

- Latino immigrants 60 years and older living in Wisconsin.
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews lasting 1 to 6 hours with most interviews lasting around 1.5-2 hours.
- Collected life histories of each participant.
- All but one interview conducted in Spanish, transcribed and coded in Spanish.
- 27 participants from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Peru, and Bolivia.

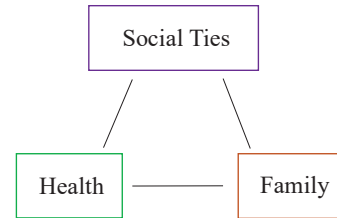
Acknowledgements

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Push and pull factors come from loose ties, children, and health concerns

"So we had to live here. So I had to quit my job... I didn't want to stay because I didn't want to quit my job [back home]. That medicine. That medicine was almost 15,000 pesos a month. **Because it's chemo... So we came [to the US], even though I didn't want to come**—to stay—I don't want to suddenly have to quit my jobs. I quit my job, I sold my house...so we stayed here."
-Mayra, 65 years old, 4 years in WI

"In Wisconsin. We arrived with a family because our house wasn't ready yet... **It was the sister of the girlfriend of my nephew.** We stayed with them for 15 days."
- Veronica, 82 years old, 44 years in WI



"My son is the one who came here first. **And then he made us get our visa to come here** and they gave us the ten year visa. So, since he had his first daughter. We've been coming since then."
- Josefina, 71 years old, 10 years in U.S., 2 years in WI

"My kids, really, my kids were living here in Wisconsin... I was in Lima with my husband. And the situation in Lima was not good. We'll say these last ten years. **My kids would always help me...** I would always come here to help them, too, right?... **My daughter said if we wanted [to come here],** she asked my husband and we came here. That's why we came here."
-Rebecca, 73 years old, 1 year in WI

Older Latinos in Wisconsin have varied reasons for staying in the U.S.

"And I stayed here because my husband doesn't want to leave. My kids say 'Mom, come here' 'No,' says my husband, **'I'm already used to this place and this is where I'm staying.'** And he doesn't want [to leave]. So we are here alone, because **we don't have anyone...** No family at all here."
- Carmen, 76 years old, 22 years in WI

Uncertain Immigration status

Seeking Citizenship

Linear Acculturation

Segmented Assimilation

Sustained Retention

Classic retention

On deportations happening in the U.S. "Believe me, **I don't feel comfortable** because I know that I'm not where I was born, that I have suffered more here than in Mexico. And now **it's very difficult for me to go back,** but I know that one day I'm going to leave, I'm going to have to leave."
- Martha, 71 years old, 14 years WI

"Yes. Yes, I would return. Yes. But they say not until I become a citizen, that **like this I can't leave.** I will go. But last time I went with my husband, we spent about six months there and **one time we stayed so long they almost took my visa** [*casi me iban a mochar la visa*]."
- Sofia, 71 years old, 9 years in WI

On becoming a citizen: I was so happy. So many people would say "Why are you so excited?" and it just really excited me [*a mi me emocionó mucho*] that- it's that **this country has given me so much,** right?... And even more now that I am alone and **I have what I need. Forget about it. I am very happy.**"
- Marisol, 73 years old, 53 years in U.S., 7 years in WI

Data Analysis

- We examined push and pull factors that draw and retain Latinos in Wisconsin and deconstructed the different paths to WI residence. Despite variations in SES, gender, and cultural backgrounds, they all share the same retention outcome.
- We explored patterns of individuals' engagement with familismo, immigrant identity formation, and health consequences; how these can create reasons for immigrants to stay in WI (and the U.S.), which can reinforce or sustain retention.
- To that end, we observed patterns wherein the dynamics surrounding social ties, family, and health were non-linear. Their levels of engagement alongside social background work interdependently and have impacts in later life.

Findings

- Latinos in Wisconsin have different reasons for staying in the U.S.
- First, individuals find satisfaction in living in the U.S.
 - Second, individuals miss their home country; they stay because of familial ties.
 - Third, individuals want to return to their country of origin but are constrained to stay by healthcare reasons.

Discussion

Expanding our understanding of Latino immigrant retention is vital for furthering our understanding of the health impacts of push/pull factors and how they change over time.