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ATTITUDES OF SELECTED LATINO OLDTIMERS TOWARD NEWCOMERS: A PHOTO ELICITATION STUDY

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ABSTRACT—The Latino population in the Midwest has been increasing rapidly. Latinos have been in Omaha, Nebraska, since the late 1800s. However, the development of modern meatpacking plants and a low unemployment rate have resulted in a large population of "newcomers" to the city. Latino "oldtimers" differ from newcomers in their experiences. I examine, through photo elicitation, attitudes of a selected population of Latino oldtimers toward newcomers as contextualized through segmented assimilation. Results indicate oldtimers in this sample have some misgivings about newcomers. Furthermore, I argue that downward assimilation of Latino newcomers is likely given the conditions to which they migrate.

Latinos have been present in Nebraska, and Omaha, since the late 1800s (Sullenger 1934; Nixon 1979, 1989; Grajeda 1976; Aponte and Siles 1994; Aponte and Siles 1997; Rochin and Siles 1996). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, single Mexican men came to work in agriculture and for the railroad. However, an ethnic community began to develop as meatpacking began to offer more stable employment. Families began to emerge in the 1920s. These families formed the basis of the Latino ethnic community in Omaha. Many descendents of these oldtimers have experienced socioeconomic success. More recently, with the development of modern, smaller meatpacking plants, Latino immigration to Omaha has skyrocketed. Between 1990 and 1997, the Latino population in Douglas County has increased by 90% (Lopez 2000). This study examines the attitudes of a selected population of Latino oldtimers toward newcomers and is part of a larger project on the transition of the Latino population in Omaha.

Given the unique historical and structural conditions of Omaha (it is an urban immigrant city built on railroading and especially the meatplants), examining the relationship between co-ethnics against this backdrop contributes to an overall understanding of the immigrant experience and the Latino experience in particular. Others have written on the Latino experience in

the Midwest (Cardenas 1976; Grajeda 1976; Nixon 1979, 1989; Wells 1981; Saenz 1991, 1993, 1996; Valdes 1991; Aponte and Siles 1994; Gouveia and Stull 1995, 1997; Rochín and Siles 1996; Aponte and Siles 1997; Aponte 1998; Munoz et al. 1998 & Munoz and Lopez 2000). However, attitudes of oldtimers (defined in this study as those over 50 years of age and residents of the city since 1960) toward newcomers (defined as first-generation immigrants arriving since 1980) have been unexplored.

Latinos in Omaha: Historical and Structural Conditions

In 1924 the number of Mexicans living in Omaha numbered 1,000, mostly men working as laborers (Nixon 1979, 1989). Men who came to work in the railroads usually came alone, leaving their families behind (Grajeda 1976; Nixon 1979, 1989). In 1910 housing provided to these men by the railroad was located along the tracks and consisted of tents and boxcars. This area was known as "Mexican Town." Mexicans also came to Omaha as strikebreakers from other cities, primarily from Chicago's steel industry. The single male transitory nature of the work and movement to other cities was not conducive to the building of an ethnic community. This was to come later with the development of large meatpacking plants, which offered a more stable occupation, allowing the community to become rooted. Mexicans did not begin to settle as a community in Omaha until approximately 1910. According to the US Name Census, there were four foreign-born Mexicans living in Omaha in 1890. In 1900 five foreign-born Mexicans resided in the city (Grajeda 1976).

Mexicans tended to settle in isolated neighborhood pockets (Nixon 1979, 1989). Four neighborhoods were most notable in the 1920s: Gibson, 7th and Pierce Streets, Brown Park, and parts of South Omaha, the last being the most significant in terms of businesses and social organizations. Several families whose livelihood was connected to the railroad lived in boxcars near the railroad tracks, although some were fortunate enough to live in rented housing. In the areas near the meatpacking plants, especially during the 1920s, several Mexican families found housing. These Mexican neighborhoods were interspersed with other ethnic groups such as Germans, Italians, Poles, and Czechoslovakians.

Grocery stores, restaurants, barbershops, and pool halls serving a Mexican clientele found a home and customers in South Omaha. These establishments not only served the community in terms of supplying goods and services, but they also offered a location in which information could be exchanged, such as where to find housing, jobs, and community events. This area

of Mexican-owned business encompassed the 2400 and 2500 blocks of Q Street and catered to packinghouse workers. The building of businesses and the permanent settlement of families began to bring together the community.

Social organizations began to develop. For example, the Commission Honorifica offered mutual assistance to the community and sponsored social events. In 1924 a Cinco de Mayo celebration was held at the Union Hall in South Omaha. Another organization, Esperanza (later the Mexican Mutual Society), offered social, recreational, and educational events such as dances and English classes. The Mexican Mutual Society also assisted its members in financial and other living needs (*Omaha World-Herald* 1999). The Social Settlement Association, which focused on assimilating immigrants of all ethnic groups, had considerable Mexican participation in their parties, dances, and English classes.

Since 1900, Latinos (primarily Mexican) were sought out and actively recruited to work on the railroads. In 1929 church records suggested that the Mexican population in Omaha was over 2,000. However, this number dropped to 940 in 1930 due to the depression. Some workers left Omaha to work in the beet fields in the western part of the state and many returned to Mexico. With the onset of World War II and the Bracero Program, where contract workers from Mexico were imported for jobs in the fields and factories, the Mexican population began to increase.

The first stockyard was opened in South Omaha (or "South O," as it is known) in 1884 (Larsen and Cottrell 1997). The Union Stock Yards Company of Omaha paid $100,000 to the South Omaha Land Company for 156.5 acres of land to serve as a transfer station enroute to Chicago. Refrigerated boxcars, improved freight service, favorable contracts, and an increase in beef production on the Plains all resulted in the growth of South Omaha as a center of livestock processing. In 1885 Hammond & Co. opened the first slaughterhouse in South Omaha. The packinghouses of Swift, Armour, and Cudahy soon followed. The building of the slaughterhouses and on-site processing and packaging propelled Omaha in meat product output, rivaled only by Chicago and Kansas City.

Founded in 1886 as an independent city (until it was incorporated into Omaha in 1915), South Omaha was a hub of activity. It soon evolved into the nation's largest livestock market. South Omaha became known as the "Magic City" due to its rapid growth. In 1890 South Omaha had a population of over 10,000 people. Prior to incorporation into the city of Omaha in 1915, the boundaries of South Omaha were west from the Missouri River to 44th Street; Grover Street, Hoctor Boulevard, and Spring Lake Park Drive on the north; and Polk and Harrison Streets on the south.

Between 1967 and 1969, three of the large meat-processing plants closed in Omaha (Cudahy in 1967, Armour in 1968, and Swift in 1969). The Wilson plant closed in 1976. Although the big meatplants are gone, the meatpacking industry has made a resurgence. However, the new companies differ from the large plants of the golden days. The plants are smaller, mechanized, and the jobs are not the high-paying union jobs of days past. Some of the newer plants are Greater Omaha Packing Co., Nebraska Beef, Northern States Beef, Monfort, and IBP, Inc. The work in these plants is hard and dangerous. Many Latinos have come to work in these plants, willing to accept the conditions (Saenz 1991; Rochín and Siles 1996; Gouveia and Stull 1997). These newcomers tend to settle in South Omaha (Lopez 2000).

Population and Birth Rate: Census data indicate that in 1930, about the time the sample of respondents were born, the number of persons in Omaha born in Mexico numbered 399 (Lopez 2001). More recent American Community Survey data reveal that the noninstitutionalized Latino population in Douglas County has increased by almost 90% between 1990 and 1997 (Lopez 2001). The birthrate of Latinos is also a factor contributing to the increase in this population (Lopez 2001). The Mexican 1998 birthrate increased almost five times in the eight-year span from 1990 to 1998, approaching 10% of the total births for the city in 1998. The rate for non-Latino whites remained the same during the same time frame. If all Latino births (i.e., not just Mexican births) were considered for 1998, they would account for a little over 12% of the total births in the city. These numbers suggest the Latino population has become a critical mass in the city and the figures foretell of the increasing "Latinoization" of Omaha.

Social and Economic Indicators: Although Latinos are represented in higher status occupations, they are concentrated in semiskilled and low-skilled occupations compared to non-Latino whites (Lopez 2001). Latinos have a higher rate of unemployment than non-Latino whites, but they experience a higher rate of poverty and have a higher percentage of households headed by women (Lopez 2001). It is unknown if persons in these categories are new arrivals or long time residents. The median income for Latinos is lower than that of non-Latino whites. The number of Latinos with bachelor's degrees is slightly higher than the national trend, in which 9.2% of the nation's Latinos possess degrees (Rumbaut 1996).

The Latino community in Omaha consists of both oldtimers and more recent arrivals. Segmented assimilation is a useful framework in which to understand the relationship between the groups.

Segmented Assimilation

Segmented assimilation suggests the sector of society that immigrants enter at their place of destination affects their adaptation experience (Portes 1995; Portes and Zhou 1999; Zhou 1999). For some, assimilation results in upward mobility and success while for others assimilation has a downward effect. Factors influencing the direction of mobility include proximity to native co-ethnics, degree of social capital, and the level of social ties within the ethnic community (Portes 1995). Immigrants tend to settle in inner-city areas where poor economic conditions exist and children attend public schools. It is in these public schools that the children of immigrants encounter native co-ethnics who have experienced discrimination and have developed an adversarial attitude toward the majority group (Rumbaut 1994). One aspect of this adversarial attitude is the belief that education does not result in upward mobility and pursuing education is disparaged (i.e., downward assimilation). These beliefs are in contradiction to those of the immigrant children's parents, who espouse following the path of hard work to access rewards in the new homeland. The closer an immigrant group is to native co-ethics, the more likely downward assimilation will occur among children in the immigrant group.

Social capital is "the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures" (Portes 1998:6). Benefits can include access to employment and business opportunities and material goods and services. Access is freely given in a reciprocal type of arrangement. The extent to which the individual can access these benefits and social networks is their degree of social capital (Portes 1995). Social capital is influenced by type of ethnicity, reactive or linear. Reactive ethnicity develops out of bonds formed due to experiencing discrimination, being categorized as a homogeneous group, and being viewed in derogatory terms by the majority group. Linear ethnicity is the fluid transmission and maintenance of culture from the place of origin to the place of destination. Reactive ethnicity contributes to an adversarial attitude toward the majority group, whereas linear ethnicity results in the formation of community institutions similar to the place of origin. These institutions create an environment that reinforces cultural norms and offers opportunities. If linear ethnicity exists more social capital is available. For parents, this translates into an additional source for the reinforcement of cultural norms among their children (i.e., co-ethnics in the community). Among children, a linearly ethnic community means an increased ability to access resources

available in the community. The greater the degree of social capital, the less likely downward assimilation will occur.

Social capital is related to the concept of structural holes. If the ethnic community lacks social networks, structural "holes" are created. When gaps exist, parents are less able to guide their children as they pursue goals because of the formation of inter-ethnic contacts among the youth. In this situation, downward assimilation is more likely. Therefore, it is important for the ethnic community to have a variety of social connections to lessen the incidence of these holes in the community (Portes 1995).

Segmented assimilation suggests the availability of community resources increases upward mobility and lessens the possibility of downward assimilation. Community resources can be translated into social capital. If resources are available, multiple economic, social, and cultural institutions and programs can be available for the ethnic community. This lessens the structural gaps, strengthens the community, and makes upward social mobility more likely.

Methods

The study is conducted in the tradition of visual sociology (Becker 1974). Photo elicitation is a particular tool used by visual sociologists; it gives the researcher "an excellent source of data about how members of communities understand their environment" (Gold 1994:330). In this process, respondents familiar with a subject matter under investigation are asked to comment on the content of the photograph related to the topic. The photographs act as a stimulus for respondents to offer insights that might otherwise not be accessible by conventional interviewing.

Thirteen photographs were selected from 100-plus photographs taken as part of a larger study. Places associated with Latino history, transitions, and presence were photographed. Sometimes, the "old" and the "new" overlapped (e.g., Our Lady of Guadalupe Church has long served, and continues to serve, the community). The basis for selecting photos developed out of the purpose of this study, to examine the Latino ethnic community and analyze transitions. With this purpose as a guide, and on the basis of previous research on immigrant communities (Portes 1995; Portes and Rumbaut 1996; Rochín 1996), three dimensions were developed as the primary focus of analysis: history and transitions, presence, and issues. It was along these dimensions that photographs were selected. Photographs representing history and transitions included the stockyards, the Livestock Exchange Building, Nebraska Beef, and IBP, Inc. (Figs. 1-4). Jacobo's

Figure 1. The Old Stockyards. South Omaha was built around these yards near 28th and L Streets. Many European and Latino immigrants found work here and in the surrounding meatpacking houses. Opened in 1884, the yards became by 1955 the largest livestock market in the world, holding that position for 18 years. On 27 October 1999, 56 cows and bulls were sold for the last time at the site, closing 116 years of livestock trading. A business park will be built at the location. In the background is Johnny's Cafe, built in 1926 by a Polish immigrant. Johnny's was frequented often by stockyard and meatpacking workers and their familes. At one time, an on-site butcher shop was located in the bottom floor of the restaurant.

Mexican grocery store, La Popular Video, Our Lady of Guadalupe, Chicano Awareness Center, a wall mural, and El Museo Latino (Figs. 5-10) were selected as representations of the Latino presence. Photographs suggestive of community issues were a sign advertising assistance for immigration problems and the mayor marching in the Cinco de Mayo parade (Figs. 11 and 12). Twelve photographs were used for two reasons. First, Gold (1991) successfully used 13 photographs in his photo elicitation study on ethnic entrepreneurship; because the theme of this study and his are similar, the use of 12 photographs was deemed appropriate. Secondly, it was felt that closely viewing and discussing more than 12 photographs would be tiring for the respondents, as many were elderly. If the respondents were tired, this could negatively effect the quality of the data obtained. This was borne out in the interviews, as toward the end of the album, by photographs 9 and 10, some respondents began to lose their energy in recounting stories related to the photographs.

Figure 2. The Livestock Exchange Building. Built in 1926, this was the center of business during the glory days of the stockyards. Several respondents told of renting the ballroom to hold Mexican dances in the 1950s and 1960s.

As the photo album was opened, the respondent was presented with two photographs, one on each page of the album. The respondent was first directed to the photograph on the left-hand side of the album and then to the right. The script for the interviewer read, "Please tell me as much as you can about the photograph, such as where it is, what you know about it, or any stories you have about what is shown in the photo." Initially, respondents would identify the place, when it was built, and sometimes who owned the business or how often they visited the establishment, if at all. As they thought more about the photo, stories emerged. When respondents told their stories, they personalized the photographs. Here I discuss the most common

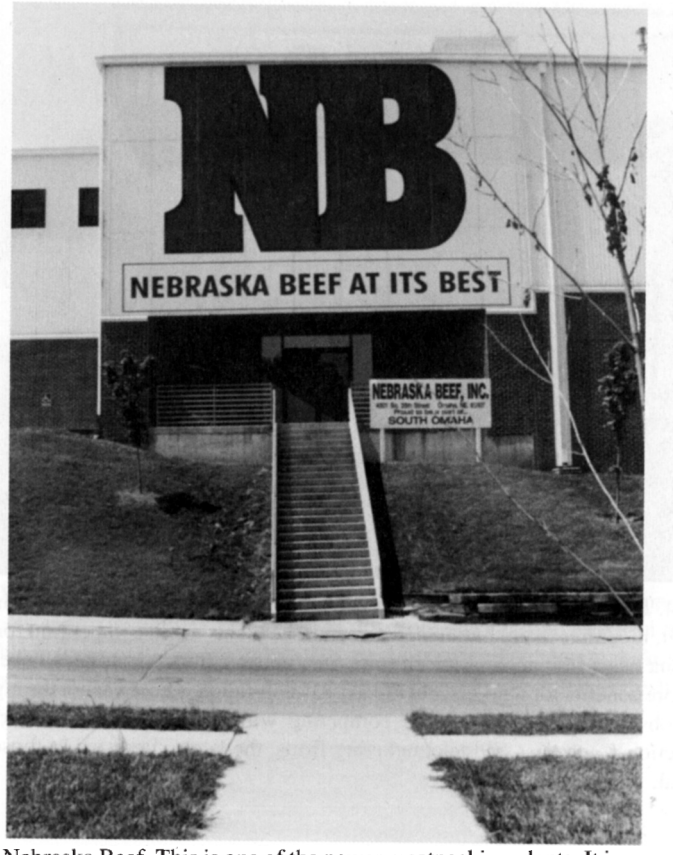

Figure 3. Nebraska Beef. This is one of the newer meatpacking plants. It incorporates an assembly line as part of its processing. Conveyer belts and other devices move a carcass through the plant with amazing speed and efficiency. According to the plant personnel manager, about 70% of the workforce is Latino, most Mexican but also a good number of Central Americans. The majority of the Latino workers at these modern plants are newcomers. The work is grueling and dangerous.

theme that developed among the respondents as prompted by the photographs—that of sentiment toward newcomers.

Respondent Characteristics: Ten respondents were selected, as this number allowed for a manageable analysis of the detailed data obtained through photo elicitation. A staff member at a university in Omaha familiar with the Latino community was approached and asked to assist in locating respondents. The criteria were that respondents be at least 50 years old and

Figure 4. IBP, Inc. This modern plant is located across the Missouri River in Council Bluffs. It, too, hires many Latino newcomers. The plants are in competition for workers, as Omaha has a low unemployment rate (just under 2.0%). Meatplants have begun to offer more benefits for workers, but the work is non-union. These are not the high-paying union jobs of the old days. Also competing with the meatplants for workers are construction companies and telemarketing firms, the latter interested in those who are bilingual.

residents of Omaha since 1960. The first interviewee was an uncle of the staff person. The remaining respondents were obtained through a snowball type of sampling, that is, interviewees were asked at the conclusion of the session if they knew of others (meeting the criteria) who they thought would be good sources of information.

Eight of the 10 respondents were men. The average age of both men and women was 67.5 years, the youngest participant being 51 and the oldest 75 years of age. All had lived in Omaha their entire adult lives. One woman was born in Mexico and migrated with her parents when she was an infant. Half of the respondents' parents were born in Mexico. Most of the respondents had worked in meatpacking at one point in their lives, several having careers in the business and now retired. Three of the respondents were self-defined professionals.

Data Analysis: Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were entered into *Ethnograph* and a data file created by

Figure 5. Jacobo's. Once the site of a shoe store, Jacobo's came to this location on 24th and L Streets approximately 11 years ago. At this store one can find Mexican products not available in times past. For example, all of the necessary ingredients to make *tamales* or *menudo* can be found at Jacobo's. When entering the store, the smell of fresh cooked *carne* (meat), spices, and *pan dulce* (sweet bread) greets the shopper.

combining all of the individual interviews. Coding was open and allowed to rise out of the data, that is, the grounded theory technique (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990). Responses were coded until categories were exhausted. Many responses were cross-coded. For example, one respondent spoke of service in the military and then began to discuss his involvement in G. I. Forum. Sections of his response were coded as "military" and sections also coded as "G. I. Forum." This procedure resulted in a list of 30 codes.

Results and Interpretation

Oldtimers took care to distinguish themselves from newcomers, those Latinos who had recently immigrated to the city. It was recognized that the newcomers brought some positive qualities to the community. For example, some were seen as hard workers who kept their houses neat and clean. Also

Figure 6. La Popular Cine Video. This is one of the newer establishments in South Omaha. Not only does La Popular sell and rent Spanish-language videocassettes, but it carries *ropa para todo la familia* ("clothes for the whole family"). Of interest is the decoration of the storefront windows—every space is covered with posters or pictures (e.g., Jesus, film stars, advertisements). This is very similar to storefronts in Mexico.

oldtimers seemed to be pleased at the growth of the community, because newcomers brought more Latino-oriented businesses. One man stated:

> I'm amazed at some of the people that are coming. Excluding the people that are dealing with drugs, besides those because that is sad, you know, that you have so many of these people that are bringing in drugs. Besides those that are, there are people that are hard-working, they are looking, you know, to better themselves. They are buying real estate and I know people that are undocumented that have real estate. . . . I think they want the same wants and needs that we have, they also want a place, a better place to live, and they want their kids to go to school.

A woman, commenting on newcomers, said:

> These people are good people, they are just here looking for work. They keep up their home, they don't bother anyone. I don't know,

Figure 7. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. In 1928 Our Lady of Guadalupe began to minister regularly to Omaha's Latino community. For a time, masses were held at a store front at 5027 South 25th Street. The church has become an integral part of the Latino community. It opened at its present location on 23rd Street in South Omaha on 8 June 1951. One respondent stated, "The parish has been here since the '20s and I think it started over on Q Street but I remember as a kid going there. I made my first communion, my confimation there. My wife and I got married there. It's an institution and my relationshp to the Catholic religion is represented in that church." All of the respondents had some relationship or experience with the Church (e.g., their marriage ceremony, active involvement, baptism).

> I wish my mom and dad would have had it as good as these people do . . . and these Mexican people, I think they are really going to go somewhere. Because we are getting some smart, smart kids in this parish.

Recognizing the contribution newcomers have made to the economy, a Latino businessman suggested:

> There's a different culture of immigrants coming in and they're not as light-colored as the immigrants that this plant recognizes. But that stream—available work, energy, entrepreneurship—continues to happen. And that is what's going to keep South Omaha continuing to grow.

Figure 8. The Chicano Awareness Center. The center opened 16 September 1971. Created to address issues in the community, the center operates as an outreach, educational, and informational entity invested in improving the quality of life for Latinos in Omaha. Among some of the respondents, the center was initially viewed as "radical." (One man stated, "They got themselves a little store down there on 25th Street and they had posters of Che, the communist from Cuba and all that, you know.") However, the center is now perceived as being beneficial to the community. As one man said, "They've done a lot of good things in the community."

However, the general sentiment toward newcomers tended to be lukewarm. Even in the examples of positive statements above, there are some misgivings about the newcomers. Although not hostile toward their co-ethnics, oldtimers expressed concerns over what they perceived to be some negative aspects of the new migrants. In the first example, the respondent speaks of the "hard-working" newcomers but prefaces his statement with "so many of these people are bringing drugs." In the second example, the woman acknowledges that "these people are good" but somehow have an easier experience of adjustment than oldtimers ("I wish my mom and dad would have had it as easy as these people do"). In the third example, although the respondent recognizes the economic vitality newcomers bring, he comments on "the different culture of immigrant coming in," implying a distinct difference between oldtimers and newcomers, even a color gradient.

Figure 9. Mural. This mural is located just off of 24th Street next to Nena's Mexican Products and Groceries. Respondents found the murals pleasing and took pride in the depiction of Mexican culture in a public venue. The brightly colored paintings are rarely vandalized with graffiti. Most felt that this was a sign of respect. Murals such as these are common in barrios with larger Latino populations (e.g., East Los Angeles). Their recent appearance in Omaha suggests the growing presence of Latinos in the city.

In interviews with oldtimers, it was not uncommon for them to refer to newcomers as "those people' or "the Mexican people" (even though the respondent was of Mexican descent). Newcomers were also referred to as "this other element" and "these new people." These statements have the effect of establishing a marked difference between the speaker and the object, between the oldtimer and the newcomer. A variation on the belief of newcomers having an easier time than oldtimers was manifested in attitudes toward language. One woman stated:

> I don't believe we should change for them. I don't. Just like putting signs in front of the post office with directions for them. My mother learned directions. My mother learned to go to the grocery store and buy her groceries the hard way, you know. Why can't these people learn?

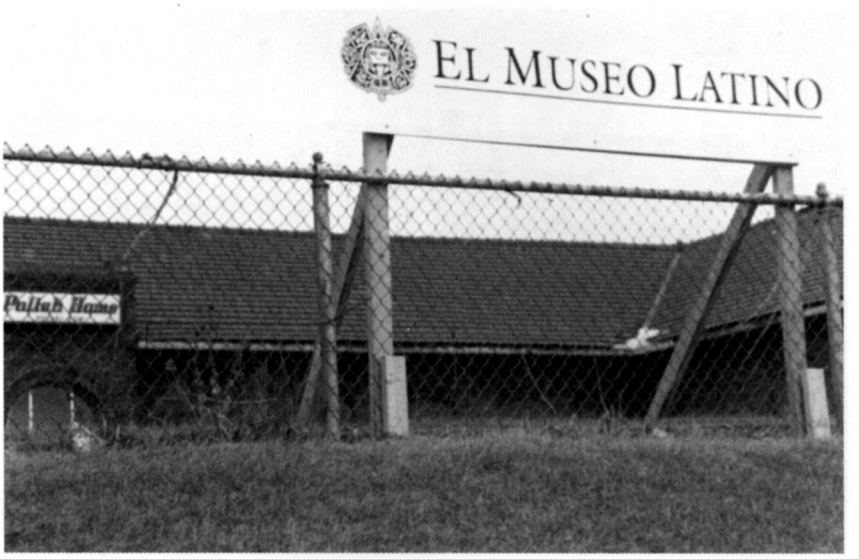

Figure 10. El Museo Latino. El Museo Latino sponsors artistic and cultural events year round and is noted for bringing nationally and internationally known artists and exhibits to Omaha. This photograph was taken while El Museo was renting half of the building from the Polish Home. However, the entire buliding was subsequently bought by El Museo and was dedicated in September 1998. The two signs are poignant symbols of the transformation of the ethnic community in South Omaha.

The perception that some newcomers were lawbreakers was prevalent. Of particular concern was how this "lawlessness" effected the perception of all Latinos:

> [Newcomers] come here from the boonies where they don't have no laws, no restrictions, and that puts a different color on the grassroots people, you know. The first thing they [whites] think of is Mexicans.

And,

> The oldtimers, they had their own ways and they were here to work and they worked and they respected the authorities, you know. Why, you wouldn't dream of doing something, you know, to go to jail. . . . They [newcomers] commit a crime, they leave, and it's the poor people that have been here all their lives that they are ruining their reputation.

Figure 11. Immigration Problems? Issues associated with immigration are a reality in South Omaha. As newcomers continue to migrate to Omaha, some view them with fear and mistrust, creating an environment in which all persons of Mexican descent are suspect. This advertisement is located on 24th Street in South Omaha.

Related to law is the belief that some newcomers have brought drugs and gangs with them, as expressed in the following:

> A lot of people tell me that people coming in here for business they are in dealing and illegal stuff and dope . . . as you know we've got gangs and they put their graffiti on one of my apartments.

Another man stated:

Figure 12. Mayor Hal Daub and Spouse at *Cinco de Mayo* Parade. This photograph of the mayor, as representative of the city, was included to assess how respondents viewed their relationship with the city. However, respondents tended to focus on their perception of Mayor Daub. The results were mixed. Some felt the mayor was doing his job and serving the city well. Others felt it would take more than carrying a hat in a parade to truly address the needs of the Latino community.

> With the arrival of them [newcomers] it seems like a drug problem came in with them. I won't say that there wasn't a gang problem here because there was, there's always been gangs here in Omaha, you know. But they weren't like they are now, you know, people shooting and everything like that.

Segmented assimilation suggests the closer the proximity of newcomers to native co-ethnics, the more likely downward assimilation will occur among their children (Portes 1995). This argument assumes native co-ethnics in urban areas have experienced discrimination and have formed an adversarial relationship with the majority group. Although oldtimers reported experiencing instances of discrimination (Lopez 2001), an adversarial attitude toward the majority group was not detected in this sample. A possible explanation for the absence of an adversarial relationship is that the linear ethnicity expressed in this sample of oldtimers buffered the effects of discrimination. Furthermore, respondents reported the availability of well-paying jobs, particularly in meatpacking, when they entered the job market.

The lack of economic conflict may have lessened ethnic conflict for oldtimers.

Newcomers have come to Omaha under quite different conditions. Comparatively, the rate of Latino immigration to the city is greater today than it was when oldtimers arrived, thus making Latinos (particularly newcomers) more visible. This visibility may increase the degree of xenophobia and racism among some in the majority group. A negative reaction by the majority group toward newcomers can contribute to an adversarial relationship. Furthermore, newcomers are migrating to the more impoverished sectors of South Omaha (Lopez 2000), increasing the potential for downward assimilation. As evidence of this, Latinos drop out from school at a disproportionate rate compared to other groups (Lopez 2001). Lastly, the tenuous relations between the majority group and newcomers (Lopez 2001) suggests that any bonds that develop among newcomers will be based on reactive ethnicity, thus impeding the development of social capital and creating structural holes.

The prevailing attitude of oldtimers toward newcomers was one of guarded distance. What, then, may explain the attitude of oldtimers in this sample toward newcomers? I suggest it is a function of class, assimilation, and generational differences. Compared to newcomers, oldtimers fare better socioeconomically and have experienced a degree of upward mobility. They tend to live in nicer homes, have newer automobiles, and many of their children are professionals (Lopez 2001). Previous research has found Latinos in South Omaha tend to have poorer English skills than other Latinos in the city (Lopez 2000). Although, clearly, not all Latinos who live in South Omaha are newcomers, newcomers tend to live in South Omaha and oldtimers and their descendents have out-migrated (Lopez 2001). As such, using language as a proxy for assimilation, it can be argued that oldtimers are more assimilated. If oldtimers are more assimilated, they may be reflecting an attitude more similar to the majority group in sentiment toward newcomers. In Omaha, ethnographic data indicates some descendents of European immigrants (e.g., Poles) who immigrated to the city in the 1920s (i.e., non-Latino white oldtimers) felt Latino "newcomers" were negatively affecting the city (Lopez 2001). In addition, as the name implies, oldtimers may possess a differential world view than that of the newcomer. Newcomers tend to be younger than oldtimers, and concerns expressed may have been a reflection of a differential value system, a system borne out of the depression and World War II eras, one that contextualizes present experiences with "when *I* was growing up. . . ."

Conclusion

The results of this sample revealed that oldtimers have some misgivings about newcomers. The basis for this attitude lies in differential class, immigration, and generational experiences. Furthermore, it is suggested that newcomers have entered a segment of Omaha society that facilitates their downward assimilation. Oldtimers did not come to the city under such conditions. It is this difference in the immigration experience that contributes to the attitude of oldtimers toward newcomers in the city of Omaha.

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