NEXO

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The Midwest's Premier Latino Research Center

HOUSEHOLD POVERTY Among Latinos in the Midwest

The Influence of Race/Ethnicity, Location, and Local Opportunity Structures

by Jean Kayitsinga, JSRI

Latinos are the second largest ethnic group (next to White Americans), the largest ethnic minority group, and the fastest growing population in the United States. In 2008, the Latino population was estimated at 46.9 million, representing 15.5% of the total U.S. population. The Latino population in the Midwest in 2008 was estimated at 4,263,987, representing 6.4% of the total population. Though one of the smallest regional concentrations in the country, Latinos in the Midwest increased by more than 1.1 million persons between 2000 and 2008, or by 35.2%. Latino population growth in the Midwest is primarily due to international immigration and in-migration from other regions of the United States, and is fueled by local labor market opportunities, particularly the shift of meatpacking industries from urban to rural areas. At the same time, a disproportionate number of communities in the Midwest have been losing their non-Latino population. These demographic changes have substantive implications for the communities experiencing them.

Restructuring of the Midwestern economies has created not only new structures of work, but it has also stressed and constrained choices available to workers in different labor markets and at home. These economic changes have been linked to the degradation of economic well-being of many families, race and gender inequality, increased poverty, a more polarized class structure, and a decline in employment opportunities (Tickamyer et al., 1993).

American ideology holds that individuals with lower levels of education and job experiences are employed in low-wage jobs and therefore likely to be in poverty. Alternatively, individuals with higher education and better job experiences should earn higher wages and hence are less likely to be poor. These views are used to explain why race/ethnic minorities, who tend to have lower levels of education, are in low-wage jobs. Human capital theorists tend to emphasize the same relationships (Becker, 1964; Lichter et al., 1993).

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MICHIGAN MIGRANT HOUSING INSPECTION PROGRAM IN CRISIS

by Elinor Jordan, Legal Research and Writing Scholar, JSRI & MSU College of Law

Migrant farmworkers play an important role in the agricultural industry and contribute significantly to the Michigan and U.S. economy. Each time we bite into an apple or serve blueberry muffins, we form a direct connection with the migrant farmworkers who last came into contact with that fruit. For decades, migrant workers' labor and human rights issues have been key concerns for labor advocates, policymakers and researchers.

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JULIAN SAMORA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
TWENTY YEARS AND COUNTING

From the Director

Rubén O. Martínez

For the past 20 years, the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI) has been actively engaged in the generation, dissemination and application of knowledge on Chicano and Latino community issues in the Midwest and across the nation. In that process it has also been instrumental in the professional development of students and scholars, and in promoting public forums on key forces and trends in our society. Indeed, major societal changes have occurred since the Institute's inception.

Technological, demographic, and globalization forces have transformed the daily lives of people not only here but across the globe. As these processes have unfolded, the status of Latinos has not improved substantially; and in some areas, it has deteriorated. Within this context, JSRI continues to focus on key issues facing our communities and the larger society, primarily by focusing on the results of a summit on Latino issues and an interstate initiative on Latino and immigrant communities.

STATEWIDE SUMMIT ON LATINO ISSUES

Recently, JSRI hosted a statewide summit on Latino issues. Participants identified the following as key challenges: **1**) education, **2**) immigrant rights, **3**) health and health care, **4**) civic engagement; **5**) media portrayals of Latinos, **6**) economic development, **7**) jobs and employment, **8**) Latino-focused Statewide Network, **9**) gender relations, and **10**) civil rights and discrimination.

For improvements to occur in these areas, Latinos must organize themselves, build capacity, and exert the influence necessary to bring about desired changes. As Frederick Douglass once said, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." At the same time more research is needed to inform those who seek to make improvements among Latino communities and the larger society.

In addition, this past year JSRI was active in the development of an interstate initiative focusing on "Latinos and Immigrants in Midwestern Communities." Organized as North Central Education/Extension Research Activity 216 (or **NCERA 216**), it promotes collaborative research, education and outreach among scholars and practitioners across the twelve Midwestern states in the following six areas: **1**) promoting family involvement in education, **2**) advancing entrepreneurship and economic development, **3**) building immigrant-friendly communities, **4**) building diverse organizations, **5**) strengthening Latino families, and **6**) expanding civic engagement.

Although developed separately from the issues identified at the summit, the overlap is clear and fertile for collaboration as the two efforts move forward. In November, JSRI will host a meeting for **NCERA 216** participants to develop an organizational structure that will facilitate its work over the next five years.

Finally, JSRI's 20th Anniversary Conference on "Latino/as in the Midwest" following the **NCERA** meeting will feature panels focusing on these and other critical issues. Scholars and practitioners will share the results of their work as they seek to build new relationships that will enhance our capacity to contribute to the stock of knowledge, its dissemination, and its application. As JSRI looks to its next 20 years it invites participation by those interested in the building of a truly inclusive, just, and more vibrant society through research-informed transformational practices.

NEXO

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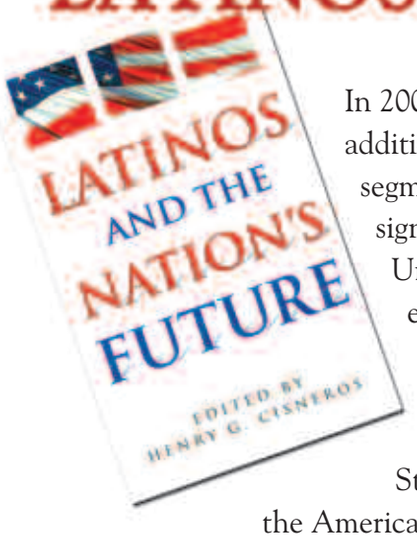
LATINOS AND THE NATION'S FUTURE

A BOOK REVIEW BY JENNIFER TELLO BUNTIN



In 2003, Latinos became the largest ethnic minority group in the United States. In addition, demographic data show that Latinos are also the youngest and fastest growing segment of the population. The essays brought together in this collection consider the significance of this demographic reality for both Latinos and non-Latinos in the United States. The central premise of the volume is that the conditions, experiences, and potential of Latinos in the United States must be recognized as "a basic shaping force of the American future" (Cisneros p. xiv).

In short, the future of the United States is intimately connected to the experiences of Latinos within it. Cisneros argues that "In order for the United States as a country to continue its advance in this century, it will be necessary for the American Latino community within it to advance far beyond its present condition" (p. 3).

The contributors to this volume include Latino scholars, activists, journalists, and business and political leaders. The included essays are well-written and provide multiple perspectives on the role of Latinos in U.S. society. The authors address both the problems faced by the Latino population, as well as the political and economic potential it possesses. Thus, the intended audience is not only Latino scholars and activists, but mainstream political and economic leaders as well. Policy recommendations by the authors include improved quality and access to education, supporting and encouraging Latino entrepreneurship, and improving general quality of life through increased home ownership, improved housing quality, and better healthcare. In sum, this book would be a useful read for students, as well as others interested in business, politics, and education.

MSU Students Benefit from Samora Endowed Scholarships

Maria Jacome

The two recipients of this fall's Julian Samora Endowed Scholarships came to Michigan State University under different circumstances, but each — independently — shares a common goal... to somehow help less fortunate Latinos as they struggle to make a life or make ends meet in the United States.

Maria Jacome, a first-generation college student working toward a masters degree in Social Work, and Paul Garza — an undergraduate student aspiring to become a medical doctor — are the latest MSU students to earn $2,000 from an endowed scholarship fund initiated by Julian Samora himself in 1993.

Paul Garza

As a 10 year old, Jacome and her mother moved from Ecuador to start a new life in America. The struggle with language and culture fueled a desire in her to help others overcome the same obstacles, and her plans include the quest for a Ph.D. and a career as a college professor. Garza, on the other hand, was raised by his grandmother and supplemented her meager income by working in the fields and on the construction sites of southern Florida. He realizes his desire for a medical degree remains an ambitious goal, but also hopes that his efforts may inspire others. Both said they achieve personal satisfaction through service to others. — *Danny Layne*

Household Poverty

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Structural explanations of poverty stress the lack of access to opportunities in local labor market areas as the main cause of high levels of poverty among racial/ethnic groups, immigrants, and women (Iceland, 2006; Bluestone & Harrison, 1988). De-industrialization, racial segregation, and discrimination have hindered the economic well-being and mobility of minorities, especially those with lower levels of education and job skills (Alderson & Nielson, 2002; Bluestone & Harrison, 1988).

Spatial explanations of poverty stress the uneven development of places, arguing that access to employment opportunities and associated economic well-being are unevenly distributed across geopolitical spaces (Tickamyer et al., 1993; Lyson & Falk, 1993). The impact of economic restructuring, for example, has been uneven across spaces, affecting individuals, families, and communities in different locations, especially those in non-metropolitan areas and those in central cities of metropolitan areas (Tickamyer & Bokemeier, 1993; Tickamyer & Latimer, 1993; Wilson, 1987, 1996).

Social stratification explanations of poverty stress the hierarchical and uneven access to opportunities across race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and immigrant status. Racial/ethnic minorities are on average more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to have lower levels of education, lower levels of employment, lower wages, and chronic health conditions – all characteristics associated with higher poverty rates (O'Hare, 1996; Iceland, 2006). Women, compared to men, continue to occupy lower economic positions. Women, especially minority female-headed households, are also more likely to be in poverty. Immigrant families are in general at a greater risk of poverty than non-immigrant families and poverty rates are highest among recent immigrants (Starrels, Bould & Nicholas, 1994).

An analysis that bridges the gaps between these conceptual explanations can improve our understanding as to why poverty and economic inequality persist, especially among racial/ethnic groups, and other socially disadvantaged groups. This study addresses four main research questions about household poverty in the Midwest: (1) How do Latinos compare with other racial/ethnic groups on household poverty? (2) Does the association between race/ethnicity and household poverty persist after controlling for gender, household structure, educational attainment, industry of employment and other individual and household confounders? (3) Does the association between nonmetropolitan/ metropolitan labor market area and household poverty persist after controlling for individual and household predictors in a multilevel model? (4) How do local labor market area (LMA) opportunity structures, as measured by both the industry structure and the percentage of good jobs influence household poverty after controlling for individual, household, nonmetropolitan/ metropolitan location, and labor market area compositional and structural characteristics – such as economic disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential stability? Each of these questions is addressed in a multilevel analysis provided below.

Data and Measures

Data are drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data, 2005-2007 for the individual and household characteristics and from the ACS Summary Files (ACS-SF) 2005-2007 for Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMA)-level characteristics. The PUMS is a sample of population and housing unit records from the ACS and Puerto Rican Survey (PRCS). The 3-year ACS PUMS file combines the responses from the 2005, 2006, and 2007 1-year PUMS files and contains data for housing units and persons from households. The analysis in this article only uses the 2005-2007 PUMS data from the 12 states in the Midwest region (Kansas, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, N.D., Nebraska, S.D., and Wisconsin).

The primary level (or level-1) unit of analysis is the household. Only householders of working age (i.e., between 16 and 64 years) are used. Excluded from the analysis are subfamilies within households, military households, households with zero household income,

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and individuals living in group-quarter units. The ACS-SF contains sample data about the characteristics of different geographic units. Summary tables for characteristics of interest at the PUMA level were tabulated and aggregated at the place of work (POWPUMA) using the relationship between PUMAs and POWPUMAs. Thus, the level-2 unit of analysis encompasses both the PUMA place of residence and PUMA place of work and is referred to as labor market area (LMA). For the U.S. Census Bureau confidentiality requirements, PUMA places contain at least 100,000 people.

The outcome measure is household poverty, a dichotomous variable that takes the value of "1" if household income is below 125% of the federal poverty threshold and "0" otherwise. This study uses three main predictors: race/ethnicity, nonmetropolitan/metropolitan residence, and local opportunity structures. Race/ethnicity is constructed from the householder's race and Hispanic origin variables. First, Latino households are distinguished from non-Latino households. Latino households include Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Central Americans, South Americans, and other Latinos. For non-Latino households, race is categorized as White, African American, Asian including Pacific Islander, or other.

The following socio-demographic and household characteristics were used as controls at level-1: householder's age (years); immigrant status (i.e., if foreign born); disability status [if at least the householder, spouse or partner (if present) has a disability limitation]; gender (female vs. male); household structure — formerly married household (divorced, separated, or widowed), never married household, dual-headed married couples, and dual-headed cohabiting with an unmarried partner; educational attainment (highest education of householder and spouse/partner, if present); industry of employment (agriculture, forestry, and fishing; construction/low-wage manufacturing; traditional high-wage industries (high-wage manufacturing, mining, and government); distributional services; high-wage services, and consumer services), and job quality (either the householder and/or spouse/partner, if present, was employed part-time; not working/unemployed; employment in service occupations); and length of residence (years).

At the LMA level, the opportunity structure is measured by the labor market area industrial structure and the percentage of good jobs. Industrial structure is measured by the percentage of residents 16 years or older employed in the following industries: extractive industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining) and government industries (a standardized factor score); low-wage manufacturing (z-score); high-wage manufacturing (z-score); and consumer services (a standardized factor score combining retail trade, art, entertainment and recreational services, and other services such as automotive, repair, and personal services). The quality of jobs available in a labor market area is assessed by the ratio of core industries (traditional high-wage industries and high-wage services) to peripheral industries (agriculture, forestry, and fisheries; construction and low-wage manufacturing; and consumer services) and by the presence of good jobs — a standardized factor score of the following variables: the percentage of residents 16 years or older employed in managerial, professional, and technical occupations and the percentage of information, finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing industries.

At the labor market area, the following structural characteristics are controlled: concentrated disadvantaged — a standardized factor score of the following variables: percentage of non-Hispanic African Americans, percentage of female-headed families with children under 18 years, percentage of residents in poverty, percentage of households on public assistance or receiving cash assistance, percentage of residents unemployed, and percentage of residents 25 years or older with less than high school education; immigrant concentration – a standardized factor score of the percentage of Latinos, the percentage of Asians, and the percentage of foreign-born populations; Residential stability – a standardized factor score of the percentage of owner-occupied housing

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Household Poverty

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units and the percentage of residents who are one year and over and have stayed in the same house in the past year (non-movers). Another control included in the analysis is the population size of each labor market area, transformed in logarithm to reduce skewness.

Statistical Methods

The primary outcome of interest is whether or not a household is in poverty, coded "1" for yes, and coded "0" for no. A multilevel logistic regression model for binary outcomes (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) is used to model the odds that a household in a given labor market area is in poverty. The odds that a household is in poverty are modeled as a function of individual, household, and labor market area characteristics.

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Table 1. Multilevel Logistic Regression of Household Poverty (<125 poverty thresholds) Rates on Individual/Household Characteristics and Nonmetropolitan Location

	MODEL 1	*MODEL 2*	*MODEL 3*	*MODEL 4*	*MODEL 5*
	Coeff. (SE)	*Coeff. (SE)*	*Coeff. (SE)*	*Coeff. (SE)*	*Coeff. (SE)*
FIXED EFFECTS					
Intercept	-3.006 (0.026)	-3.688 (0.032)	-2.562 (0.033)	-3.216 (0.035)	-3.330 (0.036)
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Latino	0.710 (0.044)	0.624 (0.045)	0.201 (0.031)	0.296 (0.034)	0.299 (0.034)
African American	1.112 (0.039)	0.780 (0.041)	0.558 (0.028)	0.581 (0.024)	0.590 (0.024)
Asian	0.064 (0.054)	0.078 (0.052)	0.335 (0.053)	0.244 (0.053)	0.247 (0.053)
Other race	0.653 (0.044)	0.533 (0.040)	0.450 (0.039)	0.412 (0.043)	0.412 (0.043)
GENDER					
Female	0.729 (0.014)	0.430 (0.014)	0.487 (0.014)	0.091 (0.013)	0.091 (0.013)
AGE/DISABILITY STATUS					
Householder's age	-0.042 (0.001)	-0.027 (0.001)	-0.017 (0.001)	-0.022 (0.001)	-0.022 (0.001)
Disability status	1.750 (0.014)	1.664 (0.013)	1.435 (0.013)	0.781 (0.013)	0.780 (0.013)
IMMIGRANT STATUS					
Foreign born	0.492 (0.030)	0.627 (0.031)	0.457 (0.034)	0.500 (0.036)	0.502 (0.036)
HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE					
Cohabiting households		0.810 (0.023)	0.575 (0.023)	0.590 (0.024)	0.590 (0.024)
Formerly married households		1.595 (0.022)	1.440 (0.021)	1.630 (0.023)	1.631 (0.023)
Never married households		1.797 (0.029)	1.776 (0.030)	1.831 (0.028)	1.833 (0.028)
Number of children		0.432 (0.007)	0.423 (0.006)	0.469 (0.006)	0.469 (0.006)
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT					
High school education			-0.773 (0.016)	-0.571 (0.017)	-0.571 (0.017)
Some college education			-1.132 (0.018)	-0.874 (0.017)	-0.874 (0.017)
College education or more			-1.975 (0.024)	-1.485 (0.024)	-1.482 (0.024)
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (YEARS)			-0.159 (0.004)	-0.140 (0.004)	-0.140 (0.004)
INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT					
Agriculture, fishing, and forestry			0.445 (0.043)	0.437 (0.043)	
Low-wage manufacturing				-0.377 (0.025)	-0.379 (0.025)
High-wage manufacturing				-0.872 (0.020)	-0.873 (0.020)
Distribution services				-0.148 (0.021)	-0.149 (0.021)
High-wage services				-0.450 (0.017)	-0.450 (0.017)
JOB QUALITY					
Part-time employment				1.657 (0.019)	1.657 (0.019)
Not working				1.975 (0.019)	1.976 (0.019)
Service occupations				0.456 (0.015)	0.455 (0.015)
LMA CHARACTERISTICS					
Non-metropolitan					0.332 (0.036)
Population (ln)					-0.080 (0.029)
Variance Components					
00	**0.178**	**0.188**	**0.141**	**0.119**	**0.089**

**p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001*

Household Poverty

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The analysis proceeds from examining the household effects to labor market area's effects on households' odds of being poor. The first set of models examines the effects of race/ethnicity (Table 1). The second stage adds household background (household structure and educational levels) and industry of employment (Table 1, Model 2, 3 & 4). The last set of models examines the effects of labor market area characteristics, including nonmetropolitan/metropolitan location (Table 1, Model 5), LMA structural characteristics (economic disadvantage, immigrant concentration, and residential stability) (Table 2, Model 6, Table 2) and opportunity structure (Table 2, Models 7, 8, & 9), and a final model combining individual and household predictors with LMA opportunity structure and structural characteristics (Model 10).

Results

Table 3 displays the results of separate unconditional models of household poverty for men and women. Overall, the average odds of household poverty are estimated at 0.123, which corresponds to an average probability of household poverty of 0.109. Furthermore, these results suggest greater variability

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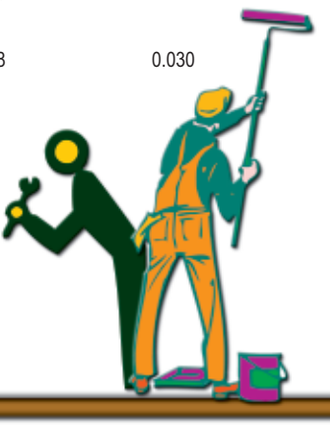
Table 2. Multilevel Logistic Regression of Household Poverty (<125 poverty thresholds) Rates on Individual/Household Characteristics and Nonmetropolitan Location[1, 2]

	MODEL 6 Coeff. (SE)	MODEL 7 Coeff. (SE)	MODEL 8 Coeff. (SE)	MODEL 9 Coeff. (SE)	MODEL 10 Coeff. (SE)
FIXED EFFECTS					
Intercept	-3.313 (0.032)	-3.313 (0.037)	-3.260 (0.033)	-3.271 (0.031)	-3.268 (0.031)
RACE/ETHNICITY					
Latino, intercept	0.296 (0.034)	0.299 (0.034)	0.300 (0.035)	0.293 (0.035)	0.226 (0.035)
Residential stability					-0.045 (0.017)
African American, intercept	0.568 (0.026)	0.591 (0.024)	0.594 (0.024)	0.569 (0.026)	0.619 (0.031)
Economic disadvantage					-0.015 (0.005)
Low-wage manufacturing					0.083 (0.037)
Asian, intercept	0.244 (0.053)	0.248 (0.053)	0.251 (0.053)	0.245 (0.053)	0.134 (0.063)
Immigrant concentration					0.032 (0.014)
Other race	0.411 (0.043)	0.412 (0.043)	0.411 (0.044)	0.408 (0.044)	0.398 (0.040)
LMA CHARACTERISTICS					
Non-metropolitan	0.279 (0.029)	0.281 (0.042)	0.120 (0.042)	0.156 (0.034)	0.147 (0.032)
Population (ln)	-0.048 (0.016)	-0.082 (0.029)	-0.076 (0.024)	-0.050 (0.014)	-0.046 (0.013)
Industrial structure					
Core/periphery ratio		-0.218 (0.089)			
Extractive industries and government			0.031 (0.013)	0.039 (0.009)	0.040 (0.009)
Low-wage manufacturing			-0.068 (0.017)	-0.046 (0.013)	-0.046 (0.012)
High-wage manufacturing			-0.079 (0.022)	-0.038 (0.017)	-0.035 (0.016)
Percentage good jobs			-0.094 (0.012)	-0.059 (0.010)	-0.056 (0.009)
Consumer service			0.029 (0.013)		
Economic disadvantage	0.039 (0.006)			0.029 (0.005)	0.033 (0.005)
Immigrant concentration	-0.049 (0.007)			-0.027 (0.006)	-0.028 (0.005)
Residential stability	-0.076 (0.011)	-0.076	(0.013)	-0.073	(0.012)
Variance Components					
$_{00}$, Intercept	0.041	0.088	0.058	0.030	0.030
$_{30}$, Latino slope					0.034
$_{40}$, African American slope					0.035
$_{50}$, Asian slope					0.080
$_{60}$, Other race slope					0.101

**p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001*

1 Model standard error is based on unit-specific model with robust standard errors.

2 All models include race/ethnicity and labor market predictors and control for other individual and household characteristics in model 4, Table 4.



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in household poverty rates between labor market areas. The LMA-average odds of household poverty range from 0.046 to 0.326.

The results in Table 3 also show that women are more likely than men to be poor. In terms of probabilities, the average odds of being poor is estimated at 0.081 for men and 0.193 for women. The between-LMA variability in odds of household poverty ranges from 0.030 to 0.219 for men and from 0.076 to 0.488 for women, respectively.

Table 4 displays the results of a multilevel logistic regression model of household poverty on race/ethnicity for both men and women. These results indicate that the odds of household poverty are 2.823 (95% CI: 2.668, 2.986) times higher for Latinos; 3.665 (95% CI: 3.415, 3.934) times higher for African Americans; 1.489 (95% CI: 1.348, 1.644) times higher for Asians; and 2.743 (95% CI: 2.522, 2.982) times higher for other racial groups than for non-Hispanic Whites. In this case, the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced from 0.249 (unconditional model) to 0.216, corresponding to about 13% variance reduction.

The results in Table 4 also show that the odds of household poverty not only differ by race/ethnicity, but also by gender. The odds of household poverty are 3.126 times (95% CI: 2.910, 3.358) higher for Latino men; 3.013 times (95% CI: 2.764, 3.284) higher for African American men; 1.727 times (95% CI: 1.538, 1.938) higher for Asian men; and 2.683 times (95% CI: 2.424, 2.970) times higher for men in other racial groups than they are for non-Hispanic White men. In comparison, the odds of household poverty are 2.685 times (95% CI: 2.504, 2.879) higher for Latinas; 3.433 times (95% CI: 3.181, 3.706) higher for African American women; 1.434 times (95% CI: 1.270, 1.620) higher for Asian women; and 2.528 times (95% CI: 2.303, 2.775) higher for women in other racial groups than they are for non-Hispanic White women. In the model for men, the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced by 10% from 0.261 (unconditional model) to 0.235 (see Table 3) while in the model for women, it was reduced by 9% from 0.225 to 0.205.

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Table 3. Multilevel Logistic Regression of Household Poverty Rates — Unconditional Models

	ALL Coeff. (SE)	MEN Coeff. (SE)	WOMEN Coeff. (SE)
FIXED EFFECTS			
Intercept	-2.099 (0.028)***	-2.518 (0.030)***	-1.646 (0.027)***
Variance Components			
τ_{00}	0.249	0.261	0.225
95% CI of LMA-average log-odds of household poverty	(-3.077, -1.121)	(-3.520, -1.516)	(-2.575, -0.717)
95% CI of LMA-average odds of household poverty	(0.046, 0.326)	(0.030, 0.219)	(0.076, 0.488)

**p<.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001*

Table 4. Multilevel Logistic Regression of Household Poverty on Race/Ethnicity and Gender, 2005-2007 (Unadjusted Coefficients)[1]

	ALL Coeff. (SE)	MEN Coeff. (SE)	WOMEN Coeff. (SE)
FIXED EFFECTS			
Intercept	-2.245 (0.027)***	-2.643 (0.029)***	-1.799 (0.027)***
RACE/ETHNICITY			
Latino	1.038 (0.029)***	1.140 (0.037)***	0.988 (0.036)***
African American	1.299 (0.036)***	1.103 (0.044)***	1.234 (0.039)***
Asian	0.398 (0.051)***	0.546 (0.059)***	0.361 (0.062)***
Other Race	1.009 (0.043)***	0.987 (0.052)***	0.927 (0.048)***
Variance Components			
τ_{00}	0.216	0.235	0.205

****p<.001*

1 Unadjusted estimates are from models with only race/ethnicity as a predictor.

Household Poverty

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Table 1 displays the results of a multilevel logistic regression model of household poverty rate on individual and household predictors (full model – both men and women). Model 1 presents coefficient estimates from a model of household poverty on race/ethnicity, controlling for householder's gender, age, disability status, and immigrant status. Exponentiating the log-odds coefficients, these results indicate that Latinos' odds of poverty are exp (0.710) = 2.035 times those of non-Hispanic Whites, on average (95% CI: 1.945, 2.129); those for African Americans are 3.041 times those of non-Hispanic Whites (95% CI: 2.950, 3.135), and those for other racial groups are 1.922 times those of non-Hispanic Whites (95% CI: 1.816, 2.034). The odds of poverty for Asians are not statistically different from those of non-Hispanic Whites. The results in Model 1 also indicate that household poverty is 2.073 times higher among female householders than male householders (95% CI: 2.037, 2,110); 1.635 times higher among immigrant households (95% CI: 1.564, 1.710); and 5.587 times higher among households in which the householder or spouse/partner (if present) has a disability limitation (95% CI: 5.472, 5.705); and that poverty is negatively related to age. The intercept variance, 00, was reduced from 0.249 (unconditional model) to 0.178 (Model 1), corresponding to about 20% variance reduction.

Model 2 in Table 1 introduces controls for household structure and composition. The results in this model show that the odds of poverty for cohabiting households (i.e., single householders living with unmarried partners) are 2.248 [exp (0.810)] times those of married-couple households (95% CI: 2.150, 2.351). As expected, the odds of poverty for single- and formerly married (divorced, separated, and widowed)-headed households are 4.931 times those of married-couple households (95% CI: 4.723, 5.147). The odds of poverty are even higher for formerly-married female headed households — they are about 7.576 times those of married-couple households. The results in Model 2 also show that the odds of poverty for single- and never married-headed households are 6.030 times those of married-couple households (95% CI: 5.699, 6.380). For never-married female-headed households, the odds are 9.272 times those of married-couple households. Notice that adding household structure indicators in the model reduces the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by 12%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 2.035 to 1.866 (95% CI: 1.708, 2.039). Adjusting for household structure also reduces the gap between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by 30%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 3.041 to 2.181 (95% CI: 2.013, 2.363). Introducing household structure in the model also drops the gap between other racial groups and non-Hispanic Whites by 18%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 1.922 to 1.703 (95% CI: 1.575, 1.842).

Model 3 in Table 1 adds controls for educational attainment and length of residence. As expected, the results in Model 3 show that the higher the educational attainment of householder or spouse/partner (if present) the lower the odds of poverty. The odds of poverty for householders with a college education are 0.861 = [1 - exp (-1.975)] times lower than those of householders with less than high school education. Similarly the odds of poverty for householders with some college education are 0.678 [1-exp (-1.132)] times lower than those of householders with less than a high school education. In a similar vein, the odds of poverty for householders with a high school education are 0.538 [1-exp (-0.773)] times lower than those of householders with less.

Notice that adding educational attainment and length of residence in Model 3 significantly reduces the odds ratio describing the gaps between different minority groups and non-Hispanic Whites, implying that one reason non-Hispanic Whites have lower levels of poverty than minority groups is that they are more likely to have higher levels of education. The log-odds coefficient that describes the gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites is reduced by an additional 68%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 1.866 to 1.223 (95% CI: 1.152, 1.299).

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New Faces at the Samora Institute

Antonio Vasquez is a second year dual major in Chicano/Latino Studies and American Studies. Antonio came to MSU last fall after six years with a non-profit human rights organization in Georgia and North Carolina. He received a masters degree in international relations at St. Mary's University in San Antonio and a bachelors degree in Political Science and International Studies at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin. His academic interests relate to Mexican migration, urban community formation, race relations, and human rights.

Dr. Pilar Horner holds a joint appointment with the School of Social Work and JSRI. Her areas of specialization include neighborhoods effects, substance use and misuse, history of social welfare policy, and organizations. She received her PhD from the University of Michigan Joint Social Work and Sociology program.

Ana Rocío Escobar-Chew is a Fulbright scholar born and raised in Guatemala. She is doctoral student at the Family and Child Ecology Department of MSU. She is currently conducting research on "The Oral History of Latinos in Michigan." Rocío has been involved in various research projects addressing Latino populations — cultural adaptation of prevention programs, domestic violence, immigrant families, and clinical interventions for couples. She is also actively involved in delivering mental health services to the Latino community in Lansing. Rocío is a student affiliate in the Violence Against Women, Research and Outreach Initiative of MSU.

Pedro González is originally from Tamaulipas, Mexico. He is currently an undergraduate student majoring in Spanish with two specializations — Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Chicano/Latino Studies. His future goals are to get into graduate school for Social Work and do research on migrant higher education.

Dr. Daniel Vélez Ortiz is an Assistant Professor at MSU with a joint appointment in the JSRI and the School of Social Work. His areas of research are in mental health services, community service integration, Latino older adults, and organizational factors. He is from Puerto Rico and has been in the Midwest since he left the island to study at Purdue University where he earned an A.S. in Organizational Leadership and a B.A. in Psychology. He earned an M.S.W. and a Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Jennifer Tello Buntin received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Chicago in 2009. In her research, she examines the ways that receiving community institutions transform in response to the presence of a transnational immigrant population. Her work investigates the ways that assimilation and transnationalism may occur simultaneously and the implications of this for both immigrant and non-immigrant residents. Dr. Buntin is the recipient of the National Science Foundation's Minority Graduate Fellowship. At JSRI, she continues studying Latinos and immigrants in the Midwest, with particular interest in the ways that they are transforming communities.

STATEWIDE SUMMIT ON LATINO ISSUES

Latino-informed leaders from throughout Michigan came together on July 31, 2009 to participate in the Statewide Summit on Latino Issues. This day-long working summit was a first step toward identifying the challenges facing Latino communities in Michigan today. Using guided discussions and small group activities, consensus was reached on the top ten issues considered the most important to improve the quality of life for Latinos in Michigan.

1. **Education.** This aspect of individual development is essential for understanding and participating in society, and is the key to success in all areas of life. Education systems do not have the cultural capacity to address the educational needs of Latino youth, leading to alienation and high dropout rates among the group.
2. **Immigration Rights.** Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids and public hostility toward Latino communities have resulted in widespread profiling, negative impacts on families, and violations of civil and human rights. Consequently, Latino communities live in fear of enforcement agencies.
3. **Health and healthcare.** These are fundamental needs of all communities. Lack of cultural competence by providers and the absence of bilingual information materials are significant barriers to accessing information and services.
4. **Civic Engagement.** Community participation is a hallmark of U.S. democracy. The political incorporation of Latino immigrants is essential for their full participation in the nation's democratic structures. Bilingual information materials are essential for facilitating this process.
5. **Media Portrayal of Latinos.** The mass media promote negative stereotypes of Latinos and thereby provoke prejudice, hostility and discrimination.
6. **Economic Development.** Information and education programs, especially in the areas of financing and marketing, are critical for promoting and supporting Latino entrepreneurship,
7. **Jobs and Employment.** Workforce development through education and training, and equal and fair treatment in the workplace, are critical for the full incorporation of Latinos in the labor force and for harnessing their full productive potential.
8. **Latino-focused Statewide Network.** Research on Latino issues and a robust statewide network that can mobilize community resources are important for supporting, advocating for and initiating policy development strategies that address the needs of Latino communities.
9. **Gender Relations.** Leadership opportunities for Latinas are key to addressing relations among Latinas and Latinos in the long run. Also, issues of domestic violence and abuse must be addressed in culturally effective ways.
10. **Civil Rights and Discrimination.** Violations of civil rights and racial and ethnic discrimination diminish the life chances of Latinos and negatively impact entire communities. The nation as a whole fails to harness the potential of its citizens and loses ground in an increasingly competitive global environment.

Addressing these issues effectively requires systematic dismantling of the barriers that perpetuate marginalization, promotion of equality and inclusion, and a willingness to cooperate with others for the benefit of the common good. Some issues will require action within the Latino community, and others will require institutional transformation, while others will require political and policy efforts.

Migrant Housing

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Migrant housing conditions, in particular, are a continual concern. Because their pay is low and their work is scattered throughout various rural locations, most migrant farmworkers live in temporary housing provided by their employers (i.e., growers). In Michigan, the Migrant Labor Housing Program (MLHP) is the division of the state's Department of Agriculture (MDA) that is responsible for ensuring the quality and safety of these housing units. This May, the MLHP faced a severe funding crisis that, while temporarily averted, still looms. This article introduces the MLHP and outlines events leading to its financial predicament. Recommendations are made for ensuring the preservation of this important public program that protects the quality of life for thousands of state migrant workers, the productivity of Michigan's hand harvested crops, and Michigan's positive labor and human rights standards.

Michigan's Migrant Labor Housing Program

Before housing in temporary labor camps was regulated by the government, most migrant farmworkers lived in truly deplorable conditions. In 1966, the Michigan Legislature responded to these circumstances by creating a comprehensive system for licensing migrant labor camps to maintain an adequate supply of agricultural workers within the state, to maintain the safety of the food supply, and to protect the health and safety of migrant laborers and the general public (P.A. 289, 1965). This legislation created the Migrant Labor Housing Program (MLHP) to carry out housing inspections. Later, the Public Health Code Act 368 of 1978 mandated that the Michigan Department of Public Health (MDPH) annually inspect and license labor camps housing five or more migratory farmworkers.

In January, 1996, the Shelter Environment Program, which housed the MLHP, was transferred by Executive Order from the Department of Public Health to the newly formed Department of Community Health [E.O. 1996-1(VIII)(1)(k)]. Then, just three months later, the Program was transferred again, this time to the Department of Agriculture (MDA) [E.O. 1996-2 (VII)(1)], where it remains today. Through these transfers, all of the power, responsibility, and funding for the Shelter Environment Program should have gone to the MDA [E.O. 1996-2 (VII)(4)(7)].

In its current form, the MLHP's five licensed sanitarians inspect housing for structural soundness, a safe water supply, washing and bathing facilities, proper heating and ventilation, and other basic health and safety issues (Johnson, 2009). While the staff and responsibilities of the MLHP were transferred from the former Department of Public Health to the MDA in 1996, no funding stream was evidently transferred with the program. This has forced the MDA to rely primarily on funding from the state's general fund. It is not surprising that, although this program is important to the health of Michigan's agricultural industry, its workers, and the overall food supply, it has been considered an "unfunded mandate" by the MDA. The result has been a consistent chipping away at the number of the program's inspectors.

In 2002, three "early out" retirements of licensed sanitarians reduced staff for the MLHP to just five inspectors statewide; these positions were not filled. As a result, the period 2001-2006 saw an 11% decrease in the number of licensed labor housing sites. In addition, very limited discretionary staff time is available for inspectors to respond to complaints of unacceptable conditions in licensed labor camps or to investigate reports of unlicensed camps (Farmworker Legal Services, 2007). At best, inspectors are able to visit camps once during each year, generally pre-occupancy. Repeated visits are only carried out if a complaint is filed. This means that inspectors cannot check for overcrowding, which is a very common problem in migrant labor housing (Johnson, 2009).

In 2005, The Michigan Legislature created a fine protocol to censure unlicensed operators of migrant labor camps. The Public Health Code mandates annual inspection and licensing of labor camps and provides for a fine of $1,000 per day to be levied

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against employers who operate without a license, not to exceed $10,000 [M.C.L. 333.12411(4)]. However, in the experience of farmworker advocates, these fines are very rarely assessed. Clearly, if growers do not believe that they will be fined for operating a migrant labor camp without a license, they are unlikely to seek licensing for their camps.

Since its inception, the MLHP has helped improve migrant labor housing. Unfortunately, the combination of insufficient inspectors and an under-utilized fine protocol has stalled improvements in the conditions of Michigan's migrant labor camps. Only 25% of the migrant labor camps in the state are within the licensing regime, leaving roughly 68,000 farmworkers and their families to live in housing that is not licensed by the state (Johnson, 2009). But even licensed housing may fall short of health and safety norms. When an inspector visits a camp pre-season, he may do one of three things: recommend a license, recommend a license with a list of repairs, or recommend that the premises not be licensed. In the second case, an inspector might recommend a license with a list of repairs only to return the next year and make the exact same list of repairs because there was no opportunity to follow up during the previous season. Moreover, when faced with the reality that they are unlikely to have the opportunity to return to a camp to follow up on issues of non-compliance, an inspector has little incentive to recommend that the premises not be licensed.

The Migrant Labor Housing Program in Crisis

In May of 2009, Executive Order 22 mandated budget cuts to the MDA, $150,000 (or approximately 17.6%) of which were allocated by the Senate Fiscal Agency to the MLHP (E.O. 2009-22; Senate Fiscal Agency Summary of E.O. 2009-22). Just as the harvest season in Michigan was heating up, the MDA announced that it would only be able to license about 50% of the remaining housing. Further, the MDA announced that it would randomly select those camps that would be inspected for licensing and then provide the list of camps that would not be reached to the growers (Swartz, 2009). As the stream of migrants coming to Michigan to pick strawberries and blueberries increased in early June, about 75 of the camps that they would live in were not slated to be inspected (MDA Camp Inspection Selection Status List, 2009). Moreover, the operators of those camps had been advised that no inspection would be taking place.

Many agencies mobilized in response to this funding crisis. The Interagency Migrant Services Council ("IMSC"), Department of Human Services ("DHS"), and Farmworker Legal Services ("FLS") were among those that cautioned about the severe consequences of neglecting the program further. These entities, among others, pressed the state government to fully fund the program. In late June, thanks to the cooperation and hard work, funds were allocated from the Department of Labor and Economic Growth to maintain the MLHP for the remainder of the 2009 fiscal year. However, the future of the MLHP still hangs in the balance.

Migrant Farmworkers and Public Health

Although other state and federal agencies bear some responsibility for protecting the health and safety of migrant farmworkers, the MLHP is the first, and primary, line of defense to protect migrant laborers from unsafe and unsanitary housing, and to protect the public from the health threats created when hand harvesters live in crowded, unsanitary conditions. Due to over-crowding in several blueberry camps in Southwestern Michigan this summer, public health authorities from Van Buren and Allegan Counties administered emergency supplies of "TAMIFLU" in order to combat a localized outbreak of the H1N1 virus ("swine flu") among migrant worker families (Intercare Migrant Health Clinic, 2009).

In order to effectively ensure safe and healthy housing for Michigan's migrant farmworkers, its inspection regime should be improved in several

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ways. First, inspections of migrant labor camps should take place both pre-season and post-occupancy in order to maximize compliance with occupancy and upkeep standards. Second, enforcement of state and federal standards for migrant labor housing should be carried out with a focus on previous "bad actors." Third, the MLHP should inspect the housing of those camps that house fewer than five workers in addition to larger camps. Additionally, those employers who choose to operate camps without a license should be fined immediately, and sufficient staffing should be available to provide for follow-up visits to enforce recommended repairs and monitor occupancy requirements. It would be necessary to restore staffing of the MLHP to at least pre-2002 levels in order to implement these improvements.

Recently, the MDA has explored one possible solution to the MLHP's funding crisis – the initiation of a fee system that would charge those who seek a license. There are concerns, however, that a fee based system will not bring in sufficient resources to maintain the already inadequate status quo, much less allow the MLHP to become a more robust entity that is capable of protecting workers and the public. Also, imposing an "application fee" would increase the unintended incentive for operators to forego the licensing process all together (Johnson, 2009). Another compelling argument against the fee-based funding approach is the danger of "agency capture" – the situation that occurs when an industry controls and influences government agencies that are supposed to regulate it. If growers, represented by the Michigan Farm Bureau and Commodities Representatives, provide the financing behind the MLHP, it is very likely that these entities will gain further influence over the operation of the program. In order to carry out its essential functions, the autonomy of MLHP must be maintained and safeguarded, otherwise it is likely to be diminished if a fee based system were implemented to fund the program (Martinez, 2009).

An alternative response to the need for funding is encapsulated in the Michigan Occupational Health and Safety Administration (MIOSHA) "State Plan" which authorizes the State of Michigan to implement certain obligations of the federal Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA), pursuant to Act 154 of P.A. 1974. Michigan's State Plan for implementation of the OSHA provides for "the full-time administrative and field staff of 8.5 persons supplemented seasonally with part-time employees to conduct field inspections at all migrant labor camps on a statewide basis. Inspections are conducted annually before the agricultural labor season starts to ensure that all camps meet minimum standards" (Occupational Safety and Health Administration, MIOSHA "State Plan," 1974-75). If the MDA's current MLHP is essentially the same as the program formerly housed in the MDPH and described in the "Migrant Labor Camp Program" section of the State Plan, it would follow that the current USDOL/OSHA federal contribution should include funds that are, or could be, attributed to Michigan's implementation of this program described in the State Plan.

Conclusion

For over a decade, the MLHP's importance has been overlooked and its effectiveness systematically reduced. The funding crisis this summer has brought to light the important role this program plays in ensuring the safety and health of Michigan's migrant farmworkers. From a human rights perspective, these workers deserve safe and comfortable living conditions. From an economic perspective, the quality of their living conditions contributes to their productivity and ultimately that of the agricultural industry and the state economy. At this point, protecting and strengthening the MLHP appears to be a costly and challenging undertaking. The federal government may be a potential resource in funding this endeavor. However, given that food security and a productive work force are of the utmost importance to Michigan agriculture, it is in the state's interest to improve and preserve the MLHP.

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Adjusting for these controls also reduces the gap between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 28%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 2.181 to 1.748 (95% CI: 1.655, 1.846). Introducing these controls also drops the gap between other racial groups and non-Hispanic Whites by an additional 16%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 1.703 to 1.568 (95% CI: 1.452, 1.694). However, adding these controls made the coefficient for Asians significant. When education and length of residence are controlled, the odds of poverty for Asians are 1.398 (95% CI: 1.1261, 1.550) times those of non-Hispanic Whites.

Model 4 in Table 1 assesses the influence of industry of employment while controlling for measures of job quality. The results reveals that the odds of poverty for householders who were employed in agriculture, fishing, and forestry industries are 1.561 times those of householders in consumer-service industries (95% CI = 1.436, 1.697). In contrast, the odds of poverty for householders who were employed in low-wage manufacturing are 0.314 times lower than those of householders employed in consumer-service industries. Also, the odds of poverty for householders who were employed in high-wage manufacturing are 0.582 times lower than those of householders employed in consumer-service industries. In a similar vein, the odds of poverty for householders who were employed in distributional service industries are 0.138 times lower than those of householders employed in consumer-service industries. The results in Model 4 show that the odds of poverty for householders employed in high-wage services are 0.362 times lower than those of householders employed in consumer-service industries.

Model 5 also adds controls for job quality. The odds of poverty for householders working part-time are 5.246 times those of full-time householders (95% CI = 5.052, 5.447). The odds of poverty are, as expected, even higher for households in which neither the householder nor spouse/partner (if present) were working. For such households, the odds of poverty are 7.207 times those of full-time householders (95% CI = 6.944, 7.480). The results in Model 5 also show that the odds of poverty for householder employed in service occupations are 1.577 times those of householders employed in other occupations.

Adding controls for industry of employment and job quality in the model increases the logistic regression coefficient that describes the gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites by 47%. The odds ratio describing that gap increases from 1.223 to 1.344 (95% CI: 1.257, 1.437). Adjusting for industry of employment and job quality also increases the gap between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites by 4%. The odds ratio describing that gap increases from 1.748 to 1.788 (95% CI: 1.705, 1.876). In contrast, introducing industry of employment and job quality in the model reduces the gap between Asians and non-Hispanic Whites by 27%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 1.398 to 1.277 (95% CI: 1.152, 1.416). Introducing these controls also drops the gap between other racial groups and non-Hispanic Whites by 8%. The odds ratio describing that gap drops from 1.568 to 1.509 (95% CI: 1.386, 1.643). Also notice that the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was significantly reduced from 0.249 in the unconditional model to 0.119 after all individual and household predictors were included in the model, corresponding to about 52% variance reduction.

Model 5 adds an indicator of nonmetropolitan status, controlling for population size. The results show that for households in nonmetropolitan areas, the odds of poverty are 1.394 times those of households in metropolitan areas (95% CI = 1.300, 1.495). Notice that residential location and population size, the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced from 0.119 to 0.089, corresponding to about 25% variance reduction.

Table 2 displays the results of models that include labor market area factors. In this table, individual and household coefficients are omitted. Instead, only race/ethnicity and labor market area-level coefficients are displayed.

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Model 6 in Table 2 controls for measures of labor market area's economic disadvantage, immigrant status, and residential stability. The results in Model 6 show that a one standard deviation increase in economic disadvantage increases the odds of poverty by exp (0.039 * 3.62) = 1.152 times. The results in model 6 also show that a one standard deviation increase in immigrant concentration reduces the odds of poverty by exp (-0.049 * 2.05) = 0.904 times. In a similar vein, a one standard deviation in residential stability reduces the odds of poverty by exp (-0.076 * 1.48) = 0.894 times. Notice that the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced from 0.089 in Model 5 to 0.041 once LMA economic disadvantage, immigrant status, and residential stability indicators were introduced in the model.

Model 7 in Table 2 drops controls for labor market area's economic disadvantage, immigrant status, and residential stability and adds the LMA ratio of core industries to peripheral industries. The results in Model 7 shows that a higher ratio of core to periphery industries in a labor market area reduces the odds of poverty by exp (-0.218) = 0.804 times (95% CI = (0.675, 0.959). This suggests that the greater the proportion of good jobs (proportion of core industries) in a place, the lower the odds of poverty.

To assess specific influences of industry structure on the odds of poverty, Model 8 in Table 2 removes the ratio of core to periphery industries and adds standardized measures of the percentage of residents 16 years or older in a labor market area employed in the following industries: extractive industries (agriculture, forestry, fishing, and mining) plus government; low-wage manufacturing; high-wage manufacturing; and consumer services. The results in Model 8 shows that a one standard deviation increase in the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in extractive and government industries increases the odds of poverty by exp (0.031 * 1.54) = 1.049 times. In a similar vein, a one standard deviation increase in the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in consumer service industries increases the odds of poverty by exp (0.029 * 1.31) = 1.039 times. In contrast, a one standard deviation increase in the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in low-wage manufacturing industries reduces the odds of poverty by exp (0.068) = 0.935 times. Similarly, a one standard deviation increase in the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in high-wage manufacturing industries reduces the odds of poverty by exp (0.079) = 0.924 times.

Model 8 also adds the percentage of good jobs, i.e., the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in managerial, professional, and technical occupation and in higher-wage service industries. The percentage of good jobs in a labor market area is linked to lower odds of poverty. A one standard deviation increase in the percentage of LMA residents 16 years or older employed in managerial, professional, and technical occupations reduces the odds of poverty by exp (-0.094 * 1.54) = 0.865 times. Notice that nonmetropolitan residence remains significantly linked to higher odds of poverty. The odds of poverty for those in nonmetropolitan LMA are 1.127 times those in metropolitan areas, even after controlling for opportunity structure indicators. Notice also that the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced from 0.089 in model 5 to 0.058 in model 8, once industry structure indicators were introduced in the model, corresponding to an additional reduction in variance of 35%.

Model 9 in Table 2 includes nonmetropolitan residence, LMA opportunity structure as measured by industry structure and the percentage of good jobs, and LMA socio-structural characteristics, including economic disadvantage, immigrant status, and residential stability, controlling for population size and individual and household characteristics. The results in Model 9 show that the odds of poverty are higher in nonmetropolitan LMAs than in metropolitan ones; higher in economically disadvantaged LMAs, higher in LMAs with a greater

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proportion of extractive and government industries; but lower in LMAs with greater concentration of immigrants, residential stable LMAs; and lower in LMAs with greater proportion of both low-wage and high-wage manufacturing industries as well as in LMAs with good jobs, i.e., with greater proportion of residents 16 years or older employed in managerial, professional, and technical occupation, respectively. The results in Model 9 also show that even after controlling for individual, household, and labor market area characteristics, poverty remains significantly higher among Latinos, African Americans, Asians, and other racial groups than among non-Hispanic Whites. Latinos' odds of poverty are 1.340 times those of non-Hispanic Whites; African Americans' odds are 1.766 times those of non-Hispanic Whites; Asians' odds are 1.278 times those of non-Hispanic Whites; and other racial groups' odds are 1.504 times those of non-Hispanic Whites, respectively. Overall, the intercept variance, τ_{00}, was reduced from 0.249 to 0.030 after all individual, household, and labor market area predictors were included in the model.

The final model (Model 10) treats the intercept for the coefficients that describe the racial-ethnic poverty gaps as random. In this model, the random components are partially explained by labor market area predictors. Most of the patterns described in Model 9 above remain the same as in Model 10. The odds of poverty in nonmetropolitan are 1.158 times those in metropolitan households. The odds of poverty are also higher in economically disadvantaged LMAs and in those with relatively greater percentage of extractive and government industries. A one standard deviation increase in economic disadvantage increases the odds of poverty by about 13% [exp (0.033 * 3.62) – 1] while a one standard deviation increase in extractive and government industries increases the odds of poverty by 6%, respectively. In contrast, the odds of poverty are lower in LMAs with a greater proportion of low-wage manufacturing industries, high-wage manufacturing industries; and good jobs. A one standard deviation increase in low-wage manufacturing, high-wage manufacturing industries, and percent good jobs reduces the odds of poverty by 4%, 3%, and 11%, respectively. The results in Model 10 also show that a one standard deviation increase in immigrant concentration reduces the odds of poverty by 6% while a one standard deviation in residential stability reduces the odds of poverty by 10%, respectively.

In addition, the results in Model 10 show that Latinos, African Americans, Asians, and other racial groups remain more likely than non-Hispanic Whites to be poor after all individual and labor market area predictors are included in the model. First, Latinos' odds of poverty are about 25% higher than those of non-Hispanic Whites. However, this poverty-gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites narrows in labor market areas with relative greater residential stability. Second, African Americans' odds of poverty are about 86% higher than those of non-Hispanic Whites, but this gap narrows in LMAs with a relative increase in economic disadvantage and widens in LMAs with a disproportionate share of lower-wage manufacturing industries. Third, Asians' odds of poverty are about 14% higher than those of non-Hispanic Whites; the Asian-White gap in poverty widens in LMAs with a disproportionate share of immigrants. Finally, the results in Model 10 reveal that other racial groups' odds of poverty are about 49% higher than those of non-Hispanic Whites.

Summary of Findings and Discussion

This research highlights racial/ethnic differences in household poverty in the Midwest. The first question of concern focused on the effect of race/ethnicity on household poverty, comparing Latinos and Latinas to other racial/ethnic groups in the Midwest. Household poverty significantly differs by race/ethnicity with racial minorities

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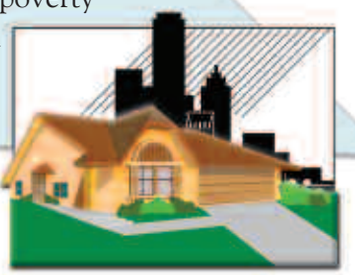
disproportionately overrepresented among the poor. Drawing on the results in Table 4, Latinos are almost 3 times as likely as non-Hispanic Whites to be poor; African Americans 4 times; Asians 1.5 times; and other racial groups 3 times. Household poverty varies not only by race/ethnicity, but also by gender. Female-headed households are most likely to be in poverty.

The second research question focused on the association between race/ethnicity and household poverty while accounting for other known confounding factors, including household structure, educational attainment, and industry of employment and job quality. Household structure, educational attainment, industry of employment, and job quality partially explain household poverty and the gaps in household poverty between racial/groups. Consistent with previous studies on poverty, householders with relatively less education are more likely to be poor. Single-headed households, especially never married female-headed households are more likely than married couples to be in poverty. The findings also show that householders who were employed in high-wage manufacturing industries were the least likely to be in poverty, followed by those in high-wage services, low-wage manufacturing, and distributional services. At the other end of the spectrum, householders employed in agriculture, fishing, and forestry industries were more likely than those in consumer services to be in poverty.



In addition, this study reveals that much of the poverty gap between Latinos and non-Hispanic Whites is explained by the type and quality of employment and educational levels. To a greater extent, the gap between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites is explained by the type and quality of employment, followed by household structure, and education. This implies that jobs in the service sector, including both high-wage services and consumer services are not equivalent substitutes for traditional high-wage jobs in manufacturing that offer better pay. Latinos and other minorities, women, and immigrants, especially those with lower educational skills tend to concentrate in lower-skill, part-time, intermittent, and low-paying jobs with little opportunity for upward mobility. In other words, they tend to be concentrated in secondary labor markets. Thus, while improving the educational skills of Latinos and African Americans is likely to improve their employment chances and incomes, it may help to examine the barriers that keep them from the primary labor markets even when they have the human capital characteristics.

Creating better-paying jobs equivalent to those in high-wage industries is crucial to the financial well-being of families. Households headed by single females, especially never married singles, are significantly more likely to be in poverty. Therefore, creating better employment opportunities for women and supplementing their incomes, especially if they are the only earner in the household is paramount.

The third research question focused on the association between nonmetropolitan/metropolitan labor market areas and household poverty and whether it persists after controlling for individual and household predictors. The findings show that household poverty varies significantly by labor market areas, ranging from about 5% to 33% (see Table 2). Despite the fact that individual/household characteristics explain much of the variance in poverty between labor market areas, much more variance in poverty is accounted for by labor market characteristics, especially, structural characteristics and labor market opportunity structures. As expected, this study demonstrates that poverty is higher in nonmetropolitan than in metropolitan areas, suggesting that the restructuring of the economy has placed much greater burdens on nonmetropolitan households. Nonmetropolitan location explains about 34% of the variance between labor market areas. This implies that more employment opportunities with quality jobs are needed in the rural Midwest.

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Household Poverty

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In addition, economically disadvantaged labor market areas, which tend to be concentrated in metropolitan areas, are associated with higher poverty rates. Minorities tend to live in these labor market areas. Economic restructuring hit these communities hardest with the loss of manufacturing jobs and the flight of middle-class families (including both dominant and minority group) (Wilson, 1987, 1996). In other words, minorities in those manufacturing jobs were not able to secure comparable paying jobs in the restructured economy due to limited education levels. In addition, the flight of the middle class produced inner city environments with limited tax bases and reduced social resources. These areas have higher unemployment rates, higher proportions of less skilled workers, higher proportions of African Americans and single-headed households with children, as well as a greater proportion of families relying on public assistance for survival. Residents in these communities have less access to better employment opportunities.

Not surprising, this study also shows that immigrant concentrated and residentially stable labor market areas are associated with lower poverty rates. Residents in these labor market areas tend to have higher skills, better access to employment opportunities, higher social capital, and therefore better chances for higher incomes. Much of the variance in poverty between labor market areas is accounted for by these socio-demographic and structural characteristics. This implies that addressing the uneven spatial access to opportunities, especially in forgotten places, may significantly address poverty in many families. This can be addressed with better economic development plans that focus on reinvesting in these communities and creating better job opportunities.

The fourth research question focuses on the effect of LMA opportunity structures, as measured by both the industry structure and the percentage of good jobs, on household poverty. According to these findings, a higher ratio of core industries to peripheral industries in a labor market area reduces poverty. More specifically, labor market areas with a relative higher proportion of extractive, government, and consumer service industries are associated with higher poverty rates. In contrast, LMAs with a greater proportion of low-wage manufacturing and high-wage manufacturing are associated with lower poverty rates. Furthermore, labor market areas with a higher proportion of good jobs (i.e., greater proportion of residents in managerial, professional, and technical occupations) are associated with lower poverty rates. The labor market opportunity structure explains about 53% of the between-LMA variance in poverty. This suggests that the creation of higher-wage jobs in labor market areas should be a priority for lifting many families out of poverty. This must be attended, of course, with on-job-training and workforce development programs so that residents with fewer skills might have a chance to fill these positions as they are created.

Finally, this study shows that even after accounting for individual, household, nonmetropolitan/metropolitan location, and labor market area opportunity structure and structural characteristics, poverty remains significantly higher among Latinos, African Americans, Asians, and other racial groups than it is among non-Hispanic Whites. The odds of poverty are about 1.3 for Latinos; 1.8 for African Americans; 1.3 for Asians; and 1.5 for other races times those of non-Hispanic Whites, respectively. Other factors not accounted for may explain the persistent gaps in poverty rates. Future research should focus on structural barriers that reproduce poverty among communities of color, on household income and the different sources of income for Latinos and other minorities, and on community development in forgotten places.

The author thanks Jennifer Tello Buntin and Rubén Martinez for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier versions of this work. *Direct all correspondence to Jean Kayitsinga at the Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 301 Nisbet Building, 1407 S. Harrison Rd., East Lansing, MI 48823 <kayitsin@msu.edu>.* *References for this article are available upon request.*

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