

# The Contributions of Latino Studies to Social Science Research on Immigration

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## ABSTRACT

The author uses a conceptual map to guide readers through the issues and approaches that pertain to immigration research. She notes that in sociology the pattern of immigration research is clear and the study of immigrants is closely linked to the beginning of social science in America. Sociologists at the turn of the century were concerned with the impact immigration had on the lives of immigrants and with the integration outcomes of those who arrived on its shores. Such outcomes were usually conceptualized as acculturation and assimilation – as becoming like the dominant population, which at the turn of the century clearly meant conforming to Anglo-Saxon ways. Latinos were remarkably absent from such studies.

Immigrants bring a whole host of social resources with them (their social class, education, occupations, culture, motivation, values) from another society, and their outcomes in American society are a function of three types of factors. They are: 1) the initial social resources of class, culture, education, values; 2) the nature of their migration (were they political or economic immigrants, victims of genocide, or “brain drain” professional immigrants); and 3) the social context that greeted them. That is, the amount of opportunity available to them in the new society (in the jobs they can find in sunrise or sunset industries, in the particular cities in which they settled, in the amount of discrimination they faced).