Pilar Parra

Web Bio

Information

Biography

Biographical Statement

The focus of my research in both the U.S. and in the international field is one of prevention with special emphasis on applied research. My research informs the design, test and evaluation of interventions to achieve long-term health behavioral change. I examine: 1) the behaviors and practices that enhance or detriment health status of groups and individuals; 2) the effect of social and economic factors on health; 3) and how culture and ethnicity shape health values, attitudes and behaviors among minorities and immigrant populations. My work in developing countries focuses on the implementation of primary health services through programs based on local resources and knowledge. Special attention is given to women's roles and the promotion of community members participation.

Department Website Summary

The focus of my research is health prevention with special emphasis on applied research. It informs the design, test and evaluation of interventions to achieve long-term health behavioral change.

Professional

Current Professional Activities

2000 –present Faculty Fellow. Latino Living Center.
2003 –present Faculty Advisor for Lambda Pi Chi Latinas working for the community.
2005 –present Faculty Advisor Biology and Society
2006 –present Board member Latino Studies Program
2007 –present Faculty Advisor. Student Organization. Ithaca Free Clinic Initiative

2011 - present Faculty Advisor for Nutritional Sciences NS and HBHS Major

Member American Public Health Association (listed as a reviewer)
Member American Sociological Association

Research

Current Research Activities

Two complementary projects are under study: 1) a follow-up to the project that examines the integration of immigrant populations in rural communities (Hatch NYC-159441), 2) a collaboration with Professor Michael Shapiro's Hatch project, "Investigating Home Food Safety Relevant Behaviors of Mexican-Americans Who Cook for Children and the Elderly."
In the first project we will build on findings from our completed Fund for Rural America project in five New York communities. Our results showed that two organizations play an important supportive role to immigrants, schools and churches. The follow-up study investigates in detail the role of churches in fostering immigrant access to jobs, housing, English language and other training, schooling and health care. The overall research objectives are: 1) production of detailed knowledge about the determination of the most common pathways and barriers to immigrant integration in new immigrant destination communities; 2) identification and development of community-base programs to foster social network formation and promote the integration of immigrants into the community social and economic life; 3) identification of relevant mechanism used by immigrants to adapt and integrate the social and economic life in their new destination immigrant communities.
To follow up on the role of churches in the integration of immigrants we fielded questions in the state wide Empire State Poll to assess what community members expect of churches in integrating immigrants into the social and economic life of the community. Results showed that the most common responses were that churches should work to build social ties, followed by facilitating or providing education to adults and children, from teaching about American culture to language classes, and charitable services. The importance of building social ties between immigrants and the community was most pronounced in rural communities in Upstate New York where few co-ethnics live. We established a working partnership with a church in Upstate New York that serves predominantely the Hispanic community. We carried a workshop on nutrition education in the summer at the church facilities to test if immigrant women would attend and if this effort could build relationships with the white community. Preliminary results are promising. Participants of the summer workshop informed that the church premises was a trusted place to attend, and that more programs would be welcomed. They were pleased to see community members interested in their well being and the opportunity to learn about the American culture.
The second research effort involves five focus groups with new immigrant families that examine their challenges meeting food safety standards when preparing food at home for children and elderly family members. The interview also included questions regarding nutrition education needs to address ongoing challenges with obesity, and diabetes among immigrant families. Results of this work informed the summer workshop discussed above. Results of the focus groups also informed the instrument utilized in a national survey to Mexican Americans and Mexican origin residing in the US (December 2010 and January 2011) on awareness and home food safety practices. We produced a working paper "Home Food Safety Among Mexican-American." The paper is under review. The development and testing of educational material culturally appropriate on food safety practices among recent immigrants is in process. Further analysis will take place in preparation to the submission of a proposal to look at best ways to prepare educational messages for this population.

Extension

Current Extension Activities

Member of the Diversity Catalyst Team

Member Task Force: Virtual Multi-Cultural Workforce Center

In collaboration with Professor Michael Shapiro, development and testing of educational tools to address home food safety among the immigrant Hispanic population to be distributed through Cornell Cooperative Extension and EFNEP.

Education

Education

Supervised implementation of a workshop in Marion, NY to Spanish speaking immigrant women with children. The workshop "Adoption of American Foodways among Recent Immigrant families," focused on nutrition, food safety, and learning about healthy American dishes (as opposed to junk food). The worshops was carried by an undergraduate student from Human Ecology, Marion Robine. She is working on her honor thesis, and we are working on a report and a manual to be distributed among agencies working with recent immigrant populations.

Field trip with pre-med students to the Finger Lakes Community Health. Migrant Health Services in Sodus, NY to learn about health services to marginal populations. May 10, 2011.

Campus lectures:

Teach for Equality of Gender, Race and Education. Panel Women of Color Conference. Robert Purcell Community Center. November 12, 2011

Mental Health Disparities Amon Ethnic Minorities. Science Organization of Latinos (SOL), Honduran Health, Sigma Lambda Upsilon, Quisqueya, Black Bio-Medical Association. April 18, 2011

Courses

Courses Taught

Sociology of Health and Ethnic Minorities (LSP/Dev Soc 2200)

Websites

Related Websites

http://courseinfo.cit.cornell.edu/courses/devsoc2200

http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/research-and-policy-brief-series.cfm

http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/11-2004-immigrants_community.pdf

http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/04-2005-immigrants_community.pdf

http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/09-2005-immigrants_community.pdf

http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cardi/publications/upload/11-2005-immigrants_community.pdf

Administration

Publications

Selected Publications

Pfeffer, M.J., Parra, P.A. “Upstate and Downstate Differ in Response to Needs of Immigrant Community.” NYSAC News 30(9):23-24, 2009

Pfeffer M.J. and Parra P. Strong Ties, Weak Ties, and Human Capital: Latino Immigrant Employment Outside the Enclave. Rural Sociology. Issue 74(2):241-269. June 2009

Pfeffer M.J. and Pilar A. Parra. Community Response to Immigrants in New Destinations. Research and Policy Briefs. Community and Rural Development Institute (CARDI). Department of Development Sociology. Cornell University. November 2008

Parra Pilar A. and Max J. Pfeffer. New Immigrants in Rural Communities: The Challenges of Integration. In: The Border Next Door: New York Migraciones. Social Text 88, Vol 24., No.3, pp 81-98. Fall 2006.

Pfeffer Max J. and Pilar A. Parra. Immigrants and the Community: Community Perspectives. Cornell University. 1500 GPP Report #4, October 2005. Development Sociology. Division of Nutritional Sciences.

Pfeffer Max J. and Pilar A. Parra. Immigrants and the Community: Former Farmworkers. Cornell University. 1500 GPP 060047. Report #3, September 2005. Development Sociology. Division of Nutritional Sciences

Parra Pilar A. and Max J. Pfeffer. Immigrants and the Community: Farmworkers with Families. Cornell University. 1500 GPP 050357. Report #2, April 2005. Development Sociology. Division of Nutritional Sciences

Pfeffer Max J. and Pilar A. Parra. Immigrants and the Community. Cornell University.1500 GPP 11607. Report #1, November 2004. Development Sociology. Division of Nutritional Sciences

Book Review: The Worm in the Wheat. Rosalie Evans and Agrarian Struggle in the Puebla-Tlaxcala Valley of Mexico, 1906-1927, by Timothy J. Anderson, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998. In: Rural Sociology, Vol. 65. No.3.

Rodriguez E. and P. Parra A Review of New York's Health and Health Care Status: The Challenges Ahead for 2000. In: New York in the 21st Century. Hirschl T. & Heaton T. (eds.) Praeger Publishers. Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. 1999:272-284.

"The Lost Knowledge: Breastfeeding Among Puerto Rican Women." In: Proceedings of the International Workshop in Dietary Assessment Methodologies. Diva M. Sanjur and Mauro Valencia. Centro de Investigación en Alimentación y Desarrollo (C.I.A.D). Camino a la Victoria Km. 6. Sonora, Mexico. Division of Nutritional Sciences-Cornell University. Ithaca NY. pp.153-168.

Parra Pilar A. and P. Guarnaccia. Ethnicity, Culture, and Resiliency in Caregivers of a Seriously Mentally Ill Family Member. In Resiliency in Ethnic Minority Families: Native and Immigrant American Families. McCubbin H., Thompson E., Thompson A., and Fromer J. Sage. Newberry Park, CA. pp. 431-450.

Cerdá Magdalena & Parra Pilar. "El Taller: Una Guia Para Extensionistas." (The Workshop: Guidelines for Agricultural and Health Extension Workers). Divison of Nutritional Sciences and Cornell International Institute for Food Agriculture and Development.

Guarnaccia Peter, Pilar A. Parra. Ethnicity, Social Status and Families Experiences of Caring for a Mentally Ill Family Member. Community Mental Health Journal. Vol. 32(3):243-260

Aguirre-Molina M. and Pilar A. Parra. Latino Youth and Familie as Active Participants in Planning Change: A Community-University Partnership Pp. 130-153. In Latino Families: Developing a Paradigm for Practice, Policy and Research. Zambrana Ruth (ed.) 1995. Sage. Newberry Park CA.

Parra, Pilar A. Midwives in the Mexican Health System. Social Science and Medicine. Vol.37. (11): 1321-1329.

Guarnaccia Peter, Pilar A. Parra, Aura Deschamps, G. Milstein, N. Argiles. Si Dios Quiere: Hispanic Families' Experiences of Caring for a Seriously Mentally Ill Family Member. Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry. Vol 16:187-215.

Parra Pilar A. La Mujer Rural, las Comadronas y el Sistema Mexicano de Salud. Revista Estudios Demográficos y Urbanos. Vol. 6 No.1. 1991:69-88