

**Unequal Power—Changing Landscapes:  
Negotiations between Evaluation  
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# Unequal Power—Changing Landscapes: Negotiations between Evaluation Stakeholders in Latino Communities

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## ABSTRACT

The analyses presented in this article are based on the authors' experiences over the past 5 years evaluating community initiatives located in several low-income, California *Latino* communities. The dynamic interactions between major stakeholder groups including funders, community-based organization staff, community members, and evaluators are examined through a context-sensitive lens. A case study of El Centro Familiar provides a vehicle for presenting our roles as an interpreters, translators, mediators, and storytellers. The challenges of blending a critical theory social science approach with community-focused evaluation practice form the basis of the discussion.

## INTRODUCTION

The overall economic, political and social landscapes in which evaluations are being conducted are changing dramatically, domestically and internationally. Economic structures are becoming increasingly globalized, political volatility is widespread, and many populations are migrating back and forth across national borders (Greider, 1997). Disparities in wealth are increasing between developing and developed nations as well as between communities within one country (Coburn, 2000; Held, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999; Kawachi & Kennedy, 1997; Maddison, 1995). Internet technology has created communication systems that are rapid and world-wide, redefining the notion of public space while changing the speed and forms in which social relationships occur locally and globally (Sack, 2000). To some extent, these contextual factors influence evaluation practice, whether conducted by the World Bank in a developing country,

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university faculty in a United States community building Initiative, or consultants evaluating programs serving particular ethnic populations (Ferroni, 2000; Picciotto, 2000).

We argue in this article that the role of the evaluator occurs within a particular context, at a particular period of history, not independent of it. Thus, a context-sensitive approach is integral to shaping our roles as evaluators and our overall evaluation practice. Complexity is not confusion and dynamic change is not chaos; rather, the acknowledgement that rapid change is occurring world-wide and locally, and that historical factors influence contemporary situations ultimately brings clarity and depth to analyses. For example, in our evaluation practice political and economic conditions within countries of origin affected the size, timing and characteristics of waves of migration between countries; and the cultural practices, beliefs, and attitudes of these ethnic communities shaped their civic participation in the countries to which they migrated.

Many important contributions have been made to advance evaluation practice over the past decades by leading theorists in the field (e.g., Guba & Lincoln, 1989, 1994; Mertens, 1999; Patton, 1997; Scriven, 1983, 1994; Schwandt, 1997; Weiss, 1987, 1998). A recent Aspen Institute report stated that over the past two decades, the role of the evaluator has undergone significant transformations (The Aspen Institute, 1997). These transformations have engendered discourse over what *is* or *should* be the role of evaluators. While some maintain that the evaluators' role is to facilitate learning and capacity building (The Aspen Institute, 1997; Kellogg Foundation, 1998), others contend that the role of evaluators is characterized by its empowering nature; i.e., building capacity of program staff to advocate for their own needs (Fetterman, Kaftarian, & Wandersman, 1996). MacNeil regards evaluators as stewards of citizen deliberation, where the evaluator constructs an infrastructure for deliberative forums in which power differentials can be mitigated. This allows for successful exchanges and interactions among stakeholders, equalizing power differentials (MacNeil, 2002).

We agree with critical theorists who characterize the researcher as not an objective, authoritative, politically neutral observer standing above the context, but historically positioned and locally situated as a human observer of the human condition (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). Our practice suggests that within negotiation processes, the distribution of power between the stakeholders in shaping and implementing the evaluation becomes central to the creation of findings. Thus, our evaluation team agrees with authors who state that evaluation is a politically contextualized act (Greene, 1994, 1997; Weiss, 1970, 1972, 1987, 1998). Our evaluation approach implies three core elements for our practice: (1) creating a multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural evaluation team; (2) designing inductive, inclusive, and iterative evaluation processes; and (3) ensuring transparency in negotiations between stakeholders wherever possible.

Our experiences over the past 5 years grappling with our roles as evaluators while negotiating with stakeholders in initiatives located in several low-income, California *Latino* communities form the basis for the analyses presented in this article (Brindis & Clayson, 1999; Brindis, Peacock, & Clayson, 1998; Clayson & Sanchez, 1998, 2000; Rundall, Castaneda, & Clayson, 2000). Within these initiatives, we identified four major interacting stakeholder groups with often-conflicting interests and priorities: funders, community-based organization staff, "community" members, and evaluators. The dynamic interactions between these stakeholders were shaped by contextual dimensions (e.g., historical, political, and economic conditions related to the larger society as well as particular regional and local communities); and the challenges of diversity (e.g., the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the particular community).

While considerable attention has been focused on the role of the evaluator in particular interventions, less emphasis has been placed on examining these roles in multi-cultural settings within the macro-level context.

As evaluators operating within these contexts, we acted as interpreters, translators, mediators, and storytellers. While not exhaustive of all the roles evaluators assume during evaluation processes, we contend that these *particular* roles are central when operating in multi-cultural settings emphasizing a context-sensitive approach. In these roles, we employed a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods that will be subsequently discussed in the case study. As interpreters, we clarified the viewpoints of all the stakeholders. We established a common language of communication in our translator roles, while as mediators we negotiated these meanings between the stakeholders. Finally, we served as storytellers, reconstructing the stakeholders' voices to depict surface realities and clarify the embedded contexts. Rather than being linear or sequential, these roles were fluid categories that we assumed with various stakeholders at different periods. In subsequent sections, we will discuss the California *Latino* community context and present a composite case study, demonstrating how this context shaped our roles as evaluators. Finally, implications for evaluation practice are considered.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Guided by a critical theory social science perspective, our evaluations have utilized constructivist methods extensively described by others (Charmaz, 2000; Denzin, 1994; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The analyses presented in this article are based on our evaluations of three California community initiatives conducted between 1993 and 2000: the Communities 2000 Initiative, the Lifeline Initiative, and the National Economic Development and Law Center's Family Support Initiative. In these evaluations, a theory of change approach was utilized along with a variety of data collection methods, including written and telephone surveys, open-ended and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, participant observation, photography, and historical archives. Diverse culturally and linguistically appropriate mechanisms were established for continuous review, analyses and interpretation by stakeholders.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Communities 2000 Initiative, a 4-year, \$3 million community-building effort, implemented in three California counties, provided small grants to over 100 neighborhood groups. The Initiative focused on building a sense of community, strengthening leadership, and enhancing civic engagement at the grassroots level. Over half the rural neighborhoods were Latino, primarily Mexican-American. Lifeline, a 5-year, \$3 million San Francisco Foundation Initiative, encouraged systemic change in programs serving low-income children and their families in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Twenty-two collaboratives were funded, including 157 organizations within all the major ethnic urban communities of the area, including Spanish-speaking organizations serving those of Mexican and Central American origin in urban communities. Finally, the continuing, statewide-focused National Economic Development and Law Center's Family Support Initiative is crafted to assist community-based family support organizations to identify and adopt economic development strategies appropriate for their agencies. This Initiative included agencies from both urban and rural *Latino* communities. Our evaluations conducted within California *Latino* neighborhoods, part of these larger community initiatives, provide important lessons for evaluation practice in other multi-ethnic communities, especially among populations migrating across national boundaries.

## THE CALIFORNIA CONTEXT FOR COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

"... communities are multi-dimensional systems, people and organizations, consciousness, actions, and context, which are integrally related with one another, forming the whole that is community. To develop an understanding of community... we need to articulate, visualize, and examine the unique qualities exhibited by each of these dimensions and how these dimensions come together to make up the complex and dynamic system of community." (Walter, 1998)

There is great diversity within California community initiatives on many dimensions, such as ethnicity, age, geography, mobility and specific project focus. In addition, assets and deficits coexist. For example, the lives of California's migrant farm workers are shaped by historical racism, current anti-migrant sentiment, and the globalization of capital across the U.S.—Mexico border. While many families have strong ties, spiritual connections and cohesive cultural practices, they may also suffer from the effects of poverty, violence, and chemical dependency. In some California new migrant communities, neighborhood in and out migration reaches 50% per year. Yet, existing within these mobile neighborhoods are structures, sometime invisible to outsiders, spoken, unspoken, formal and informal rules, and culture and gender-specific imperatives. We argue that to conduct evaluations within these communities a substantive understanding of the particular community context must be achieved.

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: LATINOS IN CALIFORNIA

"*Latinos*" is a political term used to designate a heterogeneous Caribbean and Latin American population sharing a historical background and cultural perspectives. In California by 2015, *Latinos* will comprise the largest single ethnic/racial group living in California, representing between 15 and 20 million persons (Hayes-Bautista, 1997). In California,<sup>1</sup> Mexicans comprise the largest *Latino* group. A shared border, agro-business expansion, and a sustained political, economic, and social crisis in Mexico all contribute to the growing representation of Mexicans in California. In the early 1980s, many Central Americans migrated to the United States, primarily from El Salvador and Guatemala (Hamilton & Chinchilla-Stoltz, 1991). By 1990, nearly one out of every five *Latinos* was of Central American origin (Hayes-Bautista, 1997).

Previous studies have discussed the complexities in typifying the *Latino* identity (Kearney, 1995; Kearney & Nagensgast, 1989; Rouse, 1995). First, *Latinos* come from various countries and are the heirs to *mestizaje* or hybrid cultures. In each country multiple levels of development, wealth, and racial mixtures coexist. Furthermore, media, tourism, migration, translocal, and transnational networks play a major role in the configuration of *Latino* identity(ies). Second, to define settings as purely urban or rural is difficult because of the multiple, overlapping relationships people establish. Through the use of technology, mass media, and oral histories, urban dimensions are increasingly brought to remote places, thus, diminishing the isolation of rural communities. Finally, patterns of settlement and migration are important for understanding and working with *Latino* communities.

There are significant differences between *Latinos* who were born in the U.S., others who migrated 20 years ago, and those who recently crossed the border and may follow a pendulum pattern of migration.<sup>2</sup>

Two common factors are particularly relevant to a discussion of evaluation issues within major sectors of the *Latino* population: language as a common symbol and the importance of the family.

### Language as a Common Symbol

Although there are many differences in terms or words stemming from place of origin, class, and education, language is probably the main common symbol among *Latinos* living in California. Hertzler (1965) states that "the key and basic symbolism of human beings is language. Language is a culturally constructed and socially established system, in a given society." (p. 29) Eighty percent of *Latino* households are Spanish-speaking (Hayes-Bautista, 1997). This linguistic homogeneity has contributed to the emergence of numerous Spanish communication networks in the United States, including hundreds of newspapers and magazines, several television channels, as well as local and national radio stations.

### The Importance of the Family

*Latino* families in California tend to be configured in nuclear and interdependent extended kinship structures, with multiple and mobile networks. "Familism" is considered to be one of the most important cultural values of *Latinos* (Moore, 1970). This term implies an attachment and interdependence of individuals with their nuclear and extended families and strong feelings of loyalty, reciprocity and solidarity among members (Sabogal, Marin, & Otero-Sabogal, 1987). The *Latino* family has been characterized as being highly emotionally and materially supportive of its members. It has been well documented that the *Latino* family, even in highly acculturated circumstances, is perceived by its members as the single most important institution protecting people against external problems (Cobb, 1976; Cohen, 1979; Keefe, Padila & Carolos (1979)). High levels of support and trust perceived from the family include "*compadres*," godparents, and adopted "*tios and tias*" (uncles and aunts) who play an important role in family life.

Strategies for conducting evaluations in *Latino* communities require methodologies that are grounded in these cultural dimensions and at the same time take into consideration the challenges of the larger political and economic environment. As evaluators, we needed both a macro-level understanding of the context in which the community initiative was being implemented and an in-depth, micro-level understanding of the particular components of it to conduct our evaluations effectively. Observing and participating in the life of the community are essential, rather than optional, tools for the evaluator in *Latino* communities. For example, at one Christmas Posada a community member said to us "... you see (over there) Maria, she knows everything but unless Pedro says you're ok... she isn't going to talk to you... people are afraid of La Migra (the Immigration and Naturalization Service—INS)." We have found that the "outsider" role severely limits the ability of evaluators to identify and understand the more invisible structures, spoken, unspoken, and formal and informal rules that govern complex community initiatives. Attending celebrations, like *Posadas*, while time intensive, is a primary method for information gathering and understanding the generalities and specifics of community functioning. Within our work, we have tried to balance the conflicting demands for breadth (e.g., cross-site analyses with a minimal set of variables) and depth (e.g., detailed inquiry into one area). The following composite case study of El Centro Familiar discusses how our practice unfolded.

## EVALUATORS AS INTERPRETERS, TRANSLATORS, MEDIATORS, AND STORYTELLERS: THE CASE OF EL CENTRO FAMILIAR

The importance of context to our roles as evaluators is illustrated by the case of El Centro Familiar (a pseudonym), a community grantee agency within a larger community building Initiative. El Centro provided a range of services to families in a medium sized, urban community consisting of *Latinos* from Mexico, Central, and South America including both recent and long-time residents, with and without resident documentation. Both United States immigration policies and current economic conditions in Mexico impacted El Centro. The U.S. INS policies determine legal residential status and thus, designate who may be recipients of federally-funded or reimbursed health and social services. Deteriorating economic conditions in Mexico accelerated the rate of migration from Mexico into this urban area, taxing an already strained case management staff. Further, El Centro was impacted by California state policies, such as the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994, which attempted to deny publicly-funded health and social services to undocumented persons. Latino communities particularly feared this anti-migrant Initiative because many residents were undocumented. The day after the initiative was passed by a large majority of California voters attendance at El Centro fell to almost zero. It was many months before the census began to rise again.

At the same time, the priority of the funders was to increase the number of Latino families moving from "dependency" to "self-sufficiency" through a systems reform strategy. While El Centro management also supported this self-sufficiency strategy, particularly through the use of volunteers, it also wanted to provide immediate basic supports in the form of referrals to housing, employment, and health services. The community wanted its basic material needs met, e.g., food security, housing, employment, and education. Housing costs tripled within the life of the Initiative as this historically urban Latino neighborhood was gentrified, further exacerbating the housing crises.

Deconstruction and reconstruction of words and concepts was an important aspect of our role as *interpreters*. Intrinsicly, this process required grounding words or concepts in the native context of the person/stakeholder and expressing it in a manner that the cultural and linguistic mainstream stakeholders would understand. To accomplish this, it was necessary to deconstruct the community's voices, uncovering the dimensions of meaning as expressed by the participants based on their experience in their original and current contexts. Then, we began to reconstruct the underlying significance and subtleties existing within the Spanish language and culture. The concept of trust illustrates the point: "To me . . . trust . . . it all depends. Marco, I would lend the keys to my house. Celia watches my kids when I'm at work. But I wouldn't tell anyone outside the family about my papers (documentation status)."

Trust is a multi-layered, normative concept. Evaluators attempting to examine changes in levels of trust, particularly among community members with countries of origin outside the United States, should be cognizant that the concept of trust is, in part, developed in the country of origin of a person. Some aspects of the concept may be cross-cultural but others are clearly culture-specific. In addition, the concept depends on and varies with the economic and political context within a particular society. Thus, our findings suggest that, in general, for *Latinos* in the United States trust revolves around mutual support from finding a job to safely disclosing that one does not have documents to work in the United States.

The impetus for examining changes in levels of trust in our evaluation came from the funder and from other investigators in the field who had developed survey instruments for community building initiatives that measured changes in levels of trust among community

members on a 5-point Likert scale. While having been validated in some United States communities, these instruments were not useful in our evaluation. We were able to describe and interpret the ways trust was conceptualized by members of community groups but we were unable to delineate clear relationships between the Initiative's programs and building trust.

In another example, in United States community building initiatives, indicators of "civic engagement" include behaviors such as voting and participating in civic and social organizations. For *Latino* communities, we found that the meaning of civic engagement or public participation ranged even more widely than the mainstream U.S. literature would suggest, from obeying traffic laws to planting flowers and organizing neighborhood clean ups. Questions from existing community building survey instruments crafted specific questions related to civic engagement like, "Did you vote in the last election?" However, because many community members were non-citizens this was not a relevant question. Women were involved with churches and organizations related to children in many *Latino* neighborhoods, a factor considered by some evaluators as an indicator of civic involvement. In general, however, this concept had to be described, discussed and reinterpreted for the community members before it made any sense to them. In turn, interpretation to the funders was required to inform them of how this concept, that they wished investigated, was perceived by community members. This was very challenging. Often funders were locked into particular concepts that they regarded as relevant for all contexts and communities; and it was difficult to convince them otherwise.

In another situation, we clarified the viewpoints of the different stakeholders. When we asked an El Centro staff person about clients moving toward self-sufficiency this was the response: ". . . Do you mean do the families become 'independent'? We don't (particularly) value being alone, by ourselves. We help each other . . . my next door neighbor (he) is also from Michocan (Mexico) too. We know how it is . . ." While the concept of "self-sufficiency" is a positive value indicating individual responsibility within the dominant European-American paradigm, to those from the *Latino* Diaspora, the general concept has an inter-dependency component and includes *la familia* and the broader community. Interpreting the meaning of these terms to different stakeholders was an essential step in constructing mutually agreed upon outcomes.

*Translation* is not a matter of literally translating from English into Spanish or back translation from Spanish into English. Translation without contextualization can lead to miscommunication, particularly when working with people from different countries of origin. Interpretation and translation are inherently tied. When the dimensions and subtleties of the word are contextualized, clarified and thus, interpreted, translation becomes possible. Thus, in the case of "trust" or "civic engagement" the relevance of the concepts in the countries of origin are central to translating between evaluation stakeholders. For those from the United States context (funders) civic engagement had an inherently different meaning than it did for those from the community (grantees). Thus, an early evaluation step was to interpret the meanings of these terms and then to translate them to different stakeholder groups.

When the meaning of a particular concept was clarified, a common language of communication was established and mediation to shape the story unfolded. This *mediation* seldom resulted in gaining complete consensus among all evaluation stakeholders. At some point, the nature of the unequal power relationships between the stakeholders emerged. For example, while the staff and program participants identified housing as a primary concern, the funder posed the issue this way: ". . . housing isn't the concern of this Initiative. We are interested in outcomes related to community building . . . How does our small amount of money strengthen neighborhoods? . . . How is civic engagement being enhanced? . . . Are families

moving towards self-sufficiency? . . . I have to tell my Board (Foundation Board of Trustees) how many families were served." However, in this context where gentrification was causing 10 or more people to live in one apartment and the political atmosphere (Proposition 187) was causing fear and distrust throughout the community, the funders' priorities were difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. This example illustrates our role as mediator between the funder and the grantee stakeholders to negotiate a modified set of outcomes that would report number of families served within an understanding of the broader contextual landscape. The final agreement reached reduced the required number of families served and made provisions for the final report to describe the impact of housing as a contextual issue effecting the project's results.

Our last major role was to be a *storyteller*, an inherently self-reflective practice, involving the construction of concepts involving *all* the stakeholders' perspectives. An example of our storyteller role, which intersects with the other three roles, was a 20 minute, bi-lingual, bi-cultural slide presentation conducted with an audience of *Latino* community members, El Centro staff, other non-Latino community-based organization staff and funders. A wide variety of linguistic and cultural issues were considered in preparing this presentation. Since many of the participants were Spanish speakers, we wanted to ensure that the presentation gave equal weight to the Spanish and English languages and not be viewed as a translation from English into Spanish. A slide presentation was prepared with appropriate, clear visuals that included graphics in colors, forms, and words that would be accessible to the variety of audience members. For example, a customized visual image had been created which incorporated Aztec imagery, community building blocks, and an owl (for wisdom and education). Considerable literature has stressed the importance of using linguistically and culturally appropriate multi-media research and communication approaches (Banks-Wallace, 1998; Barbash & Taylor, 1997; Barone, 1992; Juhasz, 1995; Rosenthal, 1996; Trinh, 1989, 1992, 1999). As storytellers, we have consistently incorporated a variety of visual images into our written, verbal, and multi-media reports.

Two members of the evaluation team, one a native Spanish speaker from Mexico and one a native English speaker from California, created a storyboard in English and Spanish. Each concept had its own interpretation and translation. For instance, the outcome related to civic engagement was presented within the relevant context for the English speakers and the Spanish speakers. For example, the surface reality described how the *Latino community* groups participated in public space in the project area at a particular point in time. However, the embedded context was that in Mexico public space and past/current participation in that space was very different than in the United States context. Thus, it was necessary to understand both the surface reality and the embedded context in order to understand *why* public participation was manifested in particular ways within the Initiative. Further, to participate in public spaces in the U.S. *Latino community* members needed to know how to navigate the system. For example, they needed to understand how the City Council functioned, how public utilities operated, how parents participated in schools, and where social organizations were located. There was already considerable social cohesion in these communities, but to translate this cohesiveness into U.S. *defined* public participation was challenging. In part, this relates to the issue of trust, which in this context also related to the contextual issue of documentation status and fear of the Immigration and Naturalization Service ("La Migra"). The challenge for the storyteller in this context was to portray the complexity of these sets of relationships as simply and succinctly as possible and, thus, to make the concepts accessible to the wide range of stakeholders in the audience.

The presenters practiced many times in advance to ensure smooth transitions between the English and the Spanish stories. Thus, a simultaneous but not identical presentation in two languages was created. Especially for the native Spanish speakers, both mono- and bi-lingual, this elevation of the Spanish language to an equal status was very important. One Spanish-speaking participant told the evaluation team: ". . . I am so happy that what we are doing is important to others . . . it made a big difference to hear about it in Spanish . . . and to see you too . . . one of us (from Mexico) talking about it . . ."

We received feedback on the presentation from a variety of other English and Spanish-speaking stakeholders and incorporated these insights and observations into our next wave of evaluation efforts. This example of storytelling illustrates the synthesis of our previous efforts as interpreters, translators, and mediators. This was not the final end product of the evaluation but a key aspect of the ongoing iterative process of constructing reality into a vision for the stakeholders.

## TOWARD THE FUTURE

There are several important implications of these analyses for evaluation practice in other communities. First, the globalization of economic and political constructs, along with the growing migration of groups across national borders, points to the importance of structuring an international contextual perspective into community evaluations. Regional and local conditions are affected by these global factors. Regional contexts, e.g., the past and present treatment of *Latinos* in California including migration restrictions and employment and housing discrimination, need to be understood by those involved in evaluating community interventions in these communities. Second, intrinsic in the need to ground evaluation practice in the context of a community's geographic and historical background is the necessity for cultural and linguistic competency. Evaluations should be conducted in a linguistically appropriate manner attending to the nuances of languages used among those from different geographic areas, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, and age groups. In addition, because family is perceived as the most important social institution among *Latinos*, evaluation methods should be particularly sensitive to *la familia* in those communities. This implies that methodologically, rather than interviewing individuals over the telephone, e.g., evaluators should be prepared to conduct in-person interviews with families—usually the husband and wife, or wife and someone else—at their homes. Frequently, children may be present during interviews, and evaluators need to adjust to this reality as well. Questions regarding family practices will likely include the opinions of extended family members, e.g., "tios", "tias" and "compadres".

Third, because of these factors, community evaluation practice requires methodologies and instrumentation capable of evaluating with depth and breadth over the short- and long-term. The most appropriate evaluation designs may be resource-intensive, long-term, and cross-disciplinary while still remaining flexible enough to take short-term snap shots of rapidly evolving situations. The case of El Centro familiar illustrates one approach we have used effectively: combining longitudinal studies using ethnographic methods with shorter quantitative surveys and adding historical data to understand the context in which the program is unfolding. Even in the international arena, evaluation practices appropriate for migrating populations are recently emerging in the evaluation field. Thus, there is considerable room for innovation and experimentation. Particularly where sensitivity to language and culture are central to the

construction of findings, time is needed to build trust between the stakeholders. Funders need to be convinced of the importance of this approach.

Finally, we argue that because evaluation is a politically contextualized act, all aspects of a particular evaluation, including its design, implementation, outcomes, and uses are shaped by the power relationships among the stakeholders. All the stakeholders in this process are in some respects vulnerable. Funders are accountable to Congress or their Boards of Directors to justify expenditures. Program managers want to sustain and develop their programs; and evaluators wish to conduct research with moral integrity and high professional standards. All three of these stakeholders are vulnerable to job loss, political pressure, and decreased funding as a result of their actions. However, communities, particularly those outside the dominant European Diaspora, face a qualitatively different challenge. They may have stories told which are not accurate reflections of their initiatives because the evaluation lacks a context-sensitive approach or culturally and linguistically competent practices (Hopson, 2001). The results of these evaluations have the potential of providing incomplete analyses or misguided rationales for funders to continue or withdraw their investments.

As evaluators, we are both artists and scientists. A central component of our role has been to interpret, translate, mediate, and tell stories within a particular context, at a particular period of history. It was essential that we maintained clarity regarding the distinct dimensions of our practice, acknowledging the trade-offs we made between depth and breadth in our designs. Part of our deliberative role was to encourage transparency and push for conceptual clarity among stakeholders in order to decrease power differentials. While stakeholders negotiate on the evaluation landscape, there unfold moments of potentially transformational experiences for everyone. We should take advantage of these moments to strengthen our practice and move the field ahead.

## NOTES

1. Mexicans represent about 63% of the *Latino* population (approximately 14 million people) in the U.S. The Hispanic Population in the U.S.: March 1990. Current Population Reports. Series P-20 No. 449. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Census. 1991.

2. Using Rouse's formulation, the term "migrants" rather than "immigrants" will be used throughout this article. The term immigrants suggests a unidirectional movement, which does not portray the reality of millions of *Latinos* going back and forth between their countries of origin and the U.S., as well as between geographical locations within the U.S. Instead, the term migrant implies a continuum in the migration process of individuals who spend varying amounts of time in multiple communities across borders, often following seasonal growing patterns and economic cycles (Rouse, 1995).

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