

Cultural Capital and Commercial Vitality: Analyzing the Economic Contributions of Immigrant and Minority-Owned Small Businesses in Parsippany, NJ

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Abstract

Parsippany's growing Latino, East Asian, and South Asian populations have established a dynamic and vibrant ethnic minority small business community. This study examines the economic and cultural contributions of Parsippany's minority- and immigrant-owned small businesses, specifically commercial enclaves along Parsippany Road and Route 46. Using a combination of business license data, census population data, and more than 100 interviews with proprietors, the study attempts to account for how ethnic communities leverage social capital, informal credit, and cultural branding to establish sustainable businesses. Seen are extensive application of community financing structures (e.g., rotating credit associations or family pools), bilingual marketing strategies, and market niche positioning attractive to local and regional consumers. Such businesses also create high levels of employment, especially within members of their same ethnic groups. Still, access to mainstream capital, linguistic bias in government programs, and commercial zoning remain challenges for them. The study reveals that ethnic businesses not only enhance Parsippany's economy but also diversify its culture. It recommends that local economic development planning involves multilingual outreach, cultural-focused business incubators, and inclusive zoning. The findings have implications for policymakers who want to encourage immigrant entrepreneurship and sustain economic inclusiveness at the suburban level.

Keywords: immigrant; economic; linguistic; sustainable; ethnic