Overview of Southern Immigration

- Recently portrayed as a New Immigrant Destination (Florida, Texas excluded)
- Southern regions experiencing economic, demographic growth (including retirees).
- Still strong ties to migrant labor, agriculture, and FLCs.
- Forestry is still a powerful force in the rural south (H-2B tree planters in Georgia, North Carolina, Alabama, etc.).
- Service provider networks developed for migrant population (mixed blessing).
Immigrant Economic Opportunity in the Carolinas

- Robust post-IRCA economy
- Many legalized under SAW knew Carolinas as farm workers
- Agriculture: peaches, tobacco, vegetables, Christmas trees, apples, livestock.
- Food Processing: poultry, pork, pickles, crab.
- Fisheries: Vietnamese, Cambodians, Mexicans
- Construction (often hazardous jobs such as working with glass or heavy stone)
- Hospitality industry & golfing communities.
Immigrant Social Opportunity in NC

- Lack of INS enforcement, especially post-9/11
- Well-developed links between smugglers (coyotes) and labor contractors
- Florida – North Carolina FLC Connections
- Developing service provider & church network
- Growing presence of co-ethnics (Latinization of rural America)
Face of NC Immigration

- Primary and secondary migrants
- Several World Regions: Asia, Latin America, Africa, Eastern Europe
- Diverse class, education, social capital backgrounds
- Ethnic diversity
- Linguistic diversity
Latino Diversity

- Latinos are heterogeneous
- Nationalities: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, U.S./Puerto Rico
- Class, education, social capital
- Ethnic background: Mayan, Mixtec, Afro-Caribbean, other Native American
- Language (mixes of Spanish, English, Native American languages)
Changing Face of Latino Immigration, I

- Late 1980s-early 1990s: primarily single Mexican males, working seasonally.
- Elaboration of presence: tiendas, radio, print media, bailes, new economic sectors.
- Increase in new Latin American sending areas (Central America, Southern Mexico, etc.)
- Elaboration of presence: service provider, business response (Food Lion, banks, car sales)
- Invisible becoming visible
Changing Face of Latino Immigration II

- Increasing settlement & family formation (more women, children, abuelos)
- Increasing engagement of churches, schools, health care centers (much of this due to women).
- Images of immigrants as family oriented, religious, hard-working reinforced.
- Anti-immigration voices gradually overwhelmed
Immigrant entrepreneurs common in all study communities.

Favorite businesses: stores, restaurants, immigrant service businesses

Generally founded and run with family labor and own savings (little use of banks, SBA, etc.)

Many businesses located in formerly struggling sections of small towns.
Central pluralist/legalist issue: pluralists celebrate diversity, legalists view it as divisive force in the community.

Many see that communities adapting to immigrant presence is as important as immigrants adapting to community.

Linguistic and cultural training is becoming increasingly important in the global economy.

Most basic appreciation: immigrant food.
Strategies in the Policy Arena

- Local government responsiveness to diversity (e.g. foreign language texts at libraries; sensitivity to immigrant schedules when planning meetings).
- Community-level advocacy for immigrant constituents (e.g. press state to issue drivers’ licenses for public safety reasons)
- Sister city relationships across borders (e.g. Villachuato-Marshalltown)
Civic Participation

- Fostering immigrant participation on local advisory boards about public parks, schools, etc.
- Recognizing the informal nature of much local decision-making, and including non-citizens in these efforts.
- Developing linkages with state institutions concerned with immigrant issues, particularly universities (e.g. UNCG New North Carolinian program)
- Appealing to immigrant employers to support immigrant activities & cultural events.
Confronting the Language Issue

- Hiring adequately trained translators.
- Hiring bilingual staff (immigrants now in their late teens/ twenties)
- Assuring that important documents, announcements, etc. are communicated in appropriate language (e.g. Honduran physician in North Carolina, translating intake forms).
Conclusions

- Opposition to immigration unlikely to stop the flow, but may make immigrants’ lives harder.
- As networks mature, we will see more family migration, with more households with one or more U.S. citizens.
- Increased civic participation & movement into other economic sectors, other neighborhoods.
- Increased immigrant-community partnerships
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