

LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND NEW IMMIGRANT POPULATIONS: THE INADEQUACY OF FEDERAL POLICY

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Various attempts have been made to regulate immigration since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Laws traditionally dealt with quotas and legal immigration without addressing the growing numbers of people overstaying their visas or crossing the borders unchecked or unmonitored. These undocumented individuals settled in gateway communities and disappeared into the fabric of American Society. Until the last twenty years, there have been no attempts to address this population. The conflict between new laws, history, and tradition have resulted in limited enforcement, unclear policy directives, and a governmental “blind eye” to the reality of shifting demographics and their impact. Local communities have been forced to find their own solutions to the influx of new undocumented individuals. The existence of laws that restrict both the presence and ability of undocumented individuals to become functional members of the communities, and the lack of enforcement of these same laws, have led to irreconcilable differences and conflict. Communities are left to struggle without the benefit of clear guidance or policy from those charged with making and enforcing the laws.

Immigration Policy Overview

The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was the first coherent legislative attempt to control illegal immigration (Fix and Passel, 1994). IRCA changed the strategy from intercepting people at the border or apprehending them at their jobs to making the hiring of immigrants who are here illegally a civil and possibly criminal violation. In addition to the employer sanctions, IRCA tracked the immigration status of applicants for welfare. Legal status was also extended to those who had been in the country continuously since 1992. Almost three million residents were legalized as a result. While the amnesty component was successful, the employer sanctions were difficult to enforce due to the preponderance of fraudulent documents and limited enforcement resources.

The next action resulted with the dual passage of the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) and Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA). The IIRIRA allowed the deportation of undocumented immigrants (National Immigration Forum and DeCastro, 2004) under a variety of crimes listed as “aggravated felonies” while stripping the courts of the authority to review the decisions. It also blocked the ability of immigrants to adjust their status and toughened border enforcement. PRWORA made citizenship a requirement for eligibility for public benefits such as ‘Food stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). As a result the burden of these laws fell on the states to provide or deny basic benefits. Not only were the responsibility of the benefits shifted, the costs were shifted as well.

The pattern toward tighter immigration started to reverse itself as the reality of the need for immigrant labor and the difficulties of enforcing current policy became clear. A

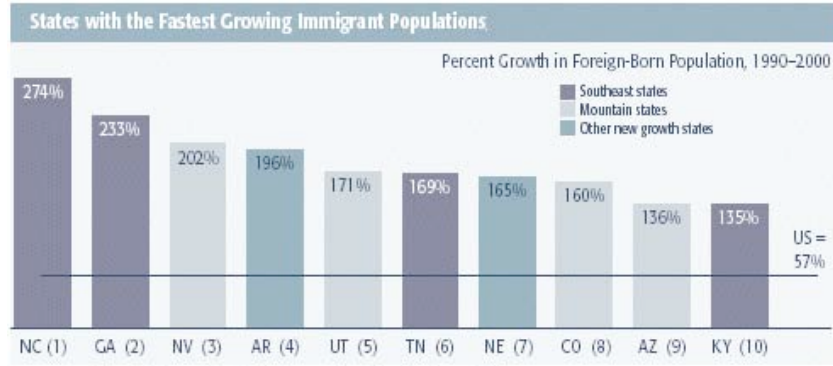
deal on reconciling immigrant status, in recognition of this reality, was imminent until September 11, 2001. While the impact of the Patriot Act and subsequent legislation after September 11th had more of a direct impact of Middle Eastern and South Asian populations, all immigrant groups were affected (National Hispanic Leadership Council, 2004). The increased border security and the tightening of access to documents such as driver's licenses had a chilling effect on undocumented populations in the United States. Tighter borders reduced the migration home during the non-peak working season out of fear of the inability to re-enter the United States. Non-match letters were sent to employers where social security numbers did not match employer names forcing many undocumented workers in regular jobs out of work. Driver's licenses in most states were no longer issued to undocumented individuals forcing them to give up driving or driving illegally. This also denied the ability to obtain key documentation that would provide access to things such as opening bank accounts. Once again the correction process is the subject of political debate. Until a decisive approach is taken by the Federal Government, these laws and subsequent policies remain in effect along with a lack of consistent enforcement.

Immigrant Experience 1990-2000

Examining how the government addresses immigration issues is only part of the picture. The context of the government's action or inaction is equally important. More restrictive policies, with their limited enforcement have done nothing to reduce the flow of newcomers to the United States.

The best analysis of immigration trends between the 1990 and 2000 according to data collected by the United States Census have been conducted by the Urban Institute (2002). Passel, Capps & Fix (2004) used the March 2002 Current Population Survey to analyze the population of undocumented immigrants in the United States. The following statistics are taken from the data presented in these two studies.

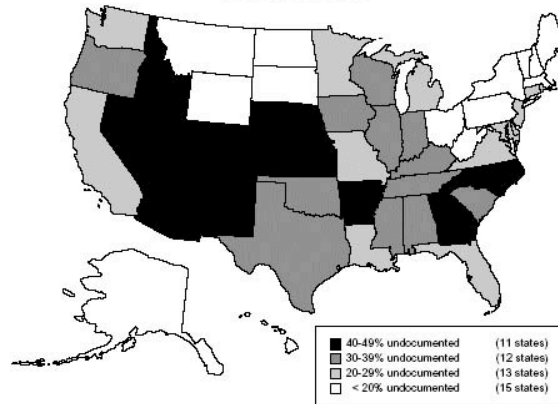
Between 1990 and 2000, according to the census, 13 million immigrants entered the United States. Six states account for 68% of the foreign-born population: California (28%), New York (12%) Texas (9%), Florida (9%), New Jersey (5%), Illinois (5%). This is down from 1990 when 75 percent of the foreign-born population resided in these states. Passel et al (2004) show a slightly different distribution for the undocumented population, with a total of 65 percent of living in the six states: California (27%), Texas (13%), New York (8%), Florida (7%), Illinois (6%), New Jersey (4%). The national average growth rate between 1990 and 2000, according to the census, was 57%. Of the six states with the highest foreign born populations only Texas (91%) exceeded the average. These shifting trends point toward the emergence of new destinations for immigrant populations.



Source: Analysis of 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census data, Urban Institute, 2002.

Census 2000 has shown that foreign-born populations more than doubled in 19 states during the 1990's. New growth states saw an average growth rate of 145 percent, more than double the national average. New growth states and the corresponding increase for foreign-born population include; North Carolina (274%), Georgia (233%), Nevada (202%), Arkansas (196%), Utah (171%), Tennessee (169%), Nebraska (165%), Colorado (160%), Arizona (136%), and Kentucky (135%). Passel et al (2004) have

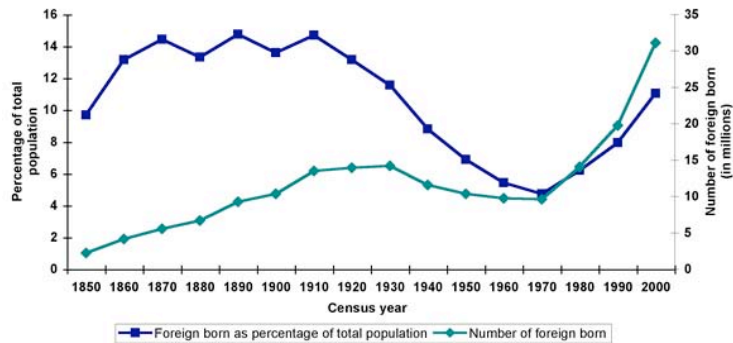
FIGURE 2. SHARE UNDOCUMENTED OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION, BY STATE, 2000



SOURCE: Urban Institute estimates based on Census 2000.

estimated that undocumented individuals make up more than 40 percent of the foreign-born population in 10 states. They also estimate that the rapid growth in Arizona, Georgia, and North Carolina may have moved these states past New Jersey on the list of states with the largest percentages of undocumented populations.

SIZE OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION AND FOREIGN BORN AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL POPULATION, FOR THE UNITED STATES: 1850 TO 2000



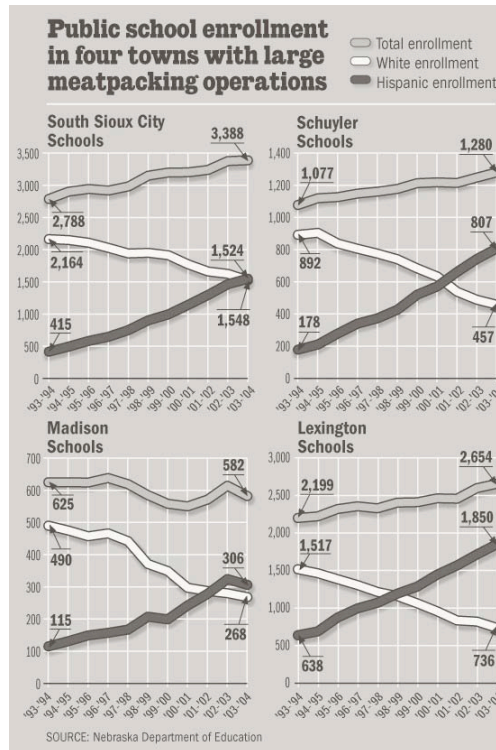
Census 2000 reports that the United States has 31 million immigrants or 11% of the total population. This 11% is still below the record level of 15% in the 1900 Census. Passel, Capps and Fix (2004) estimate there are 9.3 million undocumented immigrants in the country representing 26 percent of the foreign born population. Mexicans make up 57 percent or 5.3 million and 2.2 million or 23 percent are from other Latin American Countries. Asians comprise about 10 percent. Europeans and Canadians about 5 percent and 5 percent from the rest of the world.

What is the impact of the new populations? What is the impact of these new populations on their destinations? The Urban Institute (2004) cites several policy implications. The recent immigrants have fewer marketable skills, lower incomes, and speak less English. They are likely to need benefits and services such as health insurance, interpretation and English courses. Rapid growth states will lack the service infrastructure with few organizations, bilingual teachers and support services available to serve the new immigrants. Welfare reform has left much of this population ineligible for federally funded programs while many of the states restrict access to the state-funded safety net programs. An analysis of undocumented populations by Passel et al (2004) places 6 million individuals in the workforce or 5 percent of the total. The labor force participation rate of undocumented men is 96 percent, exceeding both legal immigrants and US citizens. This is largely due to the younger age of this group and the lower percentage that are disabled, retired, or in school. By contrast, undocumented women are less likely to be in the labor force, only 62% which is lower than women who are US citizens. Passal et al attributes this to a higher proportion of undocumented women being of childbearing age and more likely to have children and stay at home. Undocumented workers dominate the low wage workforce. About two-thirds of undocumented workers earn less than twice the minimum wage compared with one-third of all workers. While undocumented workers are five percent of the total workforce, they comprise 10 percent of the lower wage workers in the United States.

The following three examples illustrate the impact of the new populations on the communities they reside.

CASE 1

As immigrant workers, particularly Hispanics, gain employment in the meat packing industry in Nebraska, the effects on the local schools has been profound. Four meat packing towns South Sioux City, Schuyler, Madison and Lexington have seen the number of Hispanic students surpass the number of white students in the 2003-2004



school year. For example, Schuyler's white enrollment fell 49 percent between the 1993-4 and 2003-4 school years while Hispanic enrollment went up over 450 percent. The district had a net gain of 19 percent. Lexington schools saw a 48 percent decline in white students while experiencing a 290 percent increase in Hispanic students. The district had an 18 percent increase in enrollment. The Madison school district was the exception, only in total enrollment which declined by 9 percent while the number of white students declined by 55 percent and the number of Hispanic students increased by 266 percent. The implication of such population changes impact the education system in general. According to an article in the Omaha World Herald (2004) districts have outgrown their classroom capacity. Schuyler voters, who are generally older and white, have rejected expansion proposals three times. Hispanics are usually unable to vote in such elections because they are not citizens. There is also a need for bilingual teachers compounded by an overall shortage statewide.

CASE 2

Lewis and Paral (2004) did an extensive study on influence of immigrants on various industries in the suburbs of Chicago and potential impact of immigration reform. A total of 14 percent of Illinois workers are foreign born. Fifty percent of the foreign-

born workers arrived in the last ten years, about half from Mexico and a large percentage undocumented. Immigrants comprise 9 percent or more of the workforce in the accommodation and food service industry; the administrative, support and waste management industry; and manufacturing. Employment of Mexicans in these industries increased by 200 percent or more in the 1990's. Lewis and Paral estimate a moderate to high reliance (10 percent or more) on foreign-born workers growing between 2000 - 2010 in business services, health services, eating and drinking places, engineering, accounting and management services. The largest group of newcomers, the Mexicans, work in large numbers in the eating and drinking places. The authors examined the Mexican population in more detail reporting that as a group they average 28 years of age, seven years younger than non-Mexican new arrivals. It was also reported that 37% had a high school education and 37% spoke English "well or better". Overall, foreign-born comprise 26 percent of Chicago's workforce, a rapidly increasing 17 percent of suburban workers, and only 2.8 percent of workers outside the Chicago area.

CASE 3

The Farmingville, New York community, while not bearing the numbers that impact other areas of the country, has been an epicenter of the national policy debate. This will be the focus of later discussion.

The Hispanic Immigration - Invasion Or Assimilation

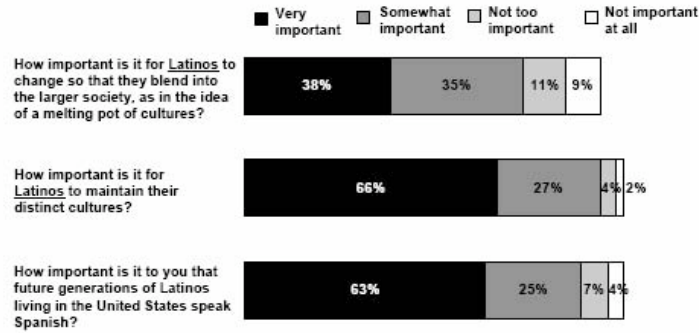
The largest of the immigrant groups in the United States are the collection of nationalities that comprise the Hispanic category. The Hispanic designation adopted in the 1970s refers to anyone residing in the United States of Spanish-speaking origin. While there is an extensive debate between the terms Hispanic and Latino and the differences they may represent, for the purposes of this paper they may be used interchangeably. Hispanics trace their origins to numerous countries who common thread is the Spanish language. The cultures and traditions are largely heterogeneous although there are some commonalities. Due to the Census designation, despite the differences, Hispanics are placed in one large general category.

The rapid influx of Hispanics into the United States and large increase in population related to other groups has led the anti-immigration movement to term this growth an "invasion." Is the Hispanic immigration different from any of the previous ethnic migrations? Are the Hispanics assimilating into the mosaic called America or do they remain isolated?

Chart 42

Assimilation of Latinos

Among all Latinos...



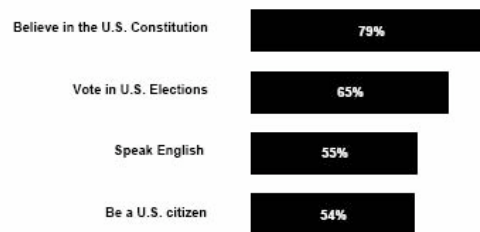
Note: Don't know/refused responses not shown
 Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Latinos: Education, January 2004 (conducted August - October 2003)

The Pew Hispanic Center has been a leader in surveying and understanding the Hispanic experience in America. The Pew Hispanic Center (2004) surveyed political and civic participation which included the shifting characteristics of Latinos. In looking at assimilation issues, 73 percent felt that it was very or somewhat important to change to blend into the United States. This can be contrasted to the 93 percent who felt it was very or somewhat important for Latinos to maintain their distinct cultures. However, 70 percent of the Latinos also felt that it was very or somewhat important for all racial or ethnic groups to blend. Similarly, 83 percent felt it was very or somewhat important for all racial and ethnic groups to maintain their distinct cultures.

Chart 44

Perceptions of What An Immigrant Must Do To Say They Are a Part Of American Society

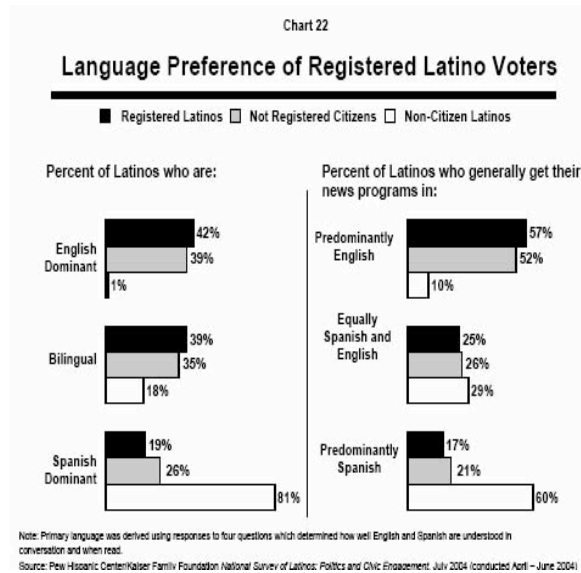
The percent of all Latinos who say an immigrant has to do each of the following to say they are a part of American society:



Source: Pew Hispanic Center/Kaiser Family Foundation National Survey of Latinos: Politics and Civic Engagement, July 2004 (conducted April - June 2004)

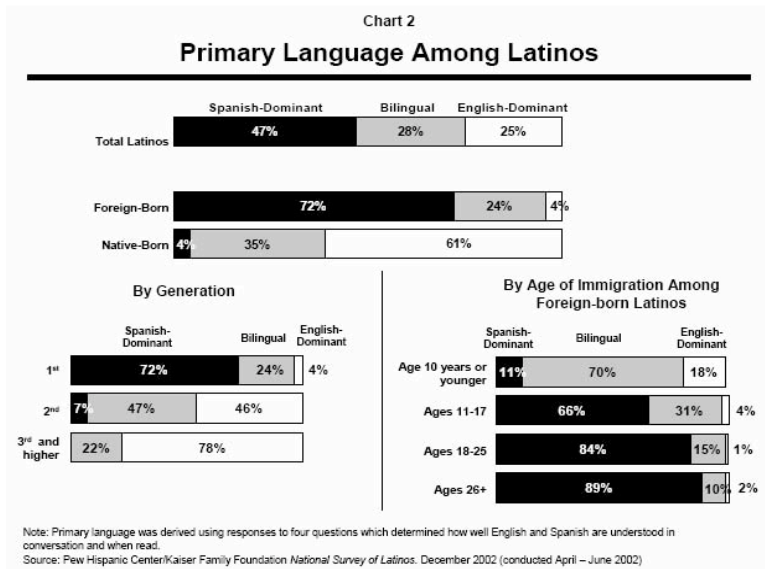
Regarding language, 88 percent felt it was very or somewhat important for future generations of Latinos to speak English. When asked what an immigrant must do to become part of American society, 79 percent responded believe in the Constitution, 65

percent vote in the United States, 55 percent speak English, and 54 percent became United States citizens.

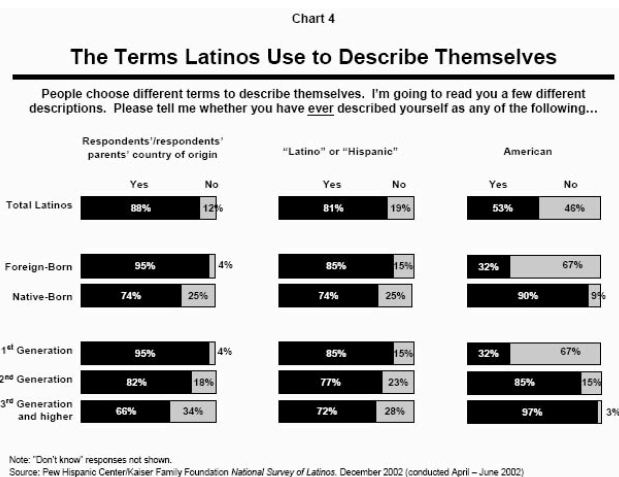


Eighty-three percent of Latinos say the United States is made up of many cultures rather than a core Anglo-Protestant culture while 10 percent disagree. Ninety-two percent of all Americans say the United States is made up of many cultures and only 5 percent disagree. A review of language preferences amongst Latinos showed that 42 percent of registered voters were English dominant versus 39 percent of non-registered voters and 1 percent of non-citizens. The categories were reversed when looking at Spanish dominant with 19 percent for registered voters, 26 percent for non-registered voters, and 81 percent for non-citizens. Thirty-nine percent of registered voters categorized themselves as bilingual as opposed to 35 percent of non-registered voters and 18 percent of non-citizens.

A general survey of Latinos by the Pew Hispanic Center (2002) looked more at native-born versus non-native born issues and changes between the generations in the United States. Eighty-nine percent of Latinos felt it was necessary to learn English to succeed in the United States compared to 86 percent of whites and 86 percent of African-Americans. Foreign-born Latinos felt stronger than native-born Latinos 91 versus 86 percent regarding learning English. Similar results, on the necessity to learn English, were found for Spanish dominant (92%) when compared to Bilingual (88%) and English dominant (86%).

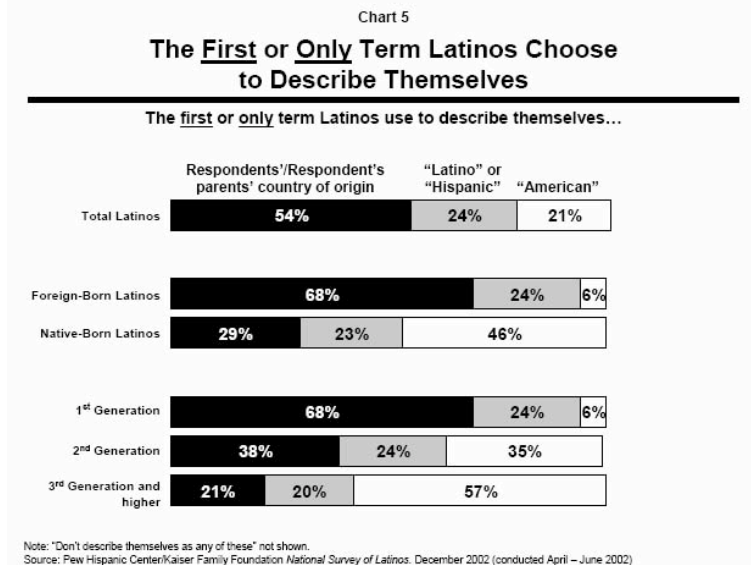


In examining primary language, 72 percent of foreign-born Latinos were Spanish-dominant while only 29 percent of the native-born were. The opposite applied as well, 4 percent of foreign-born Latinos were English-dominant while 61 percent of the native-born were. The most compelling argument for assimilation, at least in terms of language, were between the generations. Spanish-dominance was seen in 72 percent of first generation, 7 percent of second generation, and 0 percent of third generation Latinos. Spanish-dominance also varied by age for foreign-born Latinos, at ages 10 and younger only 11 percent were Spanish-dominant, in the 11-17 age group 66 percent were, in the 18-25 age group 84 percent were, and age 26 and over 89 percent were. Most of the 10 and under group (70%) were bilingual, while 31 percent of the 11-17 were bilingual.



Self-described affiliation is a telling statistic that will provide and insight to assimilation. Foreign-born Latinos used their country of origin to describe themselves 95 percent of the time compared to 74 percent of native-born. The term Latinos to describe themselves was used by 85 percent of foreign-born and 74 percent of native-born Latinos. While only 32 percent of foreign-born Latinos used the term American to describe themselves, 90 percent of the native-born used the term. In comparing the generations this distinction

was more apparent with 32 percent of the first generation Latinos using the term American, jumping dramatically to 85 percent of second generation and 97 percent of third generation Latinos. Similarly, the first and only term used to describe themselves



by first generation Latinos was 68 percent identifying with their country of origin, 24 percent Latino or Hispanic, and 6 percent American. This shifted dramatically in the second generation to 38 percent with their own country, 24 percent Latino or Hispanic, and 35 percent American. Further shifts were seen in the third generation with 21 percent with the country of origin, 20 percent Latino or Hispanic, and 57 percent American.

As a group Hispanics have demonstrated a need and desire to become part of America. Over time, they have learned the language and identified with America and American values. The patterns of assimilation are probably not too different from the generations of immigrants before them. Why is the rapid influx of Hispanics into the United States referred to as an “invasion”? The following case study will shed some light on the issue and reaction in the destination communities.

Farmingville – A Case Study

Nowhere has the clash of shifting demographics and inefficient and broken immigration policies been more evident than in Farmingville, New York. At one point considered the epicenter of the national immigration debate, Farmingville has received national attention on numerous occasions. It has also been the subject of an award winning documentary that has been on the film festival circuit and aired on national public television.

Men standing on the corners, looking for work is not new to Farmingville. It started about 15 years ago with the Portuguese. As they became assimilated into the community, and the community’s Portuguese roots grew, the original group of workers was replaced by a newer group, primarily Mexicans. How, why, and when the first Mexicans appeared in Farmingville is not exactly clear. What is clear, it that their assimilation will not be as easy or complete.

Farmingville is a suburban hamlet about 50 miles east of New York City, on Long Island. It is part of Brookhaven Town, one of the largest suburban towns in the nation. Farmingville cannot be distinguished from its neighboring hamlets. There are no clear cut borders or landmarks that separate it. However, it is Farmingville that has drawn national attention. A hamlet of roughly 16,500 people, the population is over 90 per cent white. With the influx of between 1000 to 2000 new Hispanic day laborers the demographics noticeably shifted. The middle class community consists of a mix of old and new single family houses, there is no multi-family housing. Commercial establishments can be found along an east/west road that bisects the community and a north/south six-lane road near the eastern border. The attractiveness of Farmingville, to day laborers, is the relatively central Long Island location and easy access to three major north/south routes and the Long Island Expressway that runs east/west across the island. Perhaps the influx of day laborers is tied to the proximity of one of the northeast's largest nursery wholesalers, with a large landscaping clientele, and the numerous small construction companies in the area.

After over 10 years of men standing on the corners, someone took notice and brought it to the attention of the local civic association in April, 1998. In May, 1998 the first community meeting was held by the Farmingville Civic Association. Over 300 people attended, largely against the presence of the men on the corners. People speaking out sympathetically about the men were shouted down and harassed, including representatives from the local Roman Catholic church. The government officials present were short on answers, but listened to what was being said. Several areas were to be explored including existing laws, INS intervention and policing. In searching the internet, residents came across various groups such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) and Tri-State Immigration Moratorium (TRIM). By the second community meeting in July, 1998 attended by approximately 250 residents, donations were being taken for a new citizens group and FAIR's book "How to Win the Immigration Debate" was available for the taking. Again, there was no resolution in sight and it was becoming apparent no deportations would occur. A third smaller meeting of less than 100 occurred in September. As with issues in the past, it was felt the issue was dying down without a resolution. The assumption could not be more wrong.

In October, 1998 the Sachem (named after the school district) Quality of Life Organization took place and brought about 125 people together. In addition to the litany of complaints about the Farmingville situation, the American Patrol video of a July 4, 1996 attack on anti-immigration demonstrators was shown. The implication was this could happen in Farmingville. The group continued to organize and several strategies seem to emerge. The Sachem group attempts to "take over" the local civic association. The Sachem group makes its presence known at several community groups since general attendance is usually small. Twenty-five to thirty people can reshape several of these organizations. In a twist, the group overwhelms the Town of Brookhaven's Anti-Bias Task Force to ensure no action is taken in support of the day laborers.

In January, 1999 the County Executive convenes a Task Force to look at the issue and make recommendations to ease the situation before large numbers of men return in the Spring. The County police stated for the record, and continue to maintain, the crime rate is not going up in Farmingville. The school district showed no significant increase in enrollment due to day laborers. An operating hiring site in another Long Island town,

with government support, is discussed. Issues such as no soliciting and loitering plus laws, as well as immigration sweeps are brought to the table.

On February 7, 1999 Sachem Quality of Life (SQL), as it is now known, emerges. At an organizing meeting in a local home, outside organizers paint a scenario of first men, then women, then children, then welfare, then overcrowded schools, then gangs, and finally crime. Job centers are equated to job magnets, "Farmingville will start to look like Tiajuana." An outside organizer is stationed on Long Island to help. Problems with other areas were cited – Nebraska, Salt Lake City, Iowa. It was stated that San Rafael brought in 8 INS agents and the number of day laborers dropped from 600 to 80 because the hiring hall was killed. The group was told that probable cause for street stops can be established and anti-loitering laws will work.

The County Executive Task Force meetings continued. The INS came and stated that there were no "resources, manpower, or time" to come out to investigate. Only egregious violators would be found. Out of five employers investigated, only one yielded results. At one meeting SQL's leader called the situation an "abuse to the community, "conspiracy", the situation is being used to "fill church seats." The first of three bills was introduced by the Suffolk County Legislature, it was designed to stop street hiring by posting no soliciting signs on the main roads in Farmingville. It was defeated. Next, a proposed no soliciting law was introduced and defeated, and finally, a resolution to sue the INS was introduced and defeated. On the County Task Force, it becomes clear the SQL representatives will not yield an inch, the weekly meeting become monthly and eventually fade away producing no results.

Somewhere in the following months a group of SQL members fails to oust the President in an election and forms a splinter group Citizens for a Better Brookhaven (or some similar name). A two-pronged approach emerges, CBB works closely with a more mainstream anti-immigrant national group and comes forward with calmer, more rational rhetoric and a more vocal, in your face SQL move forward with the backing and advice of a more fringe group. SQL initiates a mailbox leafleting campaign and weekly street corner demonstration opposite the workers, even "taking over" one the sites. Contractors are followed with demonstrations at the work sites or contractor's houses. A protest is held at the Presiding Officer of the County Legislature's house as evidence of bolder and bolder actions. The rhetoric heats up at an even more furious pace. An SQL spokesman in Newsday, Long Island primary newspaper on August 24, 2000 states "People who are against this resolution are stating they are for tax evasion, rape, manslaughter [and] violations of labor laws. August 26, 2000, another SQL spokesman, "I might as well be in France during the occupation of the Nazis ... It is an invasion followed by an occupation." August 31, 2000, "We'd rather have 10 tanks on the street than 400 illegals." September 1, 2000, an SQL member to Newsday while holding a sign reading "Illegal Alien Gets Away With Manslaughter", "Farmingville is not going to surrender. It's that simple." September 18, 2000, in front of the Presiding Officer of the County Legislature's house, from Newsday, "Desperate times call for desperate measures." A shape up site is a "glorified toilet." "If we sound hysterical, we're not, but we're very, very angry." September 18, 2000, two white males take two day laborers to an abandoned warehouse, under the pretense of providing work and attempt to murder them. Both attackers have neo-Nazi tattoos on their bodies. The entire discussion is forever changed.

To avoid the disruptive tactics of anti-day laborer forces a group of people begin to meet in April, 2000 to find alternate positive solutions to the Farmingville situation. A grant funded "Listening Project" conducted 225 structured interviews with all parties involved in the situation. The Listening Project documents that the majority of the community is concerned with the visible numbers and two-thirds of those interviewed are receptive to reasonable solutions. An initial group of about 15 people organize a platform that will seek reasonable, peaceful alternatives. The group lines up political support for a September press conference. The weekend before the press conference SQL members picket the Presiding Officer's house and the next day the two workers are attacked. The public outrage over the beatings combined with the support of the Presiding Officer set up a powerful press conference attended by virtually every local and New York City media outlet, as well as national attention. Brookhaven Citizens for Peaceful Solutions (BCPS) is born providing a "Call for Peace" (a front page headline) and the cover for the politicians that have blocked anti-immigrant legislation, as well as an organization for those willing to take positive action. As the debate changes forever, the momentum begins to swing away from the anti-immigrant groups. A carefully crafted message wins over the majority of the media.

In the weeks following the beatings, press attention focuses on the manhunt for the two attackers. SQL invites the leader of a radical anti-immigrant group for a visit in October. Approximately 200 people attend the event which receives moderate press attention. Two days later, over 2500 show up for a candlelight vigil calling for peace, this includes a number of politicians and provides more front page headlines. Working with several politicians and Catholic Charities, the human service component of the local archdiocese, a plan for a "Community Opportunity Center" is developed, with a shape up component for the workers and general services for the entire community. The vote gets a veto proof two-thirds majority vote despite very vocal opposition. The next step, by those opposed to the presence of the workers, is a massive campaign to get the County Executive to veto the measure. In the face of national attention, the battle over the veto is fought. The funding is vetoed by the County Executive and the override battle takes place. Several legislators under intense political pressure switch their votes. The anti-immigrant forces pepper the phone lines of key legislators and conduct a massive disinformation campaign. The New York Attorney General weighs in by stating for the record that such a site is not illegal. A massive political showdown occurs at the override vote. The funding resolution veto fails to get overridden and give some new life to the anti-immigrant forces. A true stalemate emerges with neither side having the ability to develop any solution. A short lived breather follows.

In an effort to regroup, meetings with pro-center forces try to produce new strategies. On July 2-3, 2001 a strategy session is held on Long Island. This invitation only session involves key local and national groups, such as the National Council of La Raza and the National Immigration Forum, as well as key funders. It receives front page attention. Two key strategies are brought forth, deliver a positive immigration message while marginalizing the opposition and organizing a broad-based coalition of organizations to support immigrants in general. As a result, the Long Island Immigrant Alliance (LIIA) begins to organize with 20-25 participating organizations to start. Not to be outdone SQL organizes its own "Day of Truth" conference for August. Key anti-immigrant leaders and other speakers representing different points of view of the

movement are assembled on August 4-5, 2001. The first act of to demonstrate the potential power of a pro-immigration coalition brings together 17 groups on the Friday before the conference to denounce it covered by all the regional press cover it. The disruptions by several anti-immigrant leaders actually help get the message across. Between 100-125 attendees gather at the national conference. Despite the positive spin put on by SQL, it is another blow for their efforts by shifting away the momentum gained by the defeat of the center. Soon after, in a legislative hearing over a new piece of legislation aimed at contractors, a retiring County Legislator, on the public record, directs comments to the SQL president that if it was his community they would be out there "with baseball bats." This again leads to front page headlines and key news stories. The meeting to determine what sanctions are to be taken against the Legislator is scheduled for September 11, 2001. It is September 11th that sends all sides searching for a new direction canceling an imminent guest worker/amnesty deal on the national level. September 11th didn't end the conflict in Farmingville. SQL split into two factions with new leadership based in a different part of Suffolk County. On July 5, 2003 a house with a Mexican family had fireworks thrown inside and burnt to the ground with the family barely escaping unhurt. Four Sachem high school students were convicted of arson and hate crimes in the incident. BCPS in conjunction with the Workplace Project open a center in Farmingville to provide services to workers. The old SQL leadership is now attempting to build a new organization as the situation in Farmingville remains basically unchanged.

What was learned and what are the implications? First and foremost, immigration laws and their enforcement are the responsibility of the Federal government. There can be endless debate on what the laws are intended to do, how laws could and should be enforced, or what is practical and realistic. However, without a clear and consistent Federal policy there can nothing more than further debate and a variety of local interpretations of immigration law that often end up mired in the legal system. If current immigration laws are not reflective of today's reality, they should be changed to meet that reality. In selectively choosing what to enforce, situations such as Farmingville are created. While it may be an extreme case, it represents how communities around the country struggle with changing demographics. Second, there are no solutions without the involvement of government. Solutions in Farmingville failed because government, at all levels, failed to work diligently on solutions. In attempting to take the middle ground, an appearance of paralysis was present and the status quo was the policy. The anger generated by governmental inaction seemed preferable to taking the wrong action and offending at least one of the sides. In Long Island communities where the local government became involved in seeking solutions, progress was made. Hiring centers or the talk of hiring centers, as well as other initiatives have become reality in several communities lessening tensions and bringing groups together. In communities where government has taken a "hands off" approach the problems and tensions continue. The third lesson that will be discussed, and there are several more, is related to the United States rich heritage of immigration. The U.S. is a nation of immigrants, built by immigrants. On Long Island, especially, ethnic groups migrated out of New York City to establish their homes. Many of the ethnic groups in the area are not more than one or two generations from when their families first arrived and faced the same adversity and discrimination. Extreme anti-immigrant strategies do not have traction with most ethnic

groups. Organizing broad-based coalitions of ethnic, advocacy and religious groups has delivered positive messages and tempered extreme negative reactions to local situations.

The issue is complex. If there were simple solutions, then the problem would be solved. Without guidance from the Federal government, communities will be left on their own to struggle with issues that are beyond their control. Communities struggle to find solutions that can be implemented locally within a context of unclear national policy and these solutions are subject to change as events unfold. It has become clear that if the problem is ignored, it will not go away.

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