Impacts of U.S. Immigration Policies: A Look at Local Communities’ Responses

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National and Local Considerations

- The limits of immigration policy
  - Effective immigration policy requires an integrated approach
- A national policy issue with important consequences at the local level
  - Local actions have significant implications
  - Local response to immigration should be part of a comprehensive policy approach

Immigration in Historical Perspective

Ten Source Countries with the Largest Populations in the United States as Percentages of the Total Foreign-Born Population, 2008


Immigrant Legal Status

Source: Passel and Cohn, Pew Hispanic Center, 2010
Important Developments in Recent Decades

- Less circular migration of single men
- More one way migration with families
- Growing population of children of immigrant parents

I want to stay here because of my son; he has more opportunities here - to study, to learn another language, to make a career much better than in Mexico (woman with 2 year old son).


Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2008 and the 1990 and 2000 Decennial Censuses
A Population Rooted in the U.S.

22% of all children have at least one immigrant parent

32% in New York

Growth in Foreign-Born Population, 2000-2006

Source: Kevin Jack, New York State Data Center
### The New Reality Throughout the Nation

- Increased immigrant presence
- Long-term presence of immigrants

### Are Immigrants a Community Asset or Burden?

*Immigrants don’t know the language, yet they know the business.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigrants enrich the cultural experience and bring new skills – children broaden other children’s views just by being in school with them.</th>
<th>An Immigrant Business Next to an Empty Storefront</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The community needs jobs, not more people.</td>
<td>To have an influx of people coming into the community, unless they’re bringing big money with them, I don’t see how it will help the community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Immigrants: A Community Asset or Burden?


Immigration-Related Bills and Resolutions in the States

National Conference of State Legislatures, April 27, 2010
Proposed Ordinances Specifically Regulating Immigrants or Relations with Immigrants Since 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content of Ordinance</th>
<th>Ordinance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restrictive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employer Sanctions</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanctions Against Landlords</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as Official Language</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Support Immigration Authorities</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restrictions on Day Labor</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>154</td>
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Source: Web Search by Pilar A. Parra and Medalis Trelles, September 15, 2010

Immigrant Integration and Community Development

- Ongoing need to integrate immigrants into social and economic life
- Challenging environment resulting from unauthorized immigration, increased law enforcement, and strong anti-immigrant sentiments
  - Reduced community social integration
- Need for intensified community efforts to promote immigrant integration
Challenges Facing Immigrants

...to open a bank account one has to have a Social Security number, ...we can not have credit, ... people know we carry the money, ...we suffer robberies

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...without transportation you can not do anything ...I have to pay $10-20 for the taxi or the “raitero”

Imigrants Meeting Basic Needs

Overcoming the Challenges

- Reliance on fellow immigrants does not necessarily lead to the best employment opportunities
- Immigrants who are self-reliant find better jobs, earn higher wages and have higher household incomes
- Social ties with established community members are most important in helping immigrants to become self-reliant

Forging Self-Reliance

- Reaching beyond a close circle of family and friends
- Connecting with established community members to get information and advice
- Better endowed persons are able to make such connections
  - Education
  - Immigration status
  - English language ability
Making Immigrants a Community Asset: What Can Communities Do?

• Provide English language training

I am in charge of all the manual labor on the farm ... I do the hiring for the season and the farmer has given me a lot of responsibility ... I tried to learn English from the beginning and that really helped me when I talked directly to the farmer, and not through the crew leader.

If immigrants settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in to provide English language training?

![Graph showing the importance of providing English language training among immigrants and illegal immigrants.](Source: Parra and Pfeffer, Empire State Poll, 2008)
Organization Most Appropriate to Integrate Immigrants into the Community

- Churches
- Government Agencies
- Private Service Providers
- Civic Organizations
- Don't Know
- Parent Teacher Association
- No Organization Should Help
- Other Organization

Source: Pfeffer and Parra, Empire State Poll, 2009

Making Immigrants a Community Asset: What Can Communities Do?

- Provide opportunities for immigrants to interact with other community members
- The importance of community institutions
  - Schools
  - Churches
- Support of local efforts must be part of a comprehensive policy approach
What Can Be Done?

• Support programs to integrate immigrants into community social and economic life
  – Civic engagement
  – Inclusive policies in education, law enforcement, community planning, housing
• Support programs that encourage immigrant self-reliance
  – English language training
  – Vocational education
• Expand immigrant access to health care and education, especially for children

Going Beyond Immigration Control
A Comprehensive Policy Approach

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>– Border control</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Rural development in Mexico</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Legal employment opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Immigrant integration</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Access to health care and education</td>
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<tr>
<td>– Development of community programs for immigrant integration</td>
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