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The Needs of Georgia's New Latinos

A Policy Agenda for the Decade Ahead

by Jorge H. Atiles and Stephanie A. Bohon

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The Needs of Georgia's New Latinos: A Policy Agenda for the Decade Ahead

Foreword

The Latino population in Georgia has nearly tripled over the last decade, increasing the number of Latinos in the state to nearly half a million. This population is younger, more male, and less educated than other Georgians, and their families and households tend to be larger. The state's expanding economy and prosperity have attracted Latinos, who generally find employment in just a handful of industries (e.g., poultry, construction, textile, and landscaping). Many Latino immigrants have only recently arrived in the United States, and they must adapt to life in a new country as well as to life in Georgia.

This policy paper by Jorge Atiles, Assistant Professor of Housing and Consumer Economics, and Stephanie Bohon, Assistant Professor of Sociology, is the culmination of a two-year pilot study funded by the University of Georgia Research Foundation and the Office of International Public Service and Outreach. It examines the unmet needs of Latinos and the challenges confronting Latino-serving agencies in the state. *The Needs of Georgia's New Latinos: A Policy Agenda for the Decade Ahead* outlines important problems and issues related to employment, transportation, housing, child care, health care, crime, community relations, and education that warrant the attention of policymakers. The authors suggest that governmental agencies will need to add new services and expand certain services that are currently being provided in order to meet the needs of a growing clientele.

The authors wish to acknowledge the research support of Monica Alzate, Assistant Professor of Social Work at Oklahoma State University. The also are grateful to University of Georgia Family and Consumer Sciences extension agents in six counties who assisted in the data-collection effort: Lizia Auger (DeKalb County), Joann Cavis (Muscogee County), Debbie Wilburn (Hall County), Debbie Purvis (Colquitt County), Lisa Jordan (Liberty County), and Helen Gamble (Whitfield County).

The Public Policy Research Series, published by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government, presents the results of objective and systematic research on the complex policy problems and issues confronting the state of Georgia and its local governments. The growing Latino population and the associated issues of immigrant adaptation create service-delivery challenges that are likely to confront state and local policymakers for some time to come. We are pleased to offer this paper as part of our policy series.

James L. Ledbetter
Director, Carl Vinson Institute of Government

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Authors' Note

It is important to distinguish between the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino*. Hispanic refers to people whose native language is Spanish or who are descendents of Spanish-speaking ancestors. Latino is generally used in the United States to describe U.S. residents of Latin American origin (although, technically, a Latino is anyone from Spain, France, Italy, and Portugal). Even the more general usage of the term Latino is confusing, however, because Latin America includes Spanish-, French-, and Portuguese-speaking nations. In the United States, most Latinos are Hispanics (i.e., they are from or have ancestors from Spanish-speaking Latin American countries), but there are exceptions such as Haitians and Brazilians, for example. Additionally, many Latin American countries such as Guatemala, Mexico, and Peru have indigenous populations whose native language is not Spanish.

The use of the term Latino is further complicated by the fact that there are disagreements over Latin America's geographic boundaries. Some researchers do not include the Caribbean as part of Latin America; others do. However, most Americans would recognize Caribbean natives such as Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans as Latinos (and Hispanics). On the other hand, residents from Jamaica, Haiti, the British Virgin Islands, and the West Indies generally are not considered to be Hispanic.

For the purpose of this study, the term Latino is used to describe the population that we studied. It is the most appropriate term to describe the respondents, mainly because all came from Latin American nations (or were the U.S.-born ancestors of Latin American immigrants). These nations included Mexico, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Cuba, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Colombia, and Chile. The term Hispanic is less accurate, as some of the respondents are indigenous Central Americans who are not native Spanish speakers (or of Spanish-speaking descent). In this study, all respondents were able to speak and understand Spanish, although it might not have been their first language. For simplicity, the term Latino is also used when describing related data from external data sources such as the U.S. Bureau of the Census, although such data refers to both Latinos and Hispanics.

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Executive Summary

Between 1990 and 2000, the Latino population in the United States increased by 58 percent. Unlike in past decades, when most Latino growth occurred in Florida, Texas, and California, this new growth was remarkable because much of it occurred in the southeastern states, particularly Arkansas, North Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. In Georgia alone, the Latino population nearly tripled in the last decade to almost half a million.

The prosperity of the 1990s was a key factor in attracting Latinos to Georgia. The increase in high-paying jobs attracted new residents from all over the United States, including well-educated, highly skilled Latinos. With an expanding economy, native Georgians in low-wage, low-skill jobs were able to take higher-paying jobs, leaving opportunities for many Latinos (particularly recent immigrants) to fill needed positions in the poultry, construction, textile, and landscaping industries. As more and more Latinos came to Georgia, migration networks were established so that Latinos all over the United States and Latin America became increasingly aware of the job opportunities that Georgia offers.

Because the changes to Georgia's population are so recent, policymakers and service providers in Georgia lack sufficient data regarding the needs of the Latino population in the state. Increasingly, they are struggling to find adequate venues to address the needs of this group and at the same time ease community relations and promote economic development. Additionally, they must find funds to make established programs accessible to a population that generally has low levels of literacy and limited English-speaking skills.

The massive influx of Latinos to Georgia creates a number of additional policy challenges. The growth of Georgia's population (Latino and non-Latino), while stimulating the state's economy, is increasingly straining transportation, education, and other infrastructures. The introduction of a new and sizeable minority group to the state has raised issues regarding the recognition of Latinos as a cognizable group and the facilitation of race and ethnic relations beyond black and white. Finally, the considerable portion of Latinos who are not only foreign-born but also recent immigrants creates challenges regarding the implementation and funding of new programs that will help this population adapt to a different culture.

A two-year study was undertaken to assess the needs of Georgia's new Latinos to aid policymakers in meeting these challenges. This research was conducted as a pilot study to identify key issues affecting La-

tinos and Latino-serving agencies in Georgia and then construct an instrument for a later quantitative, systematic survey of the state. It is hoped that these findings will offer policymakers a fuller understanding of the issues regarding Latinos in Georgia and that the results can also be used by agencies to document the need for changes in current programs and staffing.

We interviewed key informants working with the Latino population and conducted focus groups in Spanish with new Latino residents in six geographically and economically diverse counties with sizeable Latino populations: Hall, Whitfield, Liberty, Colquitt, Muscogee, and DeKalb Counties.

Six policy questions were addressed:

1. What are the most pressing needs of Georgia's Latino population?
2. How well are agencies such as police and fire departments, social services, and schools prepared to meet these needs, and what obstacles do they face?
3. How do the needs of Georgia's Latinos vary across counties?
4. What local-area policies have been particularly successful in addressing the new challenges posed by Georgia's Latinos?
5. What problems are related to immigration, and which are common to all Latinos—both native and immigrant?
6. What issues are unique to Georgia, and what issues are shared by other southern states facing a rapid increase in their Latino population?

Regardless of whether or not they are foreign-born, Latino immigrants face discrimination in employment and housing and struggle with language barriers and adjusting to a different culture.

The results of this study reveal the need for new policies regarding employment, transportation, housing, child care, health care, crime, community relations, and education. The most pressing needs of Latinos in Georgia pertain to transportation; housing; acquiring English language skills and obtaining needed information in Spanish; provision of interpreters in key service areas such as hospitals and schools; and information regarding their rights and responsibilities as employees, students, tenants, drivers, and Georgia residents. Urban counties generally have better transportation and housing infrastructures but also a higher incidence of consumer fraud and other crimes committed against Latinos. Rural counties have fewer Latinos who are not regularly employed.

Across the state, low levels of educational attainment, especially high school completion, are common among Latinos. Regardless of whether or not they are foreign-born, Latino immigrants face discrimination in

employment and housing and struggle with language barriers and adjusting to a different culture. Georgia's service providers have been quite responsive, but they often lack the funds to make necessary changes and to hire bilingual/bicultural staff. Despite these difficulties, several local areas have had some notable successes. Whitfield County has created an alliance with a Mexican University in order to provide bilingual/bicultural staff in the classrooms. DeKalb County has built day labor centers to protect and offer services to men who work occasional jobs. Hall County has started a public transportation service. Colquitt County has obtained corporate sponsorship to run preschool programs for Latino children and recently built a migrant health clinic.

Georgia's situation is different from traditional gateway states because the population transformation has been so sudden, and much needs to be done in a short period of time. On the other hand, Georgia has not had to deal with entrenched negative attitudes toward Latinos that create problems in other states. Georgia's situation is also different from other emerging gateway states in the South such as North Carolina, Arkansas, and Tennessee because the influx of Latinos is considerably larger. The potential for Georgia's new Latinos to wield considerable economic and political power is much larger.

The findings and the policy implications of this research on the needs of the growing Latino population in the state suggest that lawmakers and selected state agencies consider the following courses of action:

- Increase bilingual/bicultural staff in various agencies that provide housing, education, health care, and other essential services to Latinos to ease their transition into Georgia's economy, culture, and way of life.
- Provide job training (in Spanish and at low literacy levels) for unskilled Latino workers and formalize the day labor practices to protect both employers and employees. Additionally, both employers and employees need to be educated regarding labor laws and entitlements.
- Encourage negotiations among businesses, the Department of Labor, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to regularize the work status of valuable employees who work without permits and perpetuate a black market of fraudulent documents.
- Reevaluate the Department of Transportation's requirements for obtaining a Georgia driver's license in order to reduce consumer fraud and legal noncompliance as well as ensure public safety on the road. Additionally, the Department of Transportation should look to improve public transportation and sidewalk development for counties with large pedestrian populations.

- Create and fund programs through the state government that promote the supply of affordable housing for workers. A program should also be implemented to help develop safe and adequate migrant housing for farm workers. State legislators should also increase funding to agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service and the Department of Community Affairs to conduct tenant and homebuyer education programs in Spanish that are designed for low-literacy Latino individuals and families.
- Fund the Cooperative Extension Service to expand its Basic Life Skills programs in housing, child and human development (including child care issues), nutrition, chronic disease, financial and credit management, and work preparedness to aid recent immigrants in their adaptation to Georgia. More human and financial resources are needed to reach the growing Spanish-speaking clientele around the state.
- Appoint a task force under the auspices of the state government to examine Latino access to health care. Particular attention should be paid to the need for bilingual/bicultural health care providers and 911 operators and improvements to health insurance and health service access.
- Promote and fund programs for high school and college recruitment and retention of Latinos through the Department of Education and the Board of Regents to improve low levels of educational attainment among this group. Local schools should also increase the number of parent-teacher liaisons and provide positive role models for young Latinos to stay in schools.
- Work proactively in promoting community relations to prevent backlash targeting Latinos, especially immigrants. County commissioners and city councils can be especially useful in this regard.
- Create a fund, through the state legislature, that can be used for the next 10 years to address all the needs identified here and those identified by the Governor's Hispanic Affairs Commission. This fund could empower agencies around the state to expand their roles to address the needs of Latino clients.

Introduction

In the past decade, the U.S. Latino and Hispanic population grew by 58 percent, bringing the total Latino population to more than 35 million, the largest minority group in the United States.[1] In the southern United States alone, the Latino population grew from about 6.7 million in 1990 to about 11.6 million in 2000, and it is expected to double again by the year 2025 (Torres 2000). Traditionally, growth has been concentrated in three southern states: Texas, California, and Florida. This latest pattern of rampant growth throughout the southeast is therefore a significant change. In fact, 10 southern states (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia) saw their Latino populations more than double between 1990 and 2000. Of the states experiencing the most growth, Georgia ranks third, with a 299 percent increase in 10 years. Of the 50 states, Georgia now ranks 11th in total Latino population size, with more than 435,000 Latino residents.[2]

Georgia as a Latino-Receiving State

There are several reasons why Georgia is now a Latino-receiving state. Economic prosperity nationwide has created a demand for workers in the lowest-paying, lowest-skilled jobs. Labor shortages were particularly apparent in the poultry, carpet, and farm industries in the early- and mid-1990s. The 1996 Atlanta Olympics, coupled with massive in-migration of Americans from other states, also created a widespread demand for workers in the construction and landscaping industries. Much of this demand was met through immigration, and most of the immigrants originated from Latin America.

As populations in traditional Latino gateways such as California, Florida, and Texas reach tens of millions, Georgia increasingly is being seen as a haven from the crime, pollution, poverty, and discrimination found in Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, and elsewhere. Latino in-migrants flock to Georgia seeking a better quality of life for themselves and their families. Moreover, increased opportunities for skilled workers in Atlanta, Savannah, and other Georgia metropolitan areas have prompted many white-collar professionals—some of whom are Latino—to relocate to the state. Consequently, at least some of Georgia's Latino growth can be attributed to the movement of Latinos to Georgia from other states.[3]

County Demographic Profiles

The U.S. Bureau of the Census is the best source of information about population change. However, because official counts take place every 10

years, and projections are based on the 10-year counts, census information does not adequately reflect the rapid growth in the Latino population that has taken place in Georgia. Our research and that of others (Guthey 2001; Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 2001) suggests that, in most places, the rapid growth of the Latino population in Georgia occurred mostly after 1994, but the rate of growth varies by county. In Whitfield County, for example, the growth probably began earlier in the decade in response to labor shortages in the carpet industry, whereas the 1996 Olympics helped to spur the growth of the Latino population in metro Atlanta later in the decade (Engstrom 2001). Consequently, what is officially reported as an unprecedented 10-year change in the Latino population is more likely an astonishing 5- or 6-year change, and there is no current evidence for a slowing of this growth.

Although the growth of the Latino population in Georgia is considerable, the total number of Latinos is less impressive. Georgia's Latinos account for only slightly more than 5 percent of the population compared with blacks, who make up 29 percent. As in other states, however, the Latino population in Georgia is not evenly distributed but is heavily concentrated in a handful of counties (see Table 1).

Seven of Georgia's counties are now more than 10 percent Latino, with Whitfield County topping the list at 22 percent. Furthermore, Latinos are highly concentrated within counties. Block-level data from Hall County reveals several blocks that are almost exclusively Latino, and Whitfield's urban school district is now more than 50 percent Latino (Crevar 2001).[4] Latinos also make up more than 15 percent of the populations of Atkinson, Hall, and Echols Counties.

Seven of Georgia's counties have more than 10,000 Latino residents. Gwinnett and DeKalb Counties each have more than 50,000 Latinos. In fact, more than half of the state's total Latino population lives in metro Atlanta. Conversely, 22 of Georgia's counties are less than 1 percent Latino, and there are 108 counties with fewer than 1,000 Latino residents. Unlike in 1990, however, there are no longer any counties in Georgia without a Latino presence.

This presence has not gone unnoticed. In a recent poll conducted by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government (Peach State Poll 2001), more than 70 percent of Georgia residents recognized that their county's population had changed between 1991 and 2001. Additionally, nearly 80 percent of metropolitan Atlanta residents noticed a marked shift in the composition of their communities. Figure 1 shows the distribution of Latinos throughout Georgia. The counties with the highest proportion of Latinos are located in urban areas surrounding Atlanta, Columbus, and

Table 1: Georgia's Largest and Smallest Counties, by Latino Population, 2000

County	Rank	Latino Population	Percent Latino
Gwinnett	1	64,137	10.9
DeKalb	2	52,542	7.9
Fulton	3	48,056	5.9
Cobb	4	46,964	7.7
Hall	5	27,242	19.6
Whitfield	6	18,419	22.1
Clayton	7	17,728	7.5
Muscogee	8	8,372	4.5
Cherokee	9	7,695	5.4
Clarke	10	6,436	6.3
Towns	150	67	0.7
Webster	151	66	2.8
Clinch	152	54	0.8
Hancock	153	54	0.5
Warren	154	51	0.8
Miller	155	44	0.7
Clay	156	32	1.0
Taliaferro	157	19	0.9
Quitman	158	13	0.5
Glasscock	159	12	0.5

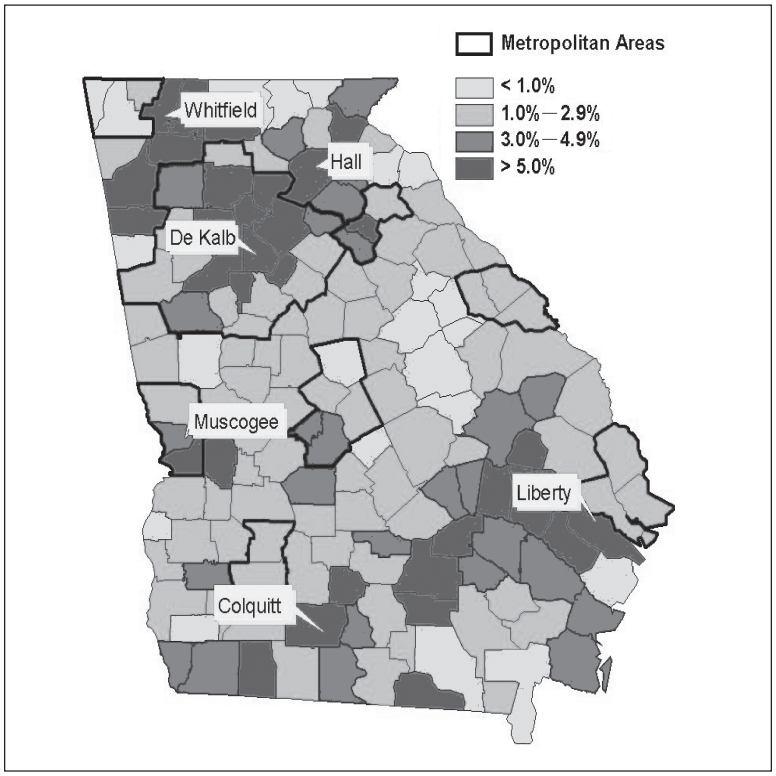
Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000).

Savannah, including the rural textile-producing counties in the north, the poultry-producing counties east of metropolitan Atlanta, and agricultural areas in the south.

Policy Challenges

The state's rapid transformation has created a number of challenges for policymakers. These challenges stem from several sources. First, the growth of the Latino population is part of a larger pattern of population growth in Georgia that is straining the state's infrastructure while at the same time stimulating economic development. Second, the introduction of a sizeable minority group to the state creates issues for agencies charged with equalizing educational and economic opportunities and facilitating race and ethnic relations.[5] Finally, the fact that most of Georgia's Latinos are foreign-born creates a need for new policies and programs to encour-

Figure 1: Percent Hispanic Population of Total, 2000



age adaptation and a demand for bilingual/bicultural staff to implement these policies and programs.

Although no single challenge is more important than any other, the most current pressing need is adaptation: the process by which immigrants learn the necessary means of negotiating all aspects of American life. Immigrants who have adapted can find work, buy goods, attend social functions, and engage in other activities that are considered normal parts of everyday life. In the case of Latino immigrants, adaptation means that Latinos coming to this state learn to speak English and eventually obtain jobs, levels of education, and earnings similar to those of native-born Americans. It also means that Latino immigrants have no more difficulty in completing their day-to-day tasks than do other Georgians.

Adaptation is different from assimilation. Assimilation assumes that, over time, immigrants are undifferentiated from native-born citizens. In other words, assimilation assumes the loss of a Mexican ethnic identity, for example, in favor of a wholly American ethnic identity. Assimilation is not necessary for survival and may be undesirable; however, adaptation is both important and necessary so that all of Georgia's residents can function in society.

The speed at which adaptation occurs varies according to many factors. Latino immigrants in Florida, for example, may find that economic adaptation occurs more quickly because it is not necessary to master fluent English in order to obtain jobs. On the other hand, they may find that it is difficult to learn English quickly because they are exposed primarily to Spanish both at home and in the workplace. Educational adaptation may be difficult for those who are undocumented because they may not be able to formally enroll in institutions offering higher education.

Because adaptation is necessary for survival, most immigrants learn to adapt; those who do not often return to their country of origin. The goal of policymakers should be to speed the process by which adaptation occurs in order to reduce the need for expensive income adjustment and similar programs in the future. That is, if Latino immigrants possess English fluency and sufficient job skills, the need for supplemental income programs should be minimized.

The unequal distribution of Georgia's new Latino population across counties suggests that some localities face a greater burden than others in meeting the challenges presented by this new population (such as the provision of bilingual education). At the national level, several states have been unduly burdened in providing assistance to Latinos that other states have been reluctant to subsidize (Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn 1999). This resentment is manifest in legislation such as California's Proposition 187, which denies educational benefits to children of undocumented workers. There is already evidence that some counties in Georgia are reacting to the increasing Latino presence by enforcing English-only sign ordinances, for example. However, it is also recognized that those communities in Georgia that bear the disproportionate cost of Latino migration also reap considerable economic benefits. Georgia's local lawmakers have been responsive in attempting to deal with the challenges of a changing population. For example, Colquitt County recently created a health clinic to serve the needs of local Latino migrants.

The unequal distribution of Georgia's new Latino population across counties suggests that some localities face a greater burden than others in meeting the challenges presented by this new population.

Objectives of This Study

To aid policymakers in identifying and meeting these challenges, we undertook a two-year, multisite study of Georgia's Latino population that was funded by the University of Georgia Research Foundation and the Office of International Public Service and Outreach. The purpose of the study was to determine the unmet needs of this population and to highlight those areas with the most pressing needs. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

- What are the most pressing needs of Georgia's Latino population?

- How well are agencies such as police and fire departments, social service agencies, and schools prepared to meet these needs, and what obstacles do they face?
- How do the needs of Georgia's Latinos vary across counties?
- What local-area policies have been particularly successful in addressing the new challenges posed by Georgia's Latinos?
- What problems are unique to Georgia, and what problems are shared by other southern states facing a rapid increase in their Latino population?
- What problems are immigrant-related, and which are common to all Latinos—both native and immigrant?

We discuss the needs of the Latino population in areas such as transportation, housing, child care, crime, and employment. In addition, we examine how these issues vary between urban and rural counties and how the problems of U.S.-born Latinos might differ from those of immigrants. In the concluding section, we make recommendations regarding the multiple policy challenges that face lawmakers as Georgia adapts to its changing population.

Research Approach

We relied on multimethod qualitative techniques for data collection because appropriate quantitative techniques, such as a systematic survey, would have been prohibitively expensive and of questionable validity. Additionally, because little was known about the needs of the Latino population prior to the completion of this study, it would have been difficult to devise appropriate questions for a survey. Consequently, this research was conducted using established qualitative methods adapted for this study population.

Data collection for this project began in January 2000 and ended in June 2001. Interviews were conducted with key informants in six Georgia counties between January and May 2000.

Selection of Study Sites

Colquitt, Dekalb, Hall, Liberty, Muscogee, and Whitfield Counties were chosen as study sites. They were selected because they are the six noncontiguous counties in Georgia with the largest Latino populations, according to the 1990 census. Noncontiguous counties were selected because selection of counties based merely on Latino population size (with the exception of Whitfield and Hall Counties) would have yielded only metropolitan Atlanta counties. While Gwinnett, DeKalb, Cobb, Fulton, and Clayton Counties have a larger Latino population than most other Georgia counties, little variation was expected with regard to Latino needs. Consequently, only one of the five metro Atlanta counties (DeKalb) was selected for this study because it is a primary receiving county for all immigrants in the state, and many of the state's resources for Latinos (e.g., the Mexican Center and the Latin American Association) are located there. The other counties selected for the study (Colquitt, Hall, Liberty, Muscogee, and Whitfield) are geographically dispersed. They represent a mix of both urban and rural areas as well as a wide range of industries including agriculture, poultry, carpet and textiles, military, and construction.[6] (See Table 2.)

The two urban counties, DeKalb and Muscogee, contain parts of the cities of Atlanta and Columbus, respectively. Latinos in these cities tend to be employed in a range of occupations, especially in food service, construction, and landscaping industries. Because Columbus borders on the Fort Benning military base, many Latinos in Muscogee County are military personnel, retired military personnel, or spouses of military personnel. DeKalb and Muscogee Counties also are home to many well-educated and wealthy Latinos; most were either born in this country or have been here for several years.

Table 2. Latino Populations, by Study Site, 2000

	Georgia Counties Selected for this Study					
	Colquitt	**DeKalb**	**Hall**	**Liberty**	**Muscogee**	**Whitfield**
Total population	42,053	665,865	139,277	61,610	186,291	83,525
Latino population	4,554	52,542	27,242	5,022	8,372	18,419
Percent Latino	10.8	7.9	19.6	8.2	4.5	22.1

Note: The numbers reflect populations as of April 1, 2000.

Whitfield County in the north is one of the world's major producers of carpets. Its seat, Dalton, is a company town dominated by textile mills and auxiliary industries. Because of labor shortages, the mills in Whitfield County pay attractive starting wages (e.g., $9–$12 an hour), and Latinos now make up more than 22 percent of the county's total population. Hall County in northeast Georgia is a major poultry producer, but it also offers a range of economic opportunities outside the poultry industry. The development of multimillion-dollar housing communities around Lake Lanier in the county's center has raised the demand for construction and landscaping industry workers. Hall County also is home to hundreds of Latino-owned small businesses; the more than 27,000 Latinos there make up almost 20 percent of the county's total population.

Colquitt County, in the southern part of the state, is typical of the small, agricultural counties found in the rural south. The climatic conditions in the county allow for the growth of over 100 different crops including cotton, tobacco, eggplant, and peppers. The four growing seasons ensure an almost constant demand for both seasonal and permanent agricultural workers. While many of the Latino immigrants in this county are undocumented migrant or documented H2A temporary visa workers, there are a considerable number of permanent Latino migrant families also living in the county.

Finally, Liberty County in the southeast is a rural, agricultural county that is also home to the Fort Stewart military base. Consequently, many of the Latinos in this county are military personnel or military spouses. Because of the few job opportunities outside agriculture and the military, many Latinos in Liberty County commute to other counties and cities (especially to nearby Savannah) to find work.

Counties were selected based on the 1990 census because data collection began four months prior to the 2000 census. Although some population shifts were expected between 1990 and 2000, we assumed that most changes would simply be in growth and not in a major redistribution of Latinos across the state. These assumptions were based on a con-

siderable body of work on "network migration" (see Pessar 1999) that shows that once immigrants become established in one area, new immigrants tend to settle in the same areas.

One drawback of using census data to locate Latinos is that researchers cannot be completely assured of selecting the most populous counties, despite official reporting. Toombs County, for example, probably has a considerably larger Latino population at certain times of the year than many other Georgia counties due to labor migration for the Vidalia onion harvest; however, seasonal residents are not likely to be enumerated in the census. Furthermore, in all counties the official census numbers are likely to undercount Latinos, particular those who are undocumented. Although seasonal migrants do pose some policy challenges, this study was limited to those counties with more stable Latino populations. It is expected that undocumented migrants will cluster in those places where there also are documented (counted) migrants.

Interviews

In the first phase of this study, we conducted hour-long, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with key informants in each county using McCracken's (1988) format for long interviews. Informants included those community members who frequently interface with the Latino population in their county. These key informants were identified by family and consumer sciences county extension agents in the six sites.

In all, 68 key informants (at least seven in each county) were interviewed. These informants represented a variety of governmental and private interests including social workers, religious leaders, attorneys, policemen, county agents, educators, and health workers. Twenty-seven of the key informants were male, and 41 were female. About one-fifth were Latino.

During data collection, respondents were asked key introductory questions and were encouraged to elaborate on their responses. Questions included, "What are the most pressing issues your institution faces in meeting the needs of Latino clientele?" and "What programs in your county have been particularly successful in meeting the needs of Latinos?" Other questions addressed needs in specific areas such as transportation, child care, and education. Generally, the participants were knowledgeable and offered insightful comments on the challenges their institution faced in reaching the Latino population.

Focus Groups

In order to verify and elaborate upon the information received from the key informants, we conducted 13 focus groups in Spanish with Latino

residents between March 2000 and May 2001. Participants included 50 men and 53 women aged 19–65 years old who were living in Georgia, regardless of their permanent or legal residency. The majority of focus group participants were Mexican, but about one-fourth were from other parts of Latin America (including Puerto Rico and Cuba). Some focus groups also included Spanish-speaking, U.S.-born Mexican-Americans originally from California, Georgia, Michigan, New York, and Texas.

The majority of the focus group participants were homemakers (n = 22) or farm or poultry workers (n = 30). Overall the participants represented a broad range of occupations including educators, factory and construction workers, pastors, restaurant workers, administrators, social workers, physicians, and civil servants. Many of the participants had only minimal (i.e., primary school) education, but at least 20 percent had attended college.

Focus groups were conducted by native Spanish-speaking moderators. In each county, groups were conducted separately for men and women; in two instances, we also conducted mixed-gender groups. Both the men's and the women's groups were asked questions about migrant adjustment issues concerning housing, transportation, education, health care, crime, policing, and employment. Men also were asked about prostitution, and women were also asked about domestic violence. Respondents were instructed that they did not have to offer personal information about themselves and their households and only to comment on those things that they had observed among Latinos in their community. Despite these instructions, most gave personal accounts of their own experiences in Georgia.

In order to overcome the challenges of recruiting participants, clarify the purpose of focus groups, and create a comfortable environment for participants (including those who were undocumented), focus group sites were selected from among places that Latinos frequent. The first focus groups took place at the outreach center of the Mexican Consulate in DeKalb County and included individuals from among those waiting for passport renewals or other services. Later focus groups were held in social service agencies and, in one case, a local Mexican restaurant.

Most of the focus groups comprised the recommended 6–12 participants (Morgan 1988). In one case, however, we conducted a focus group at a migrant camp, where it was nearly impossible to control the size because numerous curious individuals showed up to participate. In that instance, a focus group was officially conducted with 18 participants, but —including the few who stopped by briefly to voice their opinion—the total was probably over 25.

The focus groups provided corroborating information. There were virtually no discrepancies between the needs expressed by the Latino focus group participants and those that were identified by the key informants. The use of both methods of data collection supports the validity of the findings, and the responses of the focus group participants provide a qualitative dimension generally not found in survey research.

Limitations

Because this study focuses on unmet needs, the results presented here relate most specifically to Latinos who are recent immigrants and/or who have low socioeconomic status. It should be pointed out that there are many Latinos in Georgia who are extremely well educated and affluent. Many are U.S.-born or highly adapted long-term immigrants who are professors in the university system or executives in major corporations. Some hold important political positions; however, most Latinos in Georgia are new to the United States and tend to have lower levels of income, education, and marketable skills than do most Americans. This study focuses on this more needy segment of the Latino population.

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Findings and Policy Implications

In this part of the paper, we summarize and elaborate upon the major issues reported by the key informants and focus group participants. Based on their responses to our questions, the needs of Latinos cluster around eight policy areas that warrant the attention of state and local decision makers: employment, transportation, housing, child care, health care, crime, community relations, and education. Although there is considerable interaction among these domains of community life, we present the findings and associated policy implications according to each of the eight policy areas.

Employment

A person's decision to move is predicated on both push and pull factors. Push factors are those situations that force or impel people to leave their place of residence. Pull factors are those situations that make one destination more attractive than all others. The primary pull factor in the decision to move for all kinds of migrants (except refugees) is a job or employment opportunity.

To link the marked growth of the Georgia population only to expanding job opportunities, however, obscures other aspects of the state's economy. In our research, all of our respondents indicated that they had moved to Georgia because they or another family member had found work in the state; however, they also noted that there were specific aspects about work in Georgia that made it superior to their previous situation. In other words, jobs were available not only in Georgia but also in other states. Factors such as pay levels, job conditions, and opportunities for women made Georgia's jobs more attractive than job in other states.

Why Georgia's Jobs Are Better

For those Latinos who immigrated directly from Mexico or other Latin American countries, high wages made Georgia's jobs particularly attractive. Federal minimum wage in Mexico is $3.50 per day—considerably less than the $41.20 a day paid to American workers drawing the federal minimum wage.

Most of the workers who were interviewed earned well above minimum wage. One farm worker pointed out, "It's not that there aren't jobs in Mexico . . . [but] what we make here in one week, we make it there in a month." The key informants in the industrial sector informed us that

jobs in the carpet industry generally ranged from $9 to $12 an hour, while jobs in poultry paid between $7 and $8. Even in agriculture, the lowest-paying sector, jobs at reputable farms paid in excess of $6 an hour.

Moreover, there are job opportunities for women in Georgia.[7] Many immigrant women noted that they could work in Georgia but not in their home country. Poultry producers and light manufacturers are particularly likely to hire women, as are service businesses such as hotels. Most of the women appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the family income, although some felt that their child care responsibilities precluded them from working. One woman said, "If I were to find a job, I wouldn't earn enough to pay a babysitter. It's not worth it if you get nothing at the end."

To be able to balance both work and child care responsibilities, and to circumvent the need for the transportation that many lack, some Latino women work for themselves in what scholars call the "informal economy." Because so much of the Latino population in Georgia is male, women find that they can hire out their domestic services to single men, such as cooking meals and doing laundry, which allows them to work from home. These women also help other Latino women who are in the formal workforce. Informal jobs include home-based child care, cleaning, laundry, cooking, and sewing. For women who are undocumented, such jobs, which are paid "under the table," provide an opportunity to work that they otherwise would not have.

Another draw is the opportunity to learn new skills. Some Latinos see Georgia's labor market as more advanced, meaning that even what are considered low-wage, low-skilled jobs by Georgians are better than those available in many other states. One particularly prized job sector is the construction industry. Not only do construction jobs pay well, but respondents noted that such jobs often provide opportunities to work with marble or granite—skills that will be marketable in other places. The common consensus was that, even for workers with no skills, construction jobs pay well and that the acquisition of skills on the job would be rewarded with higher pay.

In addition to these job market advantages, the saturation of less skilled workers in traditional Latino areas such as California and New York has pushed workers out of these states. One woman noted, "We have seen that it's better here than in California. There aren't jobs in California anymore." Another noted, "I thought nothing could be worse than New York." Because unskilled jobs often are open to Latinos whereas other jobs are not, in Georgia it is not uncommon to find farm workers with college degrees or technical school education.

Menial Work

Of course, not all jobs for Latinos are "good" jobs. In fact, some scholars have argued that there are two markets for jobs: a primary labor market filled with good jobs and a secondary labor market in which women and minorities compete for undesirable jobs (Logan, Alba, and McNulty 1994; Sanders and Nee 1992). The secondary labor market protects native workers from newcomers because they do not vie for the same jobs. Among Georgia residents, the prevailing attitude about immigrants (Latino and otherwise) is that they create new jobs or take jobs that no one else wants. Only one-quarter of Georgians believe that immigrants take jobs from native workers (Peach State Poll 2001). Among the respondents, there was the recognition that undocumented workers fared far worse than documented workers (regardless of education) and that bilingual workers fared better than those who spoke only limited English.

Most Latinos who find little success in the regular job market because of lack of resources, documentation, or language skills resort to day labor. Day labor is the practice of hiring workers for a brief period (usually one or two days) to complete a temporary, labor-intensive, often menial task. Day workers generally stand on a street corner or designated location and wait for a chance to be picked up by a potential employer. Most take their spots long before sunrise and may stand by the side of the road for 8–12 hours without success.

For those who are lucky enough to find work—even if for only one day—abuses are common. Latinos are sometimes paid less than promised or not paid at all. In some cases, when day workers have reported mistreatment to agencies such as the Mexican Center or Catholic Social Services, their employers have threatened them with deportation.

The nature of day work creates problems for communities in which the practice is common. Because the (almost exclusively male) workers congregate at one place, they often are perceived as threatening by other members of the community. At gas stations or other areas where they congregate, business owners fear that the presence of day workers will drive away customers. Additionally, because these workers often spend long periods of time waiting for work, they may urinate at roadside, creating a public health nuisance.

One positive response to dealing with this problem has been to build day labor centers. These centers provide a central (indoor) location for workers and access to bathroom facilities. Furthermore, employers are required to register with the center, which cuts down on abuses. Workers who do not get jobs can take advantage of other offerings at the center such as English language classes. Such centers are not without drawbacks;

for example, they tend to be located in an available building rather than where Latinos (most of whom lack transportation) can easily get to them.

In fact, the issue of unfair competition and fair labor practices arises even among those who have steady employment. Employers who make concerted efforts to hire only documented workers and to pay fair wages and provide benefits feel that they are at a competitive disadvantage compared with those who do not make these provisions. Additionally, workers often are unaware of their legal right to wages and benefits, including important benefits such as Worker's Compensation Insurance. In one of the study counties, a factory that employed Latinos (whose employers and employees were not interviewed) posted several signs in Spanish regarding workers' responsibilities, but signs regarding workers' rights (such as federal minimum wage signs) were only in English.

Undocumented Workers

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) requires that employers make some effort to ensure that their employees are legally entitled to work in the United States. Despite punitive actions that can be imposed on those who hire undocumented workers, it is widely acknowledged that the hiring of illegal workers continues. Employers hire undocumented or falsely documented workers, whom they pay in cash. These employers fail to return Social Security, federal, and state tax withholding to the government for the workers, who of course do not appear on work rolls.

More often, employers may unwittingly hire undocumented workers, despite attempts to uphold IRCA laws. In Georgia, falsified document services have proliferated with the influx of Latino workers. For those with sufficient funds, it is possible to purchase illegal Social Security cards, green cards, and other identification papers. As a consequence, employers hire seemingly legal workers who provide all the necessary documentation for I-9 forms. Questions arise only when employers are notified by the Social Security Administration that a worker's name does not match the given social security number. Usually it takes months before Social Security notices the discrepancy and contacts the employer. When the employer contacts the employee regarding the matter, the employee simply fails to return to work. Under IRCA, these employers are subject to large fines when their workers' names and numbers fail to match.

Policy Implications

Our findings related to employment issues have the following policy implications:

- The creation of day labor centers by local governments may promote the fair hiring of workers and protect the health of the community.
- The Georgia Department of Labor and employers could proactively educate the Latino labor force regarding their rights and responsibilities as workers.
- State legislators could work with the Department of Labor and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to create policies that would simultaneously reduce the use of false documents and ensure a stable workforce for employers.
- State legislators could petition the federal government to make changes in the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 legislation so that employers who unwittingly hire undocumented workers are not penalized.
- The Georgia Department of Labor could promote programs that teach needed skills to Latinos and other disadvantaged workers. Skills in remodeling historic structures, for example, could fill the void in this trade and benefit the architectural legacy of the state. It will also allow these workers to obtain earnings above minimum wage.

Transportation

Lack of transportation may be the biggest barrier to adaptation to the U.S. economy and society that Georgia's Latino immigrants face. Without transportation, Latinos cannot get to jobs or school. They cannot enroll in English language classes or other programs provided for immigrants. They cannot attend church or get to the offices of various service providers. They cannot attend social functions where they can mix with others and learn about American society and way of life.

Many of Georgia's new Latinos face the problem of transportation daily. Because many are poor, they cannot afford to buy their own vehicles. Consequently, they rely on alternative forms of transportation, such as public transportation, car sharing, or employer-provided busing. These alternatives help somewhat, but they also have limitations.

Public Transportation

Around the world, buses and subways are viable forms of public transportation for the poor. In Georgia, however, public transportation is generally found only in urban areas. In the cities of Atlanta and Columbus, public transportation is readily available, but it is often limited in geographic range and hours of service. For those who do not speak English, negotiating the public transportation system is a daunting task. Moreover,

rural counties almost never have the means to create a public transit system on a wide enough scale to accommodate those without vehicles.

Atlanta has the most extensive public transportation system in Georgia. However, many of the city's immigrants live on or near Buford Highway, which is not adequately serviced by public transportation but is where many businesses that hire and cater to this immigrant population are located. In order to get to work, the store, or the MARTA station, residents must walk along this busy four-lane highway where traffic speeds by in excess of 55 miles an hour. Much of the shoulder along Buford Highway lacks sidewalks, and immigrants walk as close to the road as possible to avoid muddy and steep shoulders. For those who must cross the highway, their problem is made more difficult by crosswalks that are two to four miles apart; consequently, pedestrians will wait for openings in traffic and cross hazardously. Since 1990, 18 pedestrians have been killed on Atlanta's Buford Highway—half of these victims were Latinos.

Latino women are particularly limited by lack of transportation. While poultry processing plants and other major employers often provide buses to transport workers to and from work, those businesses that hire Latinos in large numbers (and, therefore, find it cost-effective to offer their own transportation) tend to hire men. Women, who often find work in hotel housekeeping or food service, have fewer transportation options. Car sharing is one alternative, but it creates complications. As one Department of Labor specialist noted, "My job has become much more difficult. Before, I could find one job for one woman, now I have to match six women with six jobs at the same company because they are all sharing one car. As long as this situation persists, it will be difficult for any of these women to become employed."

Licensing of Drivers

Those who can afford to buy their own vehicles face a new set of problems, primarily related to licensing. Georgia maintains stringent licensing regulations that often create problems for native-born Americans but are especially problematic for immigrants. For Latino immigrants who are living in Georgia without documentation, obtaining a driver's license is nearly impossible. For those who are documented, licensing can be almost as difficult.

Providing proof of identification is one difficulty. Some Latino immigrants who come from rural or poor backgrounds never had their births recorded, so no birth certificate exists. Proof of local residency is another problem. Many of the newest Latino immigrants live with friends or relatives, and it is unlikely that they would have a phone bill, utility

bill, or lease in their name. Because the states surrounding Georgia do not require proof of local residency, Georgia's Latino residents may travel to Alabama, North Carolina, or Florida to obtain or renew their licenses. These neighboring states, therefore, reap the licensing fees from Georgia residents without the burden of maintaining Georgia's roads. Even those who have the necessary documentation, however, find it difficult to pass licensing exams that are written and administered in English.

Many who own cars but cannot obtain licenses drive anyway. One respondent referred to his "driver's license from God." He argued that his need to drive to work or the grocery store was more important than his legal need for a license. Law enforcement officials confirm that many Latinos drive unlicensed. Beyond the serious, potentially legal repercussions for the driver, unlicensed driving creates a problem for other Georgians as well. Unlicensed drivers may not know the rules of the road and may cause accidents through their own negligence. Furthermore, because insurance companies will not underwrite unlicensed drivers, many Latinos may be driving cars without insurance.

Changing licensing requirements may prove a difficult task for legislators because driver's licenses are most Americans' official form of identification. Fear of legitimizing undocumented immigrants may keep citizens from supporting reform. Residents may not realize that licensing Latino drivers (particularly undocumented drivers) may improve road safety. Only 37 percent of Georgia residents agree that roads would be safer if illegal immigrants could obtain driver's licenses; over half feel that licensing undocumented drivers would not improve road conditions (Peach State Poll 2001).

Informal Transportation Markets

In American life, transportation is as essential as food, clothing, and shelter; in fact, it generally provides the means for gaining these other necessities. Latinos' need for transportation and the obstacles to vehicle ownership and licensing have led to a proliferation of illegal activities and profiteering schemes, the most notorious being the "international driver's license" scheme. Throughout Georgia, operations have sprung up that offer "international driver's licenses" to immigrants who forfeit a valid driver's license from their home country and pay a substantial fee. These licenses are advertised as a legal means of driving in the United States but are in fact worthless documents. Often, immigrants are unaware of the scam until they commit a traffic violation and find themselves in serious legal trouble.

Transportation problems have prompted the creation of an informal transportation market. Latinos who own cars often profit by trans-

porting coworkers and neighbors to work or other places, usually for a weekly fee. The common sight of a vanload or pickup load of Latino men riding through town often represents a pay-to-ride situation. Because the fees for riding are paid in cash to friends, neighbors, or family members, the income is untaxed, and the service provider does not pay for chauffeur licensing and insurance. Ironically, informal transportation providers also provide the necessary transportation to neighboring states for license renewal.

Taxi services specifically targeted at Latino clients are another market that has proliferated in north Georgia. Latino taxi drivers often function as paid interpreters for their riders once they arrive at their destinations. Although legitimate, these businesses serve a captive clientele that pays high prices, precluding many Latinos from using the taxis. For example, a short ride from downtown Gainesville to the Department of Public Health and back costs $30. Other taxi services exist (and charge less), but they may not be accessible to passengers who do not speak English. The consequence of the high prices is that many Latinos may forgo needed services (such as free immunizations for children) because they cannot afford the transportation costs.

In short, transportation is necessary for the adaptation of Latino immigrants. Programs to help Latino immigrants learn English, to provide free or low-cost health services, and to assist with job placement will be underutilized as long as Latinos cannot get to them. Without transportation, Latinos will be limited in their housing and job options. They will find it difficult to get to banks. Latino immigrants may drive without licenses and without insurance and could put other drivers at physical and financial risk. As long as Latinos lack legal and affordable access to transportation, the state of Georgia will continue to lose money to informal transportation networks and to neighboring states.

Programs to help Latino immigrants learn English, to provide free or low-cost health services, and to assist with job placement will be underutilized as long as Latinos cannot get to them.

Policy Implications

The following steps could ameliorate the transportation crisis faced by many of Georgia's Latinos:

- Requirements for obtaining a driver's license could be reevaluated by the state legislature. By linking a driver's license more closely to an identity card rather than to ability to operate a motor vehicle, citizens are not protected from drivers who have not passed minimum safety and road rule tests. A change in licensing laws should also increase revenue from licensing. Additionally, tests and study materials should be made available in Spanish to ensure

that Latinos who are not proficient in English fully understand the laws.

- The Georgia Department of Transportation could consider creating a public transportation assistance fund to provide seed money to rural counties to provide an adequate public transportation system. This seed money can help municipalities evaluate their transportation deficits and design the routes that will best fit their community's transportation needs.
- Local governments could work with developers (and provide incentives) to promote the construction of sidewalks, bicycle routes, and pedestrian walkways in key areas with heavy pedestrian traffic. This measure would reduce both the need for motorized transportation and the number of pedestrian fatalities.
- Local governments could regulate fees charged by taxi services to ensure that customers pay a reasonable cost for the service and that operators comply with insurance requirements.
- The Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs, in conjunction with local law enforcement, could increase enforcement of consumer protection laws to reduce the "international driver's license" and other document schemes.

Housing

The state of Georgia benefited from an economic boom during the 1990s, which allowed the housing industry to flourish and reach peak numbers in building permits issued for new residential construction, particularly around urban areas such as Atlanta and Columbus. The expansion of such urban areas into traditionally rural counties has also been evident in the areas around Dalton and Gainesville.

The construction of residential developments encroaching on rural land has required intensive labor and has thus created a shortage of construction workers. This shortage was further exacerbated by preparation and construction for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games (Engstrom 2001). Construction activities generate related businesses such as landscaping, textiles, furniture and carpet manufacturing, and housekeeping services, among others. Consequently, Latinos have come en masse to meet the demand for workers in construction and auxiliary businesses.

Georgia's Economy and Access to Housing

The infusion of needed workers in the 1990s resulted in the expansion of Georgia's housing industry; many new housing units were built, particularly high-priced units. Despite the economic boom of the decade and the availability of many new homes, much of the workforce (Latino and

non-Latino) has not benefited widely from affordable housing options outside of manufactured housing (previously known as mobile homes or trailers). In fact, the majority of Georgia's workforce with annual household incomes below $30,000 can only afford housing that is priced at or below $86,800 (Atiles et al. 2001).

Several factors may account for this phenomenon. Housing costs continue to rise, and the supply of affordable "stick built" (as opposed to "manufactured") homes is not sufficient to meet the demand. Some respondents in the construction business argue that there is little profit to be made in building low-cost housing, and consequently they are reluctant to do so.

Accumulating a down payment continues to be a problem for low wage–earning households that spend almost all of their salary on basic necessities. Access to home financing in the formal sector is challenging for many Latino households.[8] Latinos' lack of credit history in the United States is a barrier to home ownership, as are insufficient English language skills and lack of knowledge about home buying.

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Many Latinos do not trust the financial system in their homeland and bring this sentiment with them to the United States. They do not open a bank account, preferring to save their money in traditional folkways (e.g., "under the mattress"). They cannot show proof of savings to a lender—a necessity, under law, when making a down payment for a home. Furthermore, they also are more likely to lose their savings to robbery or vandalism. Families with undocumented immigration status often find it difficult to buy a home because they are not eligible for most housing assistance programs in the United States.

In Dalton, a key informant indicated that Latinos there would like to buy houses if it were possible: "Housing is a problem. Demand far exceeds offer. Latinos cannot afford to buy." Another respondent said, "Latinos save money to buy their first home. They pay the rent on time because that is their priority, along with food. They do not like public housing." During the study, we often heard statements such as these, and they demonstrate that these Latinos hold home ownership aspirations.

The manufactured housing industry in Georgia is the one major source of affordable housing for the workforce. Latino migrants like this housing option because it offers flexibility in terms of access to financing. More important, manufactured home lenders often do not require many documents that Latinos may not be able to provide for a home purchase. Still, financing, locating, and maintaining a manufactured home can present a challenge to many Latino households in some counties

where such housing is not readily available or even permitted. As one social worker said of these counties, "There is a shortage of housing. In other counties . . . most Hispanics live in mobile homes."

Access to rental housing is another challenge for Latinos. For instance, when signing a lease agreement, many Latinos do not understand the language or the concept of a security deposit. They do not know their obligations or their rights as tenants. Some problems are common in rental housing; for example, Latinos may allow people who are not on the lease to reside in the home, creating overcrowding in clear violation of their lease agreement. Another problem arises when unscrupulous landlords fail to provide a safe, quiet, and clean living environment, thereby taking advantage of immigrants. In some instances, landlords do not honor their responsibility for maintenance. Some also demand an unfair amount of money for security deposits.

Crowding also is an issue in many rental situations that involve Latinos. Many single males, for example, live in situations referred to as *camas calientes* (hot beds). In this rental arrangement, several men rent an apartment or manufactured home leased to only one or two persons. All occupants contribute to the rental payment by paying an amount to the "official" tenant(s), often on a weekly basis. They take turns occupying the apartment during the day, based on their job schedules. Some work at night, some work during the day; hence, the beds are routinely occupied (thus, *cama caliente*), and the use of facilities such as bathrooms and kitchens often exceed the design parameters for that unit and its infrastructure. Some landlords have (rightfully) complained that the arrangement puts a burden on water usage, waste disposal, and the capacity of septic tanks, for example.

Crowding and housing adaptation is a serious concern for families with children because many of these families are living at or below subsistence levels. Furthermore, unlike the native poor, many recent immigrants (documented or undocumented) are not eligible for government-subsidized housing. Consequently, they are often relegated to the poorest-quality housing in the county. Typically they find housing among the "left over" units that no one else wants. According to one caseworker, "Crowding conditions make their [Latinos'] homes dirtier. A few live in trailers. The conditions are not good, but they do the best they can. Poverty is the main issue. They move from one place to another to better their living conditions but do not know the impact this has on their children's education: As they move, children's schools must change. Children get upset."

When poor Latinos become concentrated in a ghetto (often called "Little Mexico"), they are isolated from mainstream society. By contrast,

educated, wealthier Latinos have successfully integrated into the middle- and upper-class neighborhoods in their cities. These Latinos tend to be the entrepreneurs who own successful restaurants and grocery stores or work in professional, white-collar jobs. U.S.-born Latinos also are more likely to live in integrated housing than are Latino immigrants.

Household Type

The housing situation of Latinos in Georgia is quite complex due to immigration patterns. One typical family migration pattern is for the husband to migrate first and find a job. His wife and children may migrate later incrementally or all at once. For single males, a typical migration pattern is to join with other friends and relatives already in the United States and to live with them, at least for a short period of time. Consequently, the types of households that exist in the Latino community range from single men sharing quarters with other single men to multiple families living together.

The industry in which a Latino is employed also affects his or her housing options. Among seasonal farm workers, for example, those entering under the H2A visa program are ensured a minimum standard of housing established by the U.S. Department of Labor. Growers must maintain certain standards of cleanliness, heating and cooling, and personal space. Migrant workers outside the H2A program, however, meet their housing needs in a variety of ways, typically in conditions that are less safe, affordable, or sanitary. Although both farmers and workers have voiced criticism about the H2A program, the H2A workers in South Georgia clearly have better housing conditions than do those outside the program.[9]

Latinos who come from other states to Georgia often are in a better position to find suitable housing. In many cases, they are native-born or naturalized U.S. citizens, English is their primary language, and they understand the American way of life. In many cases, these Latinos may be working in the armed forces and have access to military housing.

In terms of farm-worker housing, Peck (1999) points to several critical issues: the type of housing needed (single- or multifamily, barracks-style, rental or ownership); the ownership entity (grower, nonprofit sponsor, or farm-worker association); housing life span (seasonal or year-round); the level of subsidy needed to ensure affordability; and the social services needed to support the workforce (e.g., health, education, translation, job training). Moreover, developers of farm-worker housing typically are concerned with four key development issues: (1) land, infrastructure, and the environment; (2) the community's response to this form of

housing; (3) developers' capacity; and (4) development costs versus resources available.

Regarding the land, infrastructure, and environment concerns, Peck (1999) contends that the loss of agricultural land to housing and the building of homes in areas with environmental hazards (such as sites with pesticide contamination or fuel storage tanks) is an issue in the development of migrant housing. Many rural communities lack the sewer and water infrastructure necessary to support this type of development, forcing developers to depend on wells and septic tanks. This dependence is problematic because there are competing land uses between agriculture and septic tank drain fields.

In terms of a community response, Peck (1999) notes that NIMBYism (the "not-in-my-backyard" attitude) is a sentiment often encountered when farm-worker housing is being developed and sited. Some communities encourage the hiring of migrant workers during the harvest season but oppose the betterment of farm-worker housing if it means these workers will stay year-round. Other alleged problems include the overcrowding of schools, criminal activities, and the presence of "illegals."

Moreover, farm-worker housing may not be developed because it would then be subject to the enforcement of health and safety laws. In some states, public housing authorities, nonprofit housing developers, migrant health clinics, and some farm-worker associations take on the task of sponsoring housing for farm workers. These entities often apply for funding from the Rural Housing Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In South Georgia, public migrant housing was developed but remained vacant (it is now open to income-eligible residents). One respondent stated that the reason why this initiative did not work is because it did not consider the needs of the potential occupants. It was located too far away from service providers, grocery stores, and workplaces.

In the absence of federal funding, some states have created housing funds to help in the development or rehabilitation of farm-worker housing.

Development costs versus available resources remains a problem. Reduced federal funding levels for Section 516 of the USDA Rural Housing Services program affects the development of year-round or migrant housing for farm workers. In the absence of federal funding, some states have created housing funds to help in the development or rehabilitation of farm-worker housing.

Our study indicates the following findings with regard to housing:

- For Latino immigrants coming from rural areas of Mexico, Guatemala, or other Latin American countries, the housing they find in Georgia is quite different from that found in their native countries. Different construction techniques, materials, and layouts

make the transition from one type of housing to another quite challenging. Other issues, such as using the thermostat to regulate the heating and cooling systems, using the garbage disposal or the dishwasher properly, or understanding the maintenance required by the typical U.S. home and septic system, also create difficulties.

- U.S.-born Latinos coming to Georgia are more likely to have the means to purchase or lease a home and to understand the system and their rights and responsibilities as tenants or homeowners. However, like many Latino immigrants, U.S.-born Latinos may face limitations imposed by poverty.
- Migrant farm-worker housing meets only the needs of individuals, not families, and usually only individuals working under the H2A migrant program. The Housing Assistance Council (2001) found that dormitory or barracks-type facilities (which in some cases have been converted from chicken coops) are likely to be substandard, particularly in the southeastern part of the country. In our study, the barracks that were visited exhibited a range of conditions, from overcrowded to reasonably clean with eating and bathing facilities.
- Non-H2A migrant workers can rely only on the housing stock available in rural communities, which varies from dilapidated trailer parks to old stick-built rental units—usually the units that no one else wants.

Housing Conditions and Consumer Fraud

During interviews with Latino residents, the police, and advocacy agencies, we learned that unscrupulous landlords often take advantage of recent migrants, ignoring requests for maintenance. Some units in trailer parks and apartment complexes had no running water, no working sewage system, and no heating during the cold months. In some cases, tenants were told that the immigration authorities and the police would be notified if they continued with their demands. Threats of eviction were also used to minimize complaints about housing conditions and neglect. In some cases, complaining Latinos were evicted with a five-day notice. A social worker indicated,

> The majority of our clients live in homes where there are two, three, four families in a two-bedroom house, and maybe a couple of single people who live there, too. The homes are in very poor condition. They keep their homes the best they can, but the services might be lacking because the landlords do not fix them. I visited a home that had no hot water during the winter. Sometimes landlords charge more than what the rent usually costs.

> People just come from other countries and do not know. Landlords take months to fix something, and when they do . . . they fix them the cheap way. Apartments and homes in general are rented out dirty. People have to clean them themselves when they move in. A lot of the homes do not have a central heater or air conditioner, and the families have to buy one when they move in. Their babies are getting sick more, they get colds or dehydration.

There is also a degree of housing neglect among single Latino males who rent apartments and are seasonal migrants: "They save money to build a home or take care of the home they have back in their countries, but neglect the place where they live here. Landlords are also neglectful, and Latinos do not complain."

Unscrupulous and fraudulent practices abound not only in rental housing but also with homeownership. In one case, a real estate professional showed and sold a house to a family. When the family attempted to take possession, they found they had purchased another home—one they had never seen. In another case, a Latino family bought a manufactured home to put on a lot that was sold to them, but they later found that their lot could not hold a septic tank and that there was no sewer access. Overcharging by mortgage companies is perhaps the most common unscrupulous practice.

Housing and Health

A link not often mentioned in housing studies is the adverse effects of dilapidated and unsanitary housing on the health of poor Latinos. Problems with indoor air quality in homes are quite common. Many of these problems are tied to excessive indoor levels of moisture and the growth of biological pollutants. For instance, indoor air pollutants (such as molds, mildew, dust mites, and pet dander) have been identified as triggers for asthma attacks, severe allergies, and respiratory illnesses. Several health care providers indicated that they encountered Latino children with asthma problems that were aggravated or triggered by environmental conditions in their homes. These conditions may be related to the presence of "too many people in a two-bedroom apartment—dirty carpets, heating/air conditioning [that does not] work well. [Latinos] put up with disrepair because they have more people in their place than is allowed."

Many key informants commented on the high levels of cleanliness that many Latino households maintain. Nevertheless, when there is a water leak, a broken cooling or heating system, or when the indoor relative humidity level is above 50 percent, mold grows, roaches are more likely to enter the home, and dust mites proliferate. Both health provid-

ers and Latino families mentioned asthma, upper respiratory tract infections, and middle ear infections as commonly occurring health problems.

Other health risks posed by inadequate and unsafe housing include lead-based paint, radon gas penetration, asbestos in building materials, and combustion pollutants that are generated by heating appliances (such as carbon monoxide). Lead is associated with inadequate brain development in children, radon gas is the second leading cause of lung cancer, asbestos also is associated with lung disease, and carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal. Homes built before 1978 (particularly before 1950) are very likely to have lead-based paint. Because many Latinos are more likely to occupy older, dilapidated housing, they are at a higher risk of being exposed to these health threats. Recent Latino immigrants may not be aware of these risks. Until they become educated as consumers, they will not be able to address them.

Policy Implications

Our findings regarding housing have the following policy implications:

- There is a need to increase the supply of affordable housing for the workforce, including Latinos. Working with Georgia builders and developers as well as employers is essential to address this issue. A task force might be appointed by state government to address the supply of workforce housing.
- The Department of Community Affairs could develop a strategy to address effective demand for housing (i.e., the actual costs that a household is willing to pay for housing) by Latino workers in Georgia. An effective demand study should consider not only the challenges associated with actually being able to buy or rent a home but also the issue of legal documentation as it relates to home financing.
- The state can work with the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide technical assistance to farm owners who employ Latino migrants. This assistance would help growers in the design, location, and administration of migrant housing. Issues pertaining to living arrangements and exposure to agricultural chemicals because of the location of housing close to fields also need to be addressed.
- Family financial education programs are needed to teach Latino households how to manage their finances. Employers can work with banks to create programs that will build trust and teach Latino immigrants how to save money to buy a house, build a credit history, manage a checkbook, and avoid consumer fraud.

- The Department of Community Affairs, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, could coordinate tenant and homebuyer education programs for Latinos. These programs should teach tenant-landlord laws and responsibilities, how to become a homeowner, and how to sustain homeownership. Housing education is critical to help recent immigrants become successful homeowners in an environment that is new to them.
- Because many Latino immigrants may be living in housing that is different from that in their home countries, basic life skills programs are needed to teach them how to maintain homes that are safe, affordable, and sanitary. Currently, the Cooperative Extension Service offers programs on maintaining water, sewer, septic, and mechanical ventilation systems, but these programs need to be taught in Spanish.
- The state could consider increased funding for the Georgia Indoor Air Coalition (sponsored by the Department of Community Affairs), the Cooperative Extension Service, and local health departments that provides environmental education to consumers. Latino immigrants need to be educated about the threats related to lead, radon, asbestos, biological, and combustion pollutants in order to safeguard their homes, schools, and workplaces. Basic educational materials that are available in Spanish are needed.
- An immigrant housing program, perhaps administered by the Department of Community Affairs, could be created at the state level to help recent immigrants (including Latinos) obtain safe and affordable housing.

Child Care

In their home countries, Latino women traditionally are the primary caretakers of children, and there is an extended family network that serves as a support system. When these women migrate to Georgia—where there are greater job opportunities and they can contribute to a larger household income—they are faced with the dilemma of child-care provision. Moreover, many Latino families have no knowledge or clear understanding of child care–related laws and fail to observe them. Consequently, safeguards intended to protect children are not in place. For example, in one case, a caregiver in an apartment complex took care of all the children in the building for a fee while the parents went to work. These care providers, however, are rarely licensed by the state and may be unaware of regulations regarding the number of children allowed per

supervisor or the minimum training necessary to offer such a service. Even those women who are aware of certain daycare standards may be unable to send their children to a licensed child care facility because of lack of available income, transportation, or knowledge about these facilities. Some Latino families are able to take advantage of child care opportunities offered by their church or its parishioners, however.

A lack of awareness about the need for child-restraining seats in motor vehicles is another example of many Latinos' lack of understanding of U.S. child protection laws. Many Latino immigrants are not accustomed to using cars for transportation and may not know that special seats are legally required (and not an option) for children under a certain weight and age. Law enforcement officers that we interviewed indicated that it was common to stop Latino drivers who did not have their children properly secured in the car. Those who know about child restraints often install them improperly. Many counties offer classes on proper child-restraining seat installation, but few counties offer these classes in Spanish.

A final factor affecting child care relates to the lack of understanding about American norms for child rearing. For example, in Mexico, it is not uncommon for young children to be left alone at home in a relatively safe environment—a practice that deviates from what is considered acceptable in the United States. Families who continue their cultural practices and who fail to adapt to U.S. norms often are charged by the Department of Family and Children Services with neglect or even abuse.

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Spanking and severe corporal punishment are other examples of practices that may be culturally acceptable among several Latino groups with low socioeconomic status; however, once in the United States, they find themselves in trouble with the law for using these practices for disciplining their children. One Latino social service provider explained,

> If I were to take my child and shake him just to play with him, which I can do back in my culture, it is quite normal [but] that's not going to be normal for a Caucasian. He is going to say that I am abusing this child. There are a lot of cases right now in the Children's Department with that kind of problem, when it is not really a problem. They [the case workers] just need to understand where people are coming from, what are people used to.

Another example of culturally acceptable Latino behavior that is considered abusive in U.S. society relates to attitudes about acceptable age differences between sexual partners. Some key informants indicated that Latino

girls as young as 13, 14, and 15 years old were marrying 25-year-old Latino men. Although such a relationship may be acceptable to Latino families (or perhaps even imposed if the teenage girl is pregnant), it is considered statutory rape in the United States. Again, lack of understanding of U.S. laws and cultural norms are challenges that caseworkers often face.

Policy Implications

Based on our findings, there are several policy implications for rectifying the fact that many of the child care issues that Latinos face represent a lack of understanding of U.S. laws:

- Outreach efforts by institutions and agencies such as the Department of Family and Children Services are needed to educate Latino immigrants about child protection services, acceptable U.S. child-rearing practices, and alternative practices for disciplining children.
- Latinos should be educated about the need for and proper use of child-restraining seats for young children. Resources for children with low literacy levels are needed, and existing programs should continue to be translated into Spanish.
- Job training is needed for Latino individuals who wish to offer child care services in their homes.

Health Care

Illnesses and health-related issues of particular importance to Latino immigrants include diabetes, teenage pregnancy, gastritis, skins rashes (due to exposure to harmful chemicals and pesticides), fungi problems, inadequate or nonexistent prenatal care, asthma and respiratory problems, alcohol abuse, and work-related accidents. One respondent clearly linked many health issues with inadequate housing among migrant farm workers: "[there are] very crowded conditions . . . poor living conditions, no heating, sometimes no running water, thus poor sanitation. Because most work in the fields, they get poison in their hands and get sick."

In addition, access to affordable health care is a critical issue for Latino households in Georgia. As one health provider in South Georgia indicated, the issue of access to health care includes both monetary and communication constraints: "Latinos don't have the money to pay for special exams, such as mammograms. We need someone in our staff who can speak Spanish, even if it is just part-time." Both the key informants and the focus group participants identified lack of affordable health care as a major challenge for Latinos.

Among those services targeted to Latinos, health care for children and pregnant mothers were the most abundant. In some counties, Latino women sought prenatal care and took care of themselves. By contrast, Latino men do not tend to seek health care as much as women, and there are fewer programs available to them.

Obtaining health insurance and health care services pose challenges for Latinos. Even though some respondents' employers were able to offer health insurance packages, several respondents felt that they could not afford the weekly or monthly premium payments. Therefore, many of the Latinos interviewed chose not to have health insurance and to wait until the last minute to get health care, usually at the emergency room of a hospital. One health care provider noted, "Most [Latinos] do not have health insurance. [I] have heard that some factories offer health insurance but do not know how they work. Hourly rate employees usually do not have benefits, but line leaders are trained, the company invests money in them, so they want to keep them."

Other Latinos reported that they sought health care from fraudulent health clinics that often charged them a lot of money for routine services. Several respondents thought the health care providers in these clinics were unskilled physicians who took advantage of them. Some Latinos, particularly those coming from very low socioeconomic status and rural areas in their homeland, tried to solve their maladies by using *santeria* (i.e., folk medicine) or home remedies.

Lack of transportation, inability to communicate in English, lack of emergency 911 services in Spanish, and refusal to serve non-English–speaking Latinos unless there is an interpreter are some of the barriers to health care that Latinos may encounter. Hospitals in one county supported the idea of providing interpreters, but few were available.

Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) also were mentioned during this study. STDs were regarded as more common among single males whose families are in Mexico. Prostitution contributed heavily to STDs among Latinos. According to one health care provider, chlamydia was more common than gonorrhea in males visiting the health clinics in South Georgia. Although many respondents indicated that HIV and AIDS were not problems among the Latino migrants in Georgia, a few indicated concerns about HIV crossing the border into rural Mexico. One respondent argued that migrant Latino males were contracting HIV in the United States and then passing on the virus to their wives when they returned home to their families. This transmission poses a severe health problem on both sides of the border. Intensive, aggressive education on STDs and HIV is therefore needed.

Policy Implications

Findings pertaining to health care suggest the following policy implications:

- Georgia's legislature could evaluate access to affordable health care. Programs that provide health care should be reexamined to be more inclusive of all people in Georgia, regardless of ethnicity or immigrant status. Community health is at stake when certain groups do not have access to health care.
- Employers could dedicate resources to educate their workforce about the benefits of enrolling in a health insurance plan and about how such a plan works. Employers could also benefit from training on how to make health insurance affordable and attractive to their workers.
- Hospitals, clinics, and health care providers need to provide counselors and clinicians who speak Spanish and understand Latino culture. Recruiting, training, and hiring bilingual/bicultural staff should be pursued more aggressively to meet the health needs of Latinos.
- Local governments and law enforcement agencies could support existing agencies that provide health counseling to increase Latino awareness of the problems of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, as well as other common health problems such as diabetes, alcohol abuse, and drunk driving. State government and Latin American governments could work together to foster a cross-border health education program to help migrant workers and their families back home understand the need for preventive care and managing chronic illnesses.

Crime

During the course of this study, several questions were asked regarding criminal activities as they relate to Latinos in Georgia. Among the activities mentioned by both key informants and Latino respondents were (1) driving under the influence (DUI) of alcohol, (2) prostitution, (3) driving without a valid driver's license and/or insurance, (4) domestic violence, (5) gang activities, and (6) various types of consumer fraud, particularly those targeted at immigrants. Driving without a license and driving without insurance are legal problems that were discussed earlier in this paper.

Most respondents attributed Latinos' frequent arrests for drunk driving to the fact that so many men are living in the United States far away from their families. Homesickness, being apart from wives and children,

working long hours, and ignorance of U.S. regulations regarding public drinking were cited among the causes of DUIs. One key informant compared the problem with the Western "frontier" mentality, which maintains that without families to come home to, men will tend to drink more —and more often—than they would otherwise. While we could not test this hypothesis, DUIs did tend to be disproportionately a male issue.

Because men are away from the influence of wives or mothers, they may also frequent prostitutes in their communities. According to the male respondents, who spoke quite frankly about the matter, it is not atypical to find prostitutes soliciting business from Latino males on payday. Key informants indicated that, for the most part, the prostitutes were white or black, not Latino. Prostitution, however, causes problems for married Latino women, especially when their husbands return to their home countries and bring sexually transmitted diseases with them.

A few key informants cited domestic violence as the main cause for deportation of Latino males. Alcohol abuse, working long hours, a sense of powerlessness, and a different environment in which to raise a family were cited as triggers of domestic violence among recent Latino immigrants. Division of household labor also is a related issue. For instance, many wives are entering the workforce in Georgia and thus compete with their husbands in terms of available time for household chores, child rearing, and earning income. The shift in wives' "typical" household roles, combined with the stress of adapting to a new environment, creates increased tension at home and surges in domestic violence. Consequently, immigrant families may experience domestic violence even if there was no family history of violence prior to migrating.

Although gang activity was reported frequently in this study, when we attempted to verify the incidence of gang activity with law enforcement officials, we found that it is actually minimal or nonexistent in most counties. Most of what was labeled gang activity was usually something as simple as immigrant teens spray-painting signs or slogans on walls or buildings. Actual gang activity is generally considered to be more serious and includes drug and firearm sales and extortion. Gang activity also is formalized (for example, gangs have names, territories, and an internal leadership structure).

This is not to say that there is no gang activity in Georgia. Both Hall and DeKalb Counties have had some difficulties with Latino gangs, most of which are linked to preexisting gang activity in other states. As many Latinos who are born and reared in the United States relocate to Georgia, a few traditional U.S. Latino gangs, such as the Latin Kings, have relocated or expanded to Georgia. One respondent commented,

> We need more work with our young people. There is so much gang violence going on. Many people come from California escaping from that [gangs], but they bring some of that lifestyle. They are not necessarily getting away from that. Gangs of initiation, they have to beat you up, associate with this group, or cannot associate with another group, act this way, carry this, graffiti, hurting one another, shootings. My brother was shot by a gang member from California. Someone who was here only one week from California came here [Georgia] and shot my brother. You cannot know anybody one week to have that much hatred to kill him, unless there is something wrong with you. Gang members are as young as 10 or 11 or as old as 40 years old.

Consumer fraud activities—perpetrated by Latinos and non-Latinos alike—also affect the Latino migrant population. The most typical fraud mentioned by the respondents is the sale of "international driver's licenses," discussed earlier in this paper. Another type of fraud is related to the sales of Social Security cards of U.S. citizens with Spanish surnames. These cards are used by undocumented Latinos to obtain employment, driver's licenses, and other important documents such as health insurance cards. In many cases, multiple individuals benefit from the same health insurance card. This type of fraud poses a health risk to consumers and a liability risk to health providers. One key informant reported that she had noticed that the dental records under a specific name and insurance card were not those of the person receiving treatment. She then realized that the records in fact belonged to another person. Had the patient been allergic to the anesthesia, for example, the situation ultimately could have created a liability issue. Further research is needed to fully explore consumer fraud among Latinos.

Policy Implications

Crime and law enforcement policy that is sensitive to the needs of Latinos has the following implications:

- State government could work with the Cooperative Extension Service and local and state law enforcement to increase consumer protection efforts. Consumer education resources that are available in Spanish and at a low literacy level are needed to help recent immigrants understand how to conduct business in Georgia and how to avoid scams and consumer fraud.
- Law enforcement and social service agencies need to increase their outreach to Latinos to educate this population about drunk driving, prostitution, gangs, and domestic violence. It is essential to recruit, train, and hire bilingual/bicultural staff in these agencies to reach the Latino population.

- There is a need for Latino role models (including Latino police officers and other representatives in government) to be more visible in the community. Such visibility in schools, for example, could promote good citizenship and higher educational aspirations and discourage gang activity and disengagement from society.

Community Relations

Whenever a new population moves into an area, there is the potential for backlash, particularly when the in-migration is sudden and the migrants have distinctive physical or cultural characteristics (Engstrom 2001). Historically, immigrants have been the targets of violence and discrimination during poor or declining economic times. In the 1960s in California, businesses hung signs that read "Dogs and Mexicans Not Allowed"; in the 1990s, that state attempted to bar undocumented children from attending public schools. Georgia has not experienced this type of hostility, and many of the Latinos interviewed for this study, especially those who had lived previously in California and Texas, felt that they have been treated well in Georgia.

One explanation for this lack of hostility may be that residents of Georgia historically have focused on black-white race issues, and other ethnic groups have not been seen as important.[10] Another possibility is that many Georgians recognize that Latinos provide necessary labor in the poultry, carpet, textile, construction, and landscaping industries. More likely, however, the generally welcoming attitude probably reflects the fact that Latinos still make up only a small fraction of Georgia's total population. Anthropological research shows that native resentment toward newcomers becomes hostile when the in-group reaches a concentration of about 13 percent. Latino populations in most of Georgia's counties are not that large yet.

English-Only Movements

Despite the generally warm reception in this state, however, there have been some instances that reflect poorly on race relations vis-à-vis Latinos. City officials in one county, responding to complaints about the presence of day workers in their neighborhood, posted signs in Spanish indicating that persons caught loitering would be reported to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. More alarmingly, at a 1998 Ku Klux Klan rally in northeast Georgia, a speaker railed, "I have a dream that one day we will take our county back from 60,000 illegals. We're standing up for the white race" (Garrett and Bautista 2000).

One trend is the consideration, enactment, and/or enforcement of English language signage requirements. English-only ordinances enacted in some Georgia municipalities have required that all posted signs be written in English. Others require that signs contain a substantial amount of English; still others require that all foreign language signs include English translations. These ordinances have been created or enforced under mounting pressure from local residents.[11] Businesses and even churches that offer Spanish-language services have been fined for violating these ordinances.

Besides sending the message that Latinos are unwelcome, such ordinances have economic consequences. Supporters of the English-only movement may not realize that Latinos represent a potential new market for all kinds of goods and services. Businesses who can put "*Se habla Español*" (Spanish is spoken) on their marquees can expand their customer base to a group whose buying power has increased 118 percent in the past decade (Humphreys 2000). Revenue from this market, in turn, creates jobs, increases the tax base, and stimulates the local economy. In metro Atlanta, targeting Latino buyers has the potential to attract over 229,000 customers from the local area alone.

Perceptions

Because the influx of Latinos into Georgia is relatively recent, perceptions of hostility may be overstated. Some of the Latinos whom we interviewed felt that other groups or institutions targeted them because of their national origin. Many respondents complained that they had been mistreated by the medical establishment and assumed that they had been overbilled for services. On closer inspection, however, some of these complaints were more likely problems to do with adjusting from a socialized medicine system (such as in Mexico) to a pay-for-service system. Other problems are likely the result of language barriers, which have serious ramifications. One respondent was misdiagnosed and later had unnecessary surgery for a hernia. Another respondent paid $350 for what she thought was merely a pap smear but was actually a more complicated procedure; because of this misunderstanding, she did not return for follow ups.

Respondents also reported being suspicious of police. None of the respondents could report any first-hand negative encounters with the police, but many had heard tales of mistreatment. Some respondents had heard of Latinos being harassed by police in supermarket parking lots. In other cases, Latinos who were stopped for traffic violations were routinely asked to show their work permits (green cards) or other proof of legal immigration status. Such allegations, which may have some basis in fact, likely reflect general fears held by newcomers.

There are, however, some real challenges that police forces are facing with regard to the new Latino population. Some of the challenges stem from the need for bilingual/bicultural staff. According to one policeman in Hall County, "The problem is a combination of the language barrier plus lack of trust in law enforcement personnel. [Latinos] are scared because they are undocumented. The women . . . don't want to talk to us about their husbands or boyfriends [who are abusive]. The children do not want to talk to us about their daddy or uncle touching them inappropriately. They don't want to talk to the police."

Other challenges stem from the need to educate staff regarding immigrants' rights. Some police are unaware that they are not authorized to ask people for immigration documents; such a request must come from immigration officials. Some also are unaware that foreign nationals have protections beyond those of U.S. citizens. One Latino woman, a city council member who is making police awareness a priority, stated, "When a policeman arrests a man [whom] he suspects is Mexican or Colombian, he doesn't necessarily know that this man has rights as a foreign citizen. One of those rights is to call his embassy or the Mexican Consulate in Atlanta. We have to make police aware of this, because they don't know about these things."

Policy Implications

Our findings suggest that race relations between Latinos and other Georgia residents are generally good. Addressing potential conflicts to avoid problems in the future has the following policy implications:

- Education of law enforcement agents regarding the rights of foreign nationals and cultural differences is important. Some programs already exist but could be expanded to include government employees, judges, and other regulatory officials who deal with Latinos.
- The state government, possibly the Governor's Office of Human Relations, needs to work aggressively to ease racial tensions and raise awareness regarding the positive aspects of cultural diversity in the state. Media campaigns can help achieve these goals.
- A citizen's guide to Georgia—available in both English and Spanish—that lists pertinent rules and regulations affecting civil life might be useful to Latinos. Perhaps the state government, in cooperation with the university system, could create such a document. Local governments could publish a similar guide that offers information regarding utilities, garbage and recycling, pedestrian laws, noise ordinances, and other helpful advice.

- Local officials need to reject citizen movements to enact or enforce English-only ordinances that are hostile and suppress potential market expansion.

Education

Nationally, 5 out of every 100 high school students will leave school before receiving their high school diploma. These figures vary significantly by race, ethnicity, and region. For example, in 2000, the percent of 18–24 year olds in the United States who held a high school diploma was about 87 percent. Whereas 92 percent of whites and 84 percent of blacks held diplomas, only 64 percent of young Latino adults in this age group completed high school. This trend of low rates of high school completion among Latinos has been consistent over time (Kaufman, Alt, and Chapman 2001). For Georgia, which already has below-average high school completion rates, the influx of Latinos means that rates could decline further unless the problem is addressed.

Dropping Out

A recent study conducted by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research shows that Georgia is already struggling with the issue of low school retention rates among Latinos. Two-thirds of Latino students attending Georgia high schools leave school before graduation—a rate higher than that for any other state in the country. The school districts that are most affected are Cleveland, DeKalb, Gwinnett, and Cobb (in descending order). The fact that this trend is evident in other southeastern states that have seen a large influx of Latinos in the past decade, notably Alabama, Tennessee, and North Carolina, suggests that the problem may be one of adaptation (Salzer 2001). Georgia school districts simply have not had time to adjust to changes in their classrooms.

Two-thirds of Latino students attending Georgia high schools leave school before graduation—a rate higher than that for any other state in the country.

The reasons for leaving high school without a diploma vary, but several general themes emerged during the study that may help to explain low educational attainment levels among this group:

Language—Many schools have few faculty or staff members who are bilingual. Students who have difficulty understanding English are sometimes sent to special education classes that are designed for students with learning disabilities. Even those students in special English classes may feel too frustrated with the difficulties of bilingual education to remain in school.

Low levels of education—Latino students who enter this country as teens must overcome the inadequate or limited education that they may have

received in their native countries. For the oldest students, the difficulties of learning English are compounded by the need to master basic literacy, writing, and science skills. Such a task may seem impossible to these students.

Lack of parental involvement—Some parents, in part because they lack English skills, are uninvolved in their children's schools. They do not attend parent-teacher meetings and often are unaware of their children's special needs or problems. Additionally, parents who work full-time may be unaware that their children are no longer attending classes, or they may not be able to help their children with homework.

Work conflicts—Many Latino adolescents work full-time and find education "unnecessary" or too difficult to juggle with other responsibilities. Some feel that staying in school will not necessarily lead to better work opportunities and are content with the education levels they already possess or can obtain through working.

Comfort and safety—Some students do not feel welcome, comfortable, or safe in Georgia high schools. Some mentioned fear of gangs as a reason for leaving school. Others noted that they were not accepted by other students because of language barriers or cultural differences in clothing and hairstyles.

Inability to attend college—The belief that college is not a realistic option discourages many Latinos from finishing high school. Many feel that a college rather than a high school degree makes the difference between access to good or poor jobs. Without college prospects, high school holds little appeal, even for students who are doing well.

ESOL/Bilingual/Bicultural Staffing

In addition to attrition, Georgia's schools suffer from a lack of adequate numbers of teachers with an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsement.[13] Although the state requires that special language courses (usually called ESOL) be offered on demand, fulfilling this requirement is difficult for schools in rural, remote counties. In some counties, ESOL programs are administered through migrant education programs. Consequently, children of parents who have permanently settled in the county (i.e., who are not or no longer are migrant workers) are not technically eligible for ESOL, even if these students do not speak English.

ESOL education is not the only issue. Bilingual/bicultural staff are also needed to create a link between students and teachers, particularly because many parents rely on their own children as translators. DeKalb

County, for example, has created an international center where all foreign-born students and a parent or guardian must go first in order to attend DeKalb County schools. This program enrolls students, assesses their language skills, and helps students, teachers, and parents understand their responsibilities. In Whitfield County, the school district has created an alliance with a Mexican university to provide Mexican teaching aides for elementary and secondary school classrooms and to help parents communicate with teachers. Other counties can learn from these successes or develop their own innovations to create home and school linkages.

Further Education

As other states in which there are Latino immigrant children must do, Georgia must implement new policies and reevaluate old policies to assist in the promotion of post-secondary education. *High School and Beyond*, a national study of adolescents and young adults, examined the educational aspirations of U.S. students and showed that, although most students want to attend college, many feel that it is not a realistic option (Hanson 1994). As noted earlier, this attitude is prevalent among Latino adolescent immigrants in Georgia, who have expressed frustration regarding their educational capabilities. Calling college "The Big Lie," these teenagers note that they are made to assume that college is the next step after a high school education, but they later find out that higher education is not accessible to them. For those who lack citizenship, government financial assistance programs such as educational loans and grants often are unavailable. In Georgia, undocumented students are ineligible for HOPE scholarships, even if they receive all of their education in Georgia schools and meet all of the grade requirements. Additionally, they are not considered to be in-state residents and must therefore pay out-of-state tuition—a prohibitively expensive cost for most students.[12]

In Georgia, undocumented students are ineligible for HOPE scholarships, even if they receive all of their education in Georgia schools and meet all of the grade requirements.

Other states facing these issues have looked to the legal system to make adjustments. In 2002 the state of Texas enacted a law that allows undocumented high school graduates with at least three years of state residency to attend public institutions at the in-state cost. Wisconsin and California are looking to make similar changes ("Wisconsin gets on board with higher education" 2001). These states realize that removing barriers to education benefits both the student and the state. The lifetime tax contribution of a college-educated Latino is around $152,000—an amount two and one-quarter times that of a high school graduate (Salzer 2001). When students are educated, the state reaps the benefits.

Policy Implications

As more Latino workers arrive in Georgia with their families, schools have had to scramble to meet their needs. This study's findings point to the following policy implications:

- The migrant education program (including Migrant Head Start) needs to be reevaluated to allow Latino children who are not the children of itinerant farm workers to obtain or continue to receive a preschool and elementary education that allows them to learn English as a second language.
- The eligibility requirements for HOPE scholarships could be revised to include undocumented but academically eligible resident Latino students.
- Legislation could be enacted to allow other undocumented Latino students to attend Georgia universities at the in-state tuition rate.
- Schools need support in hiring bilingual/bicultural staff and ESOL faculty, and parent-teacher liaisons need to be encouraged.
- Schools need support to help existing faculty and staff improve their Spanish language skills and knowledge of Latino cultures.
- A fund could be established to actively promote college recruitment of Latino students.
- An aggressive campaign is needed to encourage high school completion, with special attention paid to minority groups.

Conclusion

Latinos are clearly an essential part of Georgia's social, economic, and cultural landscape. Their contributions to Georgia's economy, diversity, and cultural enrichment have been recognized, and for the most part Latinos have been welcomed in many counties around the state. As with any rapid influx of a new population to a society, however, many challenges confront policymakers, legislators, educators, service providers, law enforcement agencies, and industries in meeting the needs of this population.

Challenges posed by recent Latino immigrants are significant because most work in low-paying jobs, have low socioeconomic status and limited formal education in their own language, and usually do not speak English fluently.

Challenges posed by recent Latino immigrants are significant because most work in low-paying jobs, have low socioeconomic status and limited formal education in their own language, and usually do not speak English fluently. The major issues highlighted in this study include housing, transportation, education, employment, child care, health care, crime, and community relations.

Communities around the state have realized the benefits of the influx of the Latino workforce and have worked to meet their needs and ease the transition of this population in adapting to Georgia's way of life. This difficult task requires much in terms of work, personnel, and resources; sound policy making; and a clear vision of the future.

Policy Recommendations

The findings and the policy implications of this research on the needs of the growing Latino population in the state suggest that lawmakers and selected state agencies consider the following courses of action:

- Increase bilingual/bicultural staff in various agencies that provide housing, education, health care, and other essential services to Latinos to ease their transition into Georgia's economy, culture, and way of life.
- Provide job training (in Spanish and at low literacy levels) for unskilled Latino workers and formalize the day labor practices to protect both employers and employees. Additionally, both employers and employees need to be educated regarding labor laws and entitlements.
- Encourage negotiations among businesses, the Department of Labor, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to regularize the work status of valuable employees who work without permits and perpetuate a black market of fraudulent documents.

- Reevaluate the Department of Transportation's requirements for obtaining a Georgia driver's license in order to reduce consumer fraud and legal noncompliance as well as ensure public safety on the road. Additionally, the Department of Transportation should look to improve public transportation and sidewalk development for counties with large pedestrian populations.
- Create and fund programs through the state government that promote the supply of affordable housing for workers. A program should also be implemented to help develop safe and adequate migrant housing for farm workers. State legislators should also increase funding to agencies such as the Cooperative Extension Service and the Department of Community Affairs to conduct tenant and homebuyer education programs in Spanish that are designed for low-literacy Latino individuals and families.
- Fund the Cooperative Extension Service to expand its Basic Life Skills programs in housing, child and human development (including child care issues), nutrition, chronic disease, financial and credit management, and work preparedness to aid recent immigrants in their adaptation to Georgia. More human and financial resources are needed to reach the growing Spanish-speaking clientele around the state.
- Appoint a task force under the auspices of the state government to examine Latino access to health care. Particular attention should be paid to the need for bilingual/bicultural health care providers and 911 operators and improvements to health insurance and health service access.
- Promote and fund programs for high school and college recruitment and retention of Latinos through the Department of Education and the Board of Regents to improve low levels of educational attainment among this group. Local schools should also increase the number of parent-teacher liaisons and provide positive role models for young Latinos to stay in schools.
- Work proactively in promoting community relations to prevent backlash targeting Latinos, especially immigrants. County commissioners and city councils can be especially useful in this regard.
- Create a fund, through the state legislature, that can be used for the next 10 years to address all the needs identified here and those identified by the Governor's Hispanic Affairs Commission. This fund could empower agencies around the state to expand their roles to address the needs of Latino clients.

Notes

1. This 58 percent growth represents only Hispanics and Latinos whose presence is reported in official statistics. It is widely recognized, however, that these populations are undercounted in official statistics.
2. All demographic data are taken from the 2000 U.S. census, which at the time of this writing were considered to be preliminary by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.
3. It is important to distinguish between migrants, in-migrants, and immigrants. All Latino residents of Georgia who formerly lived elsewhere are considered to be migrants. In this study, the term immigrant refers to Latinos living in Georgia who were born in Mexico, Central and South America, or the Caribbean. The term is synonymous with foreign-born. The term in-migrant refers to any Latino who has moved to Georgia from another state. Consequently, migrants can be both immigrants (i.e., those who moved directly to Georgia from Latin America) *and* in-migrants (i.e., those who moved from Latin America to another state before moving to Georgia) *or* merely in-migrants (i.e., Latinos who were born in another state or Puerto Rico and who later moved to Georgia). In this study, the term migrant includes both Latino immigrants and in-migrants, except in those cases in which only immigrants are mentioned. Puerto Ricans are a special case because, as U.S. citizens, technically they are not immigrants, but they face many of the same issues that immigrants face (e.g., adjustments to language, culture). Consequently, references to the problem of immigrant adaptation also include Puerto Ricans.
4. Blocks are geographic areas created by the U.S. census bureau for data-reporting purposes. U.S. counties are divided into tracts, and each tract is divided into blocks. In urban areas, census blocks are often city blocks, but in rural areas, blocks are larger geographic areas. In Hall County, some blocks have as many as 1,019 Latinos, as much as 96 percent.
5. A further challenge stems from the considerable variety of Latino subgroups in the state such as Mexican, Guatemalan, Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Colombian. Although this study examines Latinos as an undifferentiated whole, differences between these groups are not insignificant.
6. According to the 2000 census, all of the counties selected based on the 1990 data had some increase in their total Latino population, and they are geographically and economically diverse. Table 2 shows that the counties in this study account for more than 116,000 Latinos. Had current census data been available, however, we likely would not have chosen Liberty and Muscogee Counties, which have had only small Latino population increases. Although Gwinnett County is the metropolitan county in Atlanta with the largest Latino population, DeKalb County has more new immigrants (Latino and non-Latino) than any other county in Georgia and was therefore selected over Gwinnett as a study site. Moreover, DeKalb was selected because it was one of only two places in Georgia that had a Latino county extension agent, who was an important resource and was able to provide respondents for the study.
7. In addition to jobs for women, there are jobs for children. Focus group participants noted that it is fairly easy for 15 year olds to obtain false documents that show their age to be 18. These children then find work in poultry plants

or other industries. It was also reported that children of migrant workers who accompany their parents to the fields work when the field workers are unsupervised.

8. The formal homeowner-lending sector includes banks, mortgage finance entities, and governmental mortgage insurance agencies such as the Federal Home Administration (FHA) and second mortgage institutions such as Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and Ginny Mae.
9. Some workers in H2A housing were critical of the lack of privacy afforded by the dormitory-style housing and their isolation from local towns (housing is built in close proximity to work rather than to other amenities). Farmers who participate in the H2A program criticized it because they believe they are scrutinized more closely by the Immigration and Naturalization Service than are farmers who hire undocumented workers.
10. Since the collection of these data, however, two major events have taken place suggesting that the situation could change. First, the September 11, 2002, the bombings of the World Trade Center and Pentagon have heightened awareness of the security risks that undocumented immigrants may pose. Second, a shift in the general prosperity of the economy has forced the layoff of many workers, which could lead to problems in the future.
11. Of 648 Georgia residents surveyed in a recent poll, nearly three-fifths of the respondents stated that they are bothered by printed signs or broadcast advertisements in Spanish (Peach State Poll 2001).
12. The HOPE scholarship uses revenue from lottery ticket sales to provide free college tuition and other educational assistance to high school students who maintain certain academic standards. It is likely that the parents of nonresident Latino school children contribute their money to this funding source through lottery ticket purchases.
13. An ESOL endorsement means that a teacher has completed an ESOL program approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission or has submitted an out-of-state ESOL certificate. An ESOL endorsement program requires completion of three courses: Cross-Cultural Understanding, Applied or Contrastive Linguistics, and Methods and Materials for Teaching ESOL. An ESOL teacher is not required to learn another language.

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