



Latinos in Illinois: A Growing Population Amid a Stagnating Economy and Challenged Public Institutions

By Jorge Chapa

Given the rapid growth of the Latino population of Illinois, it is now essential to deepen our understanding of this group. This population increase is occurring at a time when the economy has yet to recover from the Great Recession and many of the state's public institutions are facing severe fiscal challenges. This chapter will outline the demographic characteristics of the Latino population including educational attainment and employment statistics. It will then assess the participation of Latinos in the educational institutions and prospects for Latinos' participation in the labor force and the economy.

Latino Population Growth

The results of the 2010 Census indicate that Illinois' Latino population grew by about 33 percent between 2000 and 2010. The state's non-Latino population decreased by 0.8 percent, so all of Illinois' population growth in the last decade was due to the increase in Latinos. This group comprised 16 percent of the total population in 2010. (See Table 1.)

Latinos are an aggregation of many national origin subgroups: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, etc. Table 2 shows that Mexican-

Table 2
Origin and Nativity of Illinois Latinos, 2010

	Frequency	Percent of Latinos	Percent Native	Percent Foreign Born
Mexican	1,623,262	79.7%	56.4%	43.6%
Puerto Rican	201,582	9.9%	98.6%	1.4%
Guatemalan	32,355	1.6%	43.0%	57.0%
Cuban	25,596	1.3%	65.1%	34.9%
Ecuadorian	25,491	1.3%	40.3%	59.7%
Colombian	21,934	1.1%	47.9%	52.1%
Peruvian	14,428	0.7%	41.0%	59.0%
All Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	92,668	4.4%	57.1%	42.9%
All Latinos	2,037,316	100%	450%	350%
Non-Latino	10,805,850		91.3%	8.7%
Illinois Total	12,843,166		86.3%	13.7%

Source: Analysis of American Community Survey Microdata

origin Latinos are the largest of these groups in Illinois, constituting almost 80 percent of the more than 2 million Latinos in the state. Puerto Ricans are almost 10 percent of Illinois Latinos. Table 2 also lists

Table 1
Illinois' Population, 2000 and 2010

	2000	2010	Change	%
Non-Latino	10,889,031	10,803,054	-85,997	-0.8
Latino	1,530,262	2,027,578	497,316	32
Total	12,419,293	12,830,632	411,339	3
% Latino	12%	16%		

Source: Census Bureau



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¹ Pew Hispanic Center, "The Mexican-American Boom: Births Overtake Immigration," 2011, (Washington, D.C.).

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the national origin groups that comprise more than 1 percent of the state's Latino population, and shows that 5 percent of all Latinos claim one of 18 additional origin or identity groups listed in the census. Table 2 also shows that a substantial portion of all Latinos (39.9 percent) were born abroad and immigrated to Illinois. Puerto Ricans born in the U.S. or in the Commonwealth are citizens by birth.

National-level analyses of Latino population growth for 1980-2000 found that this growth was due in equal proportions to natural increase (more births than deaths) and to immigration. Latino immigration has slowed since 2000, so that natural increase has become the major source of the Mexican population growth.¹

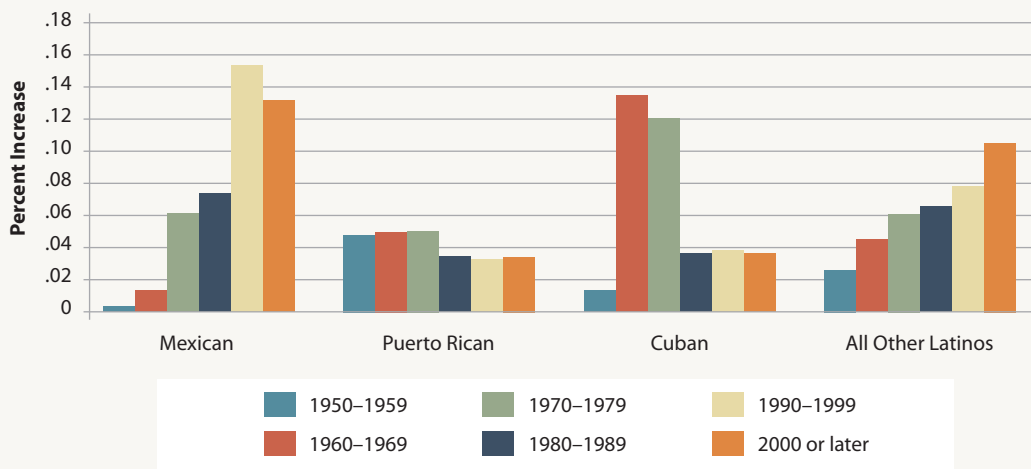
Nonetheless, immigration has been a significant source of Latino population growth and an important demographic characteristic. Figure 1 indicates that immigration is an increasing portion for all population groups over time. The numbers reported in this chart are the percentage of the total population of each group that immigrated by

decade. You will see that the number of non-Latino immigrants in Illinois—944,000—is greater than all of the 812,000 Latino immigrants in Illinois. It is worth restating: immigrants are a growing part of Illinois' population and most are not Latinos.

The fact that the percentage of immigrants among all other foreign-born Latinos shown in Figure 1 is increasing steadily suggests a similar pattern as that seen among the non-Latino immigrants. It is interesting to note that the pattern of Mexican immigration shows a lower percentage of immigrants in the 2000s than the 1990s. This reflects a number of factors, including a decrease in the number of undocumented immigrants and other related factors.

A complete discussion of Latino immigration requires addressing the issue of undocumented immigration. It is impossible to get detailed reliable estimates of the number or characteristics of the undocumented population, but it is possible to present useful approximations. Table 3a shows the total number of undocumented immigrants for various years from 1980 through 2010. The

Figure 1
Decade of Entry for Immigrants by Group, 1950-2010



Source: Analysis of 2010 Census ACS microdata

table also reveals that the total number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. is thought to have peaked at 12 million in 2007 and decreased since then. Also, while most undocumented immigrants are from Mexico, more than 40 percent of all undocumented immigrants are from other countries.

Table 3b shows estimates of the undocumented immigrant population of Illinois and several other states. While the reported estimate for 2010 shows an increase, the 90 percent interval in 2010 ranged from 425,000 to 625,000. Since the 2007 estimate is well within this range, it is better to say that, in contrast to the estimates for the U.S. and several other states, Illinois' undocumented population is not thought to have decreased between 2007 and 2010.

Table 3c shows the undocumented immigrants as a percentage of the 2010 total population for states with large numbers of undocumented. Illinois has a lower percentage than do most of the other states shown.

I and many others have argued in past research that undocumented Latino immigration has functioned as a *de facto* guest worker program or system.² This *de facto* system evolved from the Bracero Program which was a *de jure* guest-worker agreement between the U.S. and Mexico that ended in the 1960s. As is the case for most guest-worker systems throughout the world, our guest workers have seemingly become permanent workers and permanent residents.

The system thrives in a context in which aspects of both U.S. immigration policies and economic policies work to increase the

² See Chapa, Jorge. 2008. "A Demographic and Sociological Perspective on Plyler's Children, 1980-2005." *Northwestern Journal of Law & Social Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, Spring; and, Jacoby, Nicole. 2003. "America's De Facto Guest Workers: Lessons from Germany's Gastarbeiter for U.S. Immigration Reform." *Fordham International Law Journal*, Volume 27, Issue 4, Article 9.

Table 3a
Undocumented Residents of US from Mexico, Latin America and all Countries, Various Years (in Thousands)

	1980	1992	1996	2007	2010
All countries	2,057	3,900	5,000	12,000	11,200
Mexico	1,131	2,100	2,700	7,000	6,500
Other Latin America	351	575	725	2,600	2,600
Total Latino					
Origin Countries	1,482	2,675	3,425	9,600	9,100
Mexican Origin as % of Total	55%	54%	54%	58%	58%
Latino Origin as % of Total	72%	69%	69%	80%	81%

Sources: 2007 and 2010 estimates from Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010"; other estimates documented in Chapa, 2008.

Table 3b
Undocumented Residents, Selected States, Various Years (in Thousands)

	1980	1992	1996	2007	2010
California	1,024	1,600	2,000	2,750	2,550
Texas	186	530	700	1,450	1,650
New York	234	410	540	825	625
Florida	80	270	350	1,050	825
Illinois	135	220	290	500	525
Arizona	25	95	115	500	400
New Jersey	37	105	135	600	550

Sources: 2007 and 2010 estimates from Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010"; other estimates documented in Chapa, 2008

Table 3c
Undocumented Residents as a Percent of Total Population, 2010 (in Thousands)

State	Undocumented Population	State Population	Percent Undocumented
California	2,550	37,254	6.8%
Texas	1,650	25,146	6.6%
New York	625	19,378	3.2%
Florida	825	18,801	4.4%
Illinois	525	12,831	4.1%
Arizona	400	6,392	6.3%
New Jersey	550	8,792	6.3%

Sources: Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010"; and Mackun and Wilson. 2011



³ Millard, Ann., Jorge Chapa, et al. 2004. *Apple Pie & Enchiladas: Latino New-comers to the Rural Midwest*. University of Texas Press.

number of long-term undocumented residents in the United States. Employers benefit from the ready supply of reliable workers who are willing to do onerous work for low wages. Also, the employers do not have to directly bear most of the costs associated with administering this “program” or expenses due to the rapid increase in the number of immigrants living in the community where the employers are located.³

Large-scale undocumented migration to the United States would not exist without a strong demand by employers during times of rapid economic growth. The superheated growth of the U.S. economy in the 1990s, the resulting extremely tight labor market, changes in immigration law and the challenges facing the Mexican economy all resulted in extremely high Mexican immigration to the United States during the 1990s. The economic crash of this decade and possibly increased enforcement efforts explain the decrease in Mexican immigration shown in Figure 1 and the recent decrease in the undocumented immigrant population shown in Table 3a.

Latinos’ Youthful Age Distribution

Illinois Latinos are a young population. Analysis of 2010 census data shows that more than one-third are under age 18 compared to about 22 percent of non-Latinos. They have much younger age distributions (median age of 26 years) compared to non-Latinos (median age of 39 years). There are also discernible differences in the median age and thus the age distribution among Latino sub-groups. For example, the median age of Mexican-origin Latinos is 25 years, and for Cuban-origin Latinos it is 38 years.

The concentration of Latinos in the younger ages further emphasizes the probability that their population will continue to grow. The young median age indicates many Latinos have more child-bearing years ahead of them compared to groups with older median ages. Latino fertility has decreased but is still high compared to most other groups, and thus Latinos will likely become an even greater part of the young population in the near future. The current and future concentration of Latinos in the younger age groups emphasizes the importance of issues, problems and policies that pertain to Latino youth, especially education.

The changes in the population composition will be more pronounced when differences in the age distribution or age structure of these groups is taken into account. There will be relatively more Latinos in the youngest age groups and predominantly more white non-Latinos in the older ages. There are two policy-relevant areas where these age-ethnic differences are likely to be most noticeable. Almost one-third of the Illinois school-age population will be Latinos in the future. This increase will surely also result in the increase in the number of Latino-majority schools and school districts. Secondly, the same trend of Latino growth in the younger age groups will be noticeable as Latinos compose a larger proportion of the working age population. This will be

Table 4
Educational Attainment of Illinois Residents Ages 25 and Older, 2010

	Foreign-Born Latino	U.S.-Born Latino	U.S.-Born Non-Latino
Less than High School	337,319	77,459	584,582
High School or GED	193,941	113,246	1,849,453
Some College	92,383	119,556	2,039,515
BA	42,050	53,585	1,331,059
Advanced Degree	16,831	24,573	778,246
Total	682,524	388,419	6,582,855
Less than High School	49%	20%	9%
High School or GED	28%	29%	28%
Some College	14%	31%	31%
BA	6%	14%	20%
Advanced Degree	2%	6%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Analysis of 2010 Census ACS Microdata

particularly evident in the younger entry-level age groups. This increase may have a noticeable impact on the Illinois economy if educational and skill levels of Latinos do not improve.

Latino Educational Attainment

Although Latino educational attainment levels are increasing, they continue to be low when compared to non-Latinos. Lower levels of Latino educational attainment are often attributed to the large proportion of immigrants. The information presented in Table 4 shows that Latino immigrants do indeed have generally low educational attainment. Just about half of the foreign-born Latinos in Illinois have completed fewer than 12 years of schooling. This group would be commonly thought of as high school dropouts but generally they emigrated from countries with low levels of education and never started the equivalent of high school. In Mexico, for example, free public compulsory education ends after eighth grade. Only 8 percent of foreign-born Latinos have a BA or higher degree.

The education attainment of U.S.-born Latinos is substantially higher than foreign-born Latinos, but 11 percentage points lower than U.S.-born non-Latinos. The 20 percent of U.S.-born Latinos with less than a high school education are very likely to be high school dropouts. The 20 percent of U.S.-born Latinos with a BA or higher degree is 12 percentage points lower than the 32 percent of the non-Latinos. The approximate symmetry between the higher proportion of U.S.-born Latino dropouts compared with the higher proportion of non-Latinos with higher education degrees exemplifies the educational problem facing U.S.-born Latinos in Illinois.

Latino Population Growth and Geographic Distribution

The impact of a growing Latino population can be assessed by looking at the size of the

Latino population, the Latino population concentration in given areas, and the rate at which the Latino population increases. Most of Illinois' population lives in Cook and the surrounding counties, and Latinos are even more concentrated in northeastern Illinois. The 2010 census shows that more than 60 percent of Latinos live in Cook County, compared to 40 percent of the state's total population. Four "collar" counties—Kane, Lake, DuPage, and Will—are home to an additional 28 percent of Latinos. Another perspective on Latino population growth is provided by examining the Latino percentage of the total population. Census data also show that Latinos are 31 percent of Kane County's population. Cook, Boone and Lake counties all have a Latino population of 20 percent or more.

Another dimension of Latino population growth that should be considered is the increase in the proportion of Latinos in a given area. In 2010, Cass County had 2,291 Latino residents or 17 percent of the total population of 13,642. Beardstown in Cass County is home to a meatpacking plant that has attracted a large number of Latino immigrants. This rapid increase in the Latino population in recent years has been associated with racial tensions, violent confrontations and a number of other social problems.⁴

Many studies find that communities experiencing the settlement of Latino immigrants have not been prepared for the concurrent demands for housing, schooling, translators, community specialists and services. The economic consequences for places experiencing these rapid demographic changes are costly, despite some economic benefits brought by increased employment. Population growth resulting from new meatpacking plants has brought many positive economic effects for rural places, such as a stable market for farmers, growth in local business, a strengthening of community organizations, revitalization of local schools, and an expanded tax base. However, it has



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⁴ Miraftab, Faranak. 2011. "Faraway Intimate Development: Global Restructuring of Social Reproduction." *Journal of Planning Education and Research*. 31: 392



⁵ Millard & Chapa, *Apple Pie & Enchiladas*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Illinois State Board of Education, "Fall Enrollments Counts, Fall 2010-11," http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/school_sum11.xls

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also brought new problems. The onerous work in meatpacking typically results in unusually high population mobility. The work is difficult and dangerous and there is little opportunity for advancement. Worker turnover is high because of illness, injury, problems with management, economic insecurity, and dislike for the job. Plants constantly hire new workers to fill vacancies, so there is a continuous stream of newcomers. Because meatpacking jobs pay low wages, and because they typically attract financially pressed workers, poverty and correlates of poverty are increased.⁵

Communities that experience this rapid growth must confront sudden demands for housing, education, health care, social services, and law enforcement. In most of these places, available housing has been inadequate, overcrowded, and dangerous. Lack of health insurance, and difficulties in affording co-payments among the insured, have led to inadequate prenatal care, gaps in child immunization, and deficient dental care. Rapid increases in school enrollments have brought about the need for bilingual and English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction. It is difficult, however, to attract qualified bilingual teachers to remote places. Teenagers find it especially difficult to gain enough English skills or social confidence to be successful in high school, and thus have problems with truancy, pregnancy, dropouts and gangs. The prevalence of these problems implies worsening conditions for future generations. School turnover is high in meatpacking towns. Language barriers have also become an expensive issue for courts, schools, and social service providers.⁶

Changing ethnicity in a region can also bring about tension among established residents. Unlike California, where settled Hispanics often provide services to newcomers and where immigrants are segregated in particular towns or parts of cities, immigrant workers in the Midwest often obtain services from non-Hispanic providers,

making them more visible in their communities. For the most part, neither the industries that are attracting migrants to the Midwest nor the communities that host the plants have planned sufficiently for the integration of the new workforce. Meatpacking plants make no attempt to prepare communities for the changes that they can expect or to encourage development of proactive policies and programs. In general, proactive policy has mostly consisted of saying "yes" or "no" to industries proposing new plant construction. The communities to which immigrants migrate, however, do incur the costs associated with providing services to a rapidly growing, low-income, non-English speaking population.⁷

Latino Population Growth, School Board Representation and Tax Referenda

The lack of equitable educational attainment is one of the major issues that confront Latinos and everyone in Illinois. Latino educational attainment lags behind that of non-Latinos at every level. This is true for immigrants and multi-generational U.S. citizens. The counties with concentrations of Latinos all have many towns and schools with high concentrations of Latinos. But there are also schools with high percentages of Latino students in counties with relatively few Latinos. Further analysis of Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) enrollment data shows that more than 25 percent of Illinois public schools have Latino-majority enrollments compared to 2.5 percent of public school districts.⁸ School board elections and school tax referenda occur at the district level and Latinos are given short shrift in both regards.

Analysis of national survey data has found that Latino students attain higher and more equal levels of attainment when Latinos are represented on the school board. Minority and non-minority students get better scores in schools with more minority teachers. Increased representation on school boards leads to hiring more Latino administrators,

which leads to more Latino teachers. Latino representation on school boards is also linked to more support for programs and policies of particular interest to Latinos, such as bilingual education.⁹ Latinos comprised 23 percent of the students in Illinois public school enrollments in 2010, yet only 1.2 percent of Illinois school board members were Latinos.¹⁰ The important impact that Latino school board members can have on educational outcomes and the huge gap between Latino proportions of school board members and students may well explain a part of the Latino educational problem.

Illinois school districts rely on local funds and often propose taxes in local elections in order to increase their budgets. One recent research publication focusing on Illinois found that school districts with high concentrations of Latinos are less likely to pass school tax referenda than other districts. This effect appears particular to districts with Latino populations, as it is not found for districts with concentrations of non-Hispanic foreign-born constituents, or in districts with concentrations of black residents. It appears that non-Latino voters are more likely to reject tax increases for public education in districts with substantial Latino populations as compared to districts with smaller Latino populations.¹¹ This fact may explain another part of the Latino educational problem.

Latinos and Illinois Public Higher Education

Some of the shortfall in higher education participation of Latinos compared to non-Latinos is due to the characteristics and circumstances of Latinos themselves. For example, proportionally more Latinos are first-generation college students, come from low-income households, have parents with low educational attainments, attend low-performing schools, etc. Two recent books, *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies*¹² and *Achieving Equity for Latino Students: Expanding the Pathway to Higher Education through Public Policy*¹³

describe these issues and provide many insights into how Latino access to higher education can be improved.

The issue of immediate concern for this chapter is how well Illinois' public institutions of higher education serve Latinos. Despite the many obstacles Latinos face in participating in higher education, there are many reasons to think that the state's public institutions could do better. One reason is that Latino enrollments are low. Previously in this chapter we have shown that Latinos represent 16 percent of the total population but 23 percent of the population under age 18. Ninety percent of this group are U.S. citizens and most are fluent speakers of English. Also, about 14 percent of all Illinois high school graduates in recent years were Latinos.¹⁴ This information provides a perspective for Table 5, which shows Latino undergraduate and graduate student enrollments at the public universities and at community colleges. As is true across the country, Latinos are slightly over-represented at community colleges, under-represented in baccalaureate programs and severely under-represented in graduate programs.

A report by the Institute for Research on Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania contends that, "In the mid- and late-1990s, Illinois was a top-performing state in preparing students for college, enrolling residents in college, and keeping

Table 5
2010 Fall Enrollments, Latinos and Total

Illinois Public Universities	Latino Males	Latino Females	Total	Percent Latino
Undergraduate	6,373	7,593	152,795	9.1
Graduate	943	1,759	52,228	5.2
Illinois Community Colleges Total	26,962	36,383	379,736	16.7

Source: IBHE Dynamic Data Book, <http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/IBHEDatabook/Chapter1/Table%20I-2.aspx>

⁹ Leal, David L.; Valerie Martinez-Ebers, and, Kenneth J. Meier. 2004. "The Politics of Latino Education: The Biases of At-Large Elections." *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 66, No. 4, November, pp. 1224-1244.

¹⁰ Illinois Association of School Boards. 2009. "2008 Survey of School Board Members." <http://www.iasb.com/services/2008BoardMemberFreqs.pdf>.

¹¹ McKillip, Mary E. M.; Gillian Stevens, and, Jorge Chapa. 2008. "The Latino Effect? The Difficulty of Passing Tax Referenda in Illinois School Districts with High Concentrations of Latinos." CDMS Occasional Paper Number 2. Center on Democracy in a Multi-Racial Society, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

¹² Gandara, Patricia & Frances Contreras, 2010). *The Latino Education Crisis: The Consequences of Failed Social Policies*. Harvard University Press.

¹³ Contreras, Frances. 2011. *Achieving Equity for Latino Students: Expanding the Pathway to Higher Education through Public Policy*. Teachers College Press.

¹⁴ Calculated from data presented in, Illinois State Board of Education, "2007-2008 Number of High School Graduates, by Gender and Race/Ethnicity," http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/eoy_graduates07-08.pdf



¹⁵ Perna, Laura; Joni Finney and Patrick Callan. 2011. "A Story of Decline: Performance and Policy in Illinois Higher Education," Executive Summary. University of Pennsylvania, Institute for Research on Higher Education, p.3.

¹⁶ Ibid, page 4.

¹⁷ "A Community College Instructor Like Me: Race and Ethnicity Interactions in the Classroom," Fairlie, Robert; Florian Hoffmann, Philip Oreopoulos. National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER), Working Paper 17381. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w17381>. 2011.

college affordable."¹⁵ Since the mid-1990s, its performance in these three areas has sharply declined. Additionally, the state has made no progress toward mitigating persistent inequities whereby African-American and Latinos are far less likely to enroll in or graduate from a public institution. The report gives the example that even though the Board of Higher Education is required to annually present an "Underrepresented Groups Report" detailing the lower levels of minority participation to the governor and Legislature, "no actions or consequences appear to follow from the information in these reports."¹⁶ The Penn report attributes this to a 1995 reorganization that generally replaced system-wide administrative leadership with localized controls. The reorganization negated the possibility of coordinating programs and policies among the different institutions and the possibility of allocating resources to meet state goals and priorities. Finally, the report notes that all of these considerations will make it especially difficult for the higher education system to adequately serve Latinos who will rapidly grow to become a large part of the state's college-age population.

Another important recent research report found strong support for one way to minimize the gap between minority and majority academic achievement in higher

education. About half of the achievement gap was eliminated when Latino students were in classes with a Latino instructor. The results were slightly stronger when African-American students had an African-American instructor.¹⁷

These findings highlight the implications of the very low levels of Latino employment in almost all job categories at public universities and community colleges. The fact that Latino faculty and administrators are particularly scarce at community colleges that have a high Latino-student concentration emphasizes the potential positive impact of increasing Latino faculty who could affect the academic success of Latino students.

A new state law requires public universities and community colleges to annually report their progress on efforts to hire and promote Hispanic faculty, administrative staff, and bilingual persons. This data can be used to bring about improvements in hiring Latino faculty and educating Latino students.

Latinos and the Illinois Economy

Despite the problems with Illinois public higher education, Illinois is among the best Midwest states in terms of producing a highly educated workforce. The state is educating more people with BA or advanced degrees than can find jobs here.¹⁸ However, Illinois is also the Midwest state with the worst high school graduate rate.¹⁹ Part of this problem can be attributed to the state's demographics. The Latino population percentages of Illinois

¹⁸ Eskew, Matt; and Paul Kleppner. 2006. "The Future of High-Wage Jobs in Illinois." The State of Working Illinois is a joint project of Center for Tax and Budget Accountability and Northern Illinois University (Office for Social Policy Research and Regional Development Institute). www.StateOfWorkingIllinois.niu.edu.

¹⁹ Hall, Mathew, "Lessons Learned from Census 2010." 2011. Presentation made at Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois, September 23.

Table 6
**Income, and Wages and Salary of Illinois Residents
Ages 25-64, 2010**

Illinois Residents ages 25-64	Latino	Non Latino
Median Personal Income	\$20,000	\$32,000
Median Wages and Salary	\$18,000	\$25,000
US-Born Illinois Residents ages 25-64	Latino	Non Latino
Median Personal Income	\$25,000	\$32,000
Median Wages and Salary	\$23,000	\$27,000

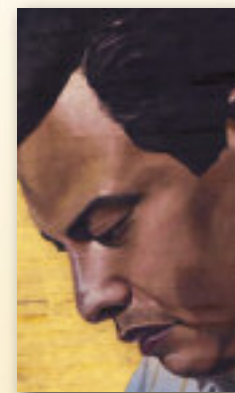
Source: Analysis of 2010 American Community Survey Microdata

are substantially greater than other Midwest states and the high school completion rates for both U.S.-born and immigrant Latinos are much lower. All of these considerations help explain Latinos having substantially lower incomes than non-Latinos (see Table 6). The difference between Latinos and non-Latinos is smaller but still substantially large even when immigrants are excluded from the analysis, as can be seen by examining the data in Table 6 for U.S.-born Illinois residents.

Many of the new, high-paying jobs in our economy do require advanced degrees. For decades, economists have wondered if our future workforce would have the education and skills necessary to be economically competitive. One example is Johnston and Packer's 1987 report, *Workforce 2000*.²⁰ The authors argued that the following trends would have a great impact on America's economic future: 1) The continuing growth of service employment and continuing decline in manufacturing; 2) An increasing demand for more highly educated workers; 3) As the population ages, the majority of a decreasing pool of future labor force entrants will consist of women and minorities; 4) Inadequate child care and other support systems limit the potential productivity of women; and, 5) Ineffective educational institutions limit the potential productivity of minorities. One major potential consequence of the interaction of these trends is a future shortage of well-educated workers in

comparison to the requirements of newly created jobs. Assessing the situation 25 years later, it does seem that these trends continued throughout this period and that these concerns do apply to Illinois today.

However, this perspective needs to be expanded. Johnson and Packer's analysis focused on new, high-tech jobs in emerging industries. The fact that the new jobs created by economic growth and change generally do require higher educational levels, as *Workforce 2000* indicates, does not mean that the skill requirements for existing jobs are increasing. The report of the National Center on Education and the Economy, *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*,²¹ provides a very helpful complement to *Workforce 2000*. The authors argue that these new high-tech jobs stand on the stable strata of the large majority of jobs with low formal educational requirements and no indications of imminent change. A major component of America's workforce consists of jobs that require no more than an eighth-grade competency in math and language, the requisite physical ability to do the work and an agreeable personality. Some of the occupations in the service and construction categories in Table 7 and many of the jobs in the production and transportation category fit this description. The concentrations of Latino males in these same three categories and Latina females in service and production categories are obvious. Neither of the



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²⁰ Johnston, W.B. and A.H. Packer. 1987. *Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century*. Hudson Institute: Indianapolis, IN.

²¹ The National Center on Education and the Economy. 1990. *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages*, Rochester, NY.

Table 7
Occupational Category for Non-Latino and Latino Males & Females, 2009

	Males		Females	
	Non-Latino	Latino	Non-Latino	Latina
Number in Labor Force	2,649,200	840,569	2,539,580	339,159
Management, professional, and related occupations	37%	13%	42%	21%
Service occupations	13%	24%	19%	26%
Sales and office occupations	19%	14%	34%	33%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	1%	1%	0%	0%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations	13%	17%	0%	0%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	17%	31%	5%	19%

Source: Analysis of 2009 ACS data from American Factfinder



²² Official unemployment statistics are calculated using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. The unemployment estimates used in this chapter were calculated using data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). ACS has a much larger sample size and other advantages over the CPS. Also official unemployment statistics are subject to adjustments that were not used here. So although the unemployment rates presented here are very close to the officially published rates they are slightly different in some cases.

two reports foresaw that these jobs would increasingly be done by Latinos. The median wage for Latinos grew by 3.6 percent between 1990 and 2004, substantially less than the increase in the median wage paid to white non-Latinos. Much of the decrease has occurred in the job categories with high concentrations of Latinos.

The long term trends that have shaped Illinois economy for the last 25 years have been troubling. However, the changes in the economy since 2007 due to the Great Recession have been really grim. In 2010, the overall unemployment rate²² was 11.4 percent and was in double digits for all educational groups except for workers with a BA degree or higher. The rate for workers with less than a high school education was 17.4 percent (See Table 8), and half of the Latino immigrants and one-fifth of U.S.-born Latinos fall into this category. Figure 2 shows that Latino unemployment rates have been higher than non-Latino rates throughout the last decade. It is also interesting to note that gap between the rate increases during the post-9/11 recession and during the most recent "Great Recession."

Table 8
Unemployment Rates for All Illinois Residents in the Labor Force, 2010

Total Labor Force	11.4%
Less than high school graduate	17.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	13.2%
Some college or associate's degree	10.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	5.5%

Source: Analysis of 2010 ACS Microdata

Table 9 is an effort to put this observation into perspective. The table examines employment in a sector severely impacted by the latest recession—construction from 2003 (the first year this series was available in ACS) through 2010. It is striking that the number of U.S.-born Latinos in construction

occupations increased by approximately 48 percent between 2003 and 2007, the year of peak employment. This may represent young Latinos with low to moderate levels of education entering the labor force. During this period, Latino immigrants employed in construction increased by 15 percent. All of the groups have experienced a decrease since 2007, but proportionally the cuts were larger among Latinos. This may be an example of last hired, first fired. While the evidence is far from conclusive, the data on unemployment presented here suggest that the employment opportunities for Latinos with low skill and educational levels are volatile. It is not clear if the availability of these jobs will increase or decrease in the future, but it does seem clear that they will pay less and have few if any benefits.

There is a large literature listing a number of possible causes of these economic changes. Among these are increased international trade, technological change, widespread computerization, industrial decline, increased immigration, increased variance in the quality of education, skill restructuring, the widespread use of computers; and the decreasing consequence of unions, labor laws and other wage-setting institutions. It is clear from this literature that there is no one factor that will explain all of the economic changes touched upon here. It is also clear that whether they are cause or consequence, all of these factors are implicated in decreased opportunities for Latinos with low levels of education.

Looking Ahead

The future well-being of Illinois is increasingly linked to the educational and economic advancement of the Latino population. It is a certainty that Illinois' Latino population will continue to grow at a rapid rate. Everyone in Illinois will be better off if we can create the circumstances and opportunities for Latinos to increase their education and income. This chapter suggests specific changes that may help bring this about.

Table 9
Illinois Construction Workers, by Nativity and Latino/Non-Latino Identification, 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2003-07	2008	2009	2010	Change 2007-10
Non-Latino Citizen	292,269	286,262	296,541	299,724	300,056	2.7%	289,550	275,665	259,315	-13.6%
Non-Latino Immigrant	35,189	30,868	35,939	40,240	33,230	-5.6%	35,260	29,879	31,417	-5.5%
Latino Citizen	15,968	29,293	16,483	20,605	23,593	47.8%	25,987	22,166	19,051	-19.3%
Latino Immigrant	57,681	59,966	61,821	62,692	66,623	15.5%	57,320	61,444	52,996	-20.5%
Grand Total	401,107	406,389	410,784	423,261	423,502	5.6%	408,117	389,154	362,779	-14.3%

Source: Analysis of ACS IPUMS

One key factor for improving Latino educational attainment is to increase the number of Latino school board members. Electing board members by voting districts or cumulative or proportional voting schemes may help bring this about. Reviewing rules and procedures for tax referenda elections is also warranted. At various times and places in our history, non-citizen parents have been allowed to vote in school board elections. If this were instituted in Illinois, it could increase the likelihood of pass tax referenda in districts with high Latino enrollments and might also help elect Latino school board members.

Latino college students learn more when they have Latino instructors. Increasing the number of Latino faculty in Illinois public

higher education could increase Latino participation and success. Given the concentration of Latino students and the paucity of Latino faculty, this is an urgent priority for community colleges. One way to improve Latino attainment of BA and advanced degrees would be to increase transfers from community colleges to universities.

Latinos are concentrated in jobs with low pay and few benefits. The same jobs had better pay and benefits in the recent past. Improving these would have a positive impact on many workers and their families. It is also important to do what we can to create more jobs in Illinois that pay well and create employment opportunities for highly skilled workers.

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