Original Article

New Southern Neighbors: Latino immigration and prospects for intergroup relations between African-Americans and Latinos in the South

Néstor Rodríguez

The University of Texas, Austin TX

Abstract The 1990s witnessed unprecedented Latino immigration in the Deep South. Some researchers developed a “new destinations” perspective to characterize this migration. Historical research, however, indicates that some Mexican migrants arrived in some areas of the Deep South decades earlier and worked in African American labor environments. Other Latinos also established an early presence in the South. The impact of Latino immigration on relations between African Americans and Latinos in the South has evolved through two phases divided by the emergence of large-scale Latino immigration in the early 1990s. National, state and local policies enacted since the mid-1990s have restricted many Latino immigrants in the South, limiting their ability to develop intergroup relations in the region. Cultural origin and social class differences among the Latino population in the South also affect the development of Latino relations with African Americans. Yet, restrictions against Latino immigrants may promote solidarity with African Americans.

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In the late twentieth century, thousands of Latinos immigrated into communities across the US southern region known as the Deep South. The Latino migrants arrived from Mexico, Central America and from a number of other areas in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as from other US areas (Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2000; Odem and Lacy, 2009). The migration was part of a record-setting pattern of immigration across the country. In many settings in the South, Latino immigration represented a highly significant development as Latino migrants introduced new social and cultural traits in the areas where they settled. Some observers viewed Latino immigration in the South as a new, never-before seen social phenomenon in the region, making the communities where Latino migrants settled “new destinations” for Latino immigration and converting the whole region into the “*Nuevo* New South” (Zúñiga and Hernández-León, 2006; Fink, 2007; Odem and Lacy, 2009). Moreover, large-scale Latino immigration in the South potentially expanded the sphere of evolving relations between Latinos and African Americans that had become prominent in other areas of the country. The South constituted a special case for these relations because it was the historical domain of African Americans and because Latinos were considered to be new immigrants in the region.

It is the argument of this article that an understanding of the prospects for evolving relations between African Americans and Latinos in the South has to take into account the phases of Latino presence in the region, as historical research indicates that the recent immigration of Latinos in the South is not entirely new. It is also the argument of this article that the prospects for relations between African Americans and Latinos has to be examined from the perspectives of international, national and local developments, as all three levels of development affect Latino immigration and subsequently the attitudinal and behavioral settings on which intergroup relations materialize.

This article examines the changing African American and Latino socio-demographic context in the Deep South (the “South”), designated as the eight-state southern region of Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. The presentation is divided into three sections. First, the article presents an historical account of early Latino migration into the South in the early twentieth century and the arrival of Mexican *bracero* workers in the region in the 1940s. Second, the article uses census data to describe the changing populations of African Americans and Latinos in the southern region from 1980 to 2010. Third, the article explores international, national and local conditions that affect Latino migration and subsequent Latino population growth in the South, and the significance of these conditions for relations between African Americans and Latinos in the selected southern region.

Emerging International Labor Migration and the Early Presence of Latinos in the South

According to one historical perspective, the emergence of Latinos in the South can be traced to regional influences of Spanish West Florida. For historian Andrew McMichael (2008), Latin American influences and imperatives were among the several social and cultural sources that affected the development of Spanish West Florida in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, also affecting adjacent regions in the South. Mexican workers, who constituted a major Latino thrust into the South starting in the 1990s, actually trickled into the destination sites in the South in the early twentieth century. According to Weise (2008), Mexican immigrants from diverse economic backgrounds and urban and rural origins started settling in New Orleans in the 1916–1920 period, and the 1920 census recorded 1,242 Mexican-born “Whites” living in the city. Labor recruiters had brought Mexican workers into the Mississippi lumber industry as early as 1908s, and into the cotton fields in the Mississippi Delta. Yet, early Latino arrival in New Orleans was not solely about labor immigration; as a commercial gateway linked to trading ports in Mexico, Central America and other Latin American areas, New Orleans experienced an early arrival of Latin American business class members as well (Carpenter, 1987).

By the mid-1920s, Mexicans were picking cotton in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi (Weise, 2008). These states contained large African American workforces, but the states were also losing African American workers in the Great Migration to the North. The 1920s were the middle of the 1910–1930 period known as the Great Migration in which 1.75 million African Americans left the harshness of sharecropping and social repression (Jim Crow) to find better opportunities in northern cities (Pinkney, 1975; Lemann, 1991). To the extent that Mexican migrants or other Latinos filled in for some of the African Americans who left cotton picking jobs in the South, it was a repeat of an inter-racial labor replacement strategy through which US employers also brought Mexican migrants to replace Chinese railroad labor in the Southwest (Cardoso, 1980).

In the first published study of Mexican immigration in the United States, Manuel Gamio ([1930] 1971) analyzed the early geographic distribution of Mexicans in the country. Using the 1900, 1910 and 1920 censuses, Gamio (1971 [1930]) listed the Mexican populations for the eight states selected for the focus of this article as indicated in Table 1. Except for Louisiana, none of the states had a significant Mexican population in 1900, notwithstanding the census undercount that must have occurred for non-English speakers in this early period. By 1910, only Louisiana reported a census count of over a thousand Mexicans, but by 1920 all of the eight states, except Georgia and North Carolina, showed clearly noticeable increases in the counts of Mexicans.

Table 1: Mexican population in selected states: 1900, 1910 and 1920

<i>State</i>	<i>Mexican Population</i>		
	<i>1900</i>	<i>1910</i>	<i>1920</i>
Alabama	43	81	146
Arkansas	68	132	280
Georgia	14	25	55
Louisiana	488	1,025	2,487
Mississippi	48	72	110
North Carolina	4	10	30
South Carolina	2	2	176
Tennessee	29	45	1166

Source: Gamio (1971 [1930]).

Again, the figures of Mexican census counts for these early years must be interpreted with considerable caution given the undercounts that must have occurred for non-English speaking minorities living under conditions of racial discrimination (Blauner, 1972).

There are no published reports on the nature of relations between African Americans and the Latinos who trickled into the South in the early 1920s. While the two populations interacted peacefully, although mostly at a distance, as sharecroppers on cotton farms owned by Whites in southern Texas (Rodriguez, 1985), it is impossible to make inferences about their relations in other regions given the usually unique circumstances that frame social relations across geographical settings.

After the United States entered World War II, and after the US Farm Bureau complained of labor shortages, the US and Mexican governments started the Bracero Program in 1942 to import large numbers of temporary Mexican workers primarily for harvest work (Craig, 1971). In Congress, senators and representatives from the Deep South states of Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi supported the Bracero Program, whereas a few other Congressional members from the South opposed it (Craig, 1971). Representative E.C. Gathings from Arkansas vigorously supported the Bracero Program. His Congressional district covered most of the cotton-producing areas in the Arkansas Delta, and he used his influence as a member of the powerful House Agricultural Committee to secure Mexican bracero labor for the cotton growers in the Delta (Morgan, 2005).

When the Bracero Program began in 1942, most braceros were placed in agricultural areas of the Southwest, but after a few years thousands of these Mexican workers were placed in agricultural areas of Mississippi and later in Arkansas (Craig, 1971; Woodruff, 1990). In Arkansas, White growers and African American tenant farmers hired braceros, and these migrant workers and other Mexican workers became 25 per cent of the cotton labor force in the

Arkansas Delta (Arkansas State University, 2008a). Mexicans worked alongside White and African American farm workers in the Arkansas Delta. A collection of oral histories concerning bracero experiences indicates that some degree of positive intergroup social and cultural dynamics or common identity transpired between Mexicans and African Americans in the Delta regions of Mississippi and Arkansas (Arkansas State University, 2008b). One interview in the oral history project mentions a bracero who described African Americans in Arkansas as friendly. Another interview describes how a bracero viewed African Americans and braceros as having the common experience of not being allowed to eat in certain restaurants, which presumably was a reference to Jim Crow practices of segregation.

Moreover, the Bracero Program was part of the historical context of the early culinary practice of African Americans in the Mississippi Delta of making *tamales*. The original introduction of tamales (made of pork and corn) in African American communities in the Mississippi Delta remains undetermined (Streeter, 2010), but having large numbers of mostly rural-origin Mexican braceros in Mississippi for a series of years in the 1940s who ate tamales as a regular part of their staple diet must have influenced the food cultures of the larger Delta region. One interview of the oral history project in the Arkansas Delta tells of a Sicilian-American family in the Arkansas Delta who started a tamale-making business after learning how to make tamales from Mexican migrant farm workers. The nutritional, inexpensive and easily portable features of corn and pork tamales matched the needs of low-income Mexicans and African Americans who spent long days working in the cotton fields of the Delta.

A decade after the termination of the Bracero Program in 1964, the growth of non-agricultural labor-intensive industries in the South added to the attraction of Latino migrants into the region. These industries include poultry farming, meatpacking, carpet manufacturing and other labor-intensive industries (Hernández-León and Zúñiga, 2000; Erwin, 2003). In addition, construction and service industries became a magnet for Latino labor (Murphy *et al*, 2001). The formations of new Latino labor forces in the South occurred alongside or close to established African American communities.

The introduction of a new labor group into an established group presence may initially produce tension and apprehension, if not distrust, among the groups, especially when jobs or other economic resources are limited (Bach, 1993). For example, Murphy *et al* (2001) report poor working relations between Latinas and African American women working as hotel maids in a city in the South. One review of Latino African American work relations in Southern settings found that these relations are more likely to develop in a positive manner when Latinos and African Americans worked in cooperating routines than when they were divided into different groups and competed against each other (Gordon and Lenhardt, 2007).

Part of the arrival of new Latino workers in the South in the 1980s occurred through migrant streams that flowed directly from Latin American sending communities to destination areas in the South (for example, see Burns, 1993). This migration transpired through kin and other social networks that connected the points of origin and destination. However, some of the new Latino immigration in the South occurred as step migration, that is, as an extension of immigration in other US settlement areas. For example, some Latino migrants who settled in Houston in the 1980s eventually migrated to Georgia and other states in the Deep South when the Houston labor market became saturated with immigrant labor (Rodriguez, 1996).

By the late 1980s and early 1990s, Houston had become a hub for the transmigration of Latin America workers to the South. Labor recruiters from the South traveled to Houston to locate Latino immigrant work crews, and several Latino-owned bus companies formed in the Houston area to transport Latino immigrants to states in the Deep South. The geographical location of Houston proved propitious for thousands of Mexican and Central American immigrants who knew little or nothing about road connections in the United States. Latino immigrants could take a single state highway directly from the US–Mexico border into Houston, where the state highway intersected with an interstate highway that went directly to four states in the South (Rodriguez, 1996). By the time the Olympics approached in Atlanta in 1996 creating a demand for construction labor, this became a much-traveled route for thousands of Latino workers migrating into areas of the Deep South.

Changing Socio-Demographic Context

Table 2 demonstrates a major demographic change in the selected eight-state region used to represent the Deep South. Before discussing the significance of this change, it is necessary to explain that the table contains an adjusted Latino count for the 1980 census year. The 1980 census results found unusually large numbers of Spanish Origin persons who identified as Black for the selected eight-state region, as occurred in other regions of the country as well (Passel and Word, 1987). An examination of the census data found that a “fairly substantial” number of these persons were African Americans who circled “American” in the “Mexican American” identifier, apparently to indicate an American identity, similar to other persons who marked “South American” to identify themselves as Americans living in the South (Martin *et al*, 1987). In an attempt to deal with this over-enumeration of Latinos, and to give a conservative estimate of the Latino count for the selected states, the column “Latino Adjusted Count” subtracts the persons who were identified as Black from the Spanish Origin count for each state in the 1980 census. The adjusted 1980 Latino counts are used for the discussion below.

Table 2: African American and Latino populations in selected Southern states, 1980–2010

	1980			1990		2000		2010	
	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>Adjusted Latino Count</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Latino</i>
Alabama	996,283	33,923	24,933	1,020,705	24,629	1,155,930	75,830	1,281,118	185,602
Arkansas	373,025	16,976	12,477	373,912	19,876	418,950	86,866	468,710	186,050
Georgia	1,464,435	60,974	44,216	1,746,565	108,922	2,349,542	435,227	3,054,098	853,689
Louisiana	1,238,472	99,699	84,445	1,299,281	93,044	1,451,944	107,738	1,486,885	192,560
Mississippi	887,206	24,731	13,893	915,057	15,931	1,033,809	39,569	1,115,801	81,481
North Carolina	1,318,857	56,667	42,370	1,456,323	76,726	1,737,545	378,96	2,151,456	800,120
South Carolina	947,969	33,667	24,745	1,039,884	30,551	1,185,216	395,076	1,332,188	235,682
Tennessee	725,942	34,077	27,006	778,035	32,741	932,809	123,838	1,107,178	290,059
Total	7,952,189	360,714	274,085	8,629,762	402,420	10,265,745	1,343,107	11,997,434	2,825,243

Sources: US Bureau of the Census (1982a, 1982b, 1982c, 1983a, 1983b, 1983c, 1983d, 1983e, 1990, 2000, 2010a).

The African American and Latino populations grew by large percentages from 1980 to 2010 in the selected southern region, but the percentage gain for Latinos was 18 times the gain for African Americans (931 per cent for Latinos and 51 per cent for African Americans) (Table 2). A large population percentage change can occur when the baseline is small (a few thousand), but when the base number is greater than a quarter of a million (as was the estimated total Latino population in the region in 1980), a large percentage change represents actual dramatic population change. In 1980, the ratio of African Americans to Latinos in the selected region was 29 to 1, but by 2010 the ratio dropped to 4 to 1 as the Latino population grew much faster than the African American population (Table 2).

An examination of the total Latino population growth in the selected eight states from 1980 to 1990 reveals that this growth advanced in a linear fashion. Alabama was a slight exception to this pattern, but the exception is probably an artifact of the adjusted estimate count for 1980. The Latino population growth in Georgia and North Carolina accounted for 77 per cent of the Latino population increase in the total selected region from 1980 to 1990. This indicates that generalizing about demographic conditions affecting African American–Latino relations across the South must be done cautiously, as the distribution of Latino population growth did not occur evenly across the region. In 2000–2010, for example, South Carolina and Tennessee led in the percentage growth of the Latino population in the region with 148 per cent and 134 per cent, respectively, whereas Louisiana and Georgia had significantly smaller Latino growth percentages of 79 per cent and 96 per cent, respectively.

Latino population growth advanced in all selected southern states between the census years 1990 and 2000 and between 2000 and 2010. The rate of Latino growth in 1990–2000, however, was 2.1 times the rate in 2000–2010. Since the Latino growth rate for the selected southern region in 1990–2000 also was 5.0 times the rate in 1980–1990, it is reasonable to select 1990 as an analytical cut-off point between phases of Latino development in the selected region. By 1990, the main differences distinguished between the two eras is that in the years before 1990, the Latino populations in the selected region overall were small and grew at a less than fast pace, whereas in the years after 1990 the Latino populations in the region grew at a fast pace, becoming substantially large concentrations in some places. The difference is one of size and dynamism.

For many African Americans, the rapid and large growth of the Latino population in sites of the Deep South in the 1990s brought concerns of a changing social environment, not only in terms of new economic competition, but also of a new population arriving with different cultural backgrounds and social perceptions (Weeks and Weeks, 2010). A random survey of 500 residents in Durham, North Carolina, in 2003, which included over 150 respondents

of each of the groups of African Americans, Latinos and Whites, found that a majority of Latino immigrants felt that few or almost no Blacks are hardworking (59 per cent) and that few or no Blacks can be trusted (57 per cent) (McClain *et al*, 2006). Whites agreed with these two perceptions at a rate that was lower than 10 per cent in each case. On the other hand, 72 per cent of the African American respondents felt most or almost all Latinos are hardworking, and only 33 per cent felt that few or no Latinos are trustworthy. Analysis of the survey findings revealed, however, that the Latino immigrant variables of having more education, more contact with Blacks and a sense of linked fate with other Latinos significantly lessened negative stereotypes toward Blacks, although males appeared to have more negative stereotypes (McClain *et al*, 2006).

A second demographic condition that distinguishes Latinos in the pre-1990 era from the post-1990 era in the selected states is their diversity. For example, in the 1980 census Mexicans did not dominated the Latino populations across the selected eight states, as they did in the 2000 census 20 years later. The South experienced a higher level of immigration from countries in the Caribbean before 1990 than it did afterwards. For instance, the 1980 census showed that among the foreign born in Georgia, more immigrants had arrived from Caribbean countries, especially from Jamaica and Cuba, than from Mexico, whereas the 2000 census showed that immigration from Mexico in Georgia was 4.9 times greater than from Caribbean countries.

A third demographic condition that contrasts Latinos in the pre-1990 era from the post-1990 era in the selected eight southern states is that in the former era less than half of Latinos in each state were foreign-born. The average per cent foreign-born for Latinos across the selected states was 19 per cent in 1980 and 54 per cent in 2009.¹ In other words, immigration affected Latino population growth in the pre-1990 era much less than it does in the post-1990 era.²

Undoubtedly, Mexicans became familiar with settings in the South in the pre-1990 era by migrating in annual agricultural labor streams that originated in southern Texas and traversed through several southern states on the way to northern agricultural work (Bowles, 1967: Figure 4). In addition, as described above, Mexican braceros learned about labor markets in the region when they were introduced in the Delta areas of Arkansas and Mississippi to work for cotton growers starting in the 1940s.

Contrasts between census findings in 1980s and findings in the 2000s indicate the importance of specifying temporal differences in examining settings of African American and Latino co-presence in the selected eight-state southern region. The two phases of the Latino presence in the selected eight-state region can be summarized as follows: the pre-1990 phase in which the Latino populations in the South are small and growing slowly with significant numbers of non-Mexican newcomers, and a post-1990 phase in which immigration fuels rapid population growth in some sites

1 The year 2009 is used instead of 2010 because at the time of this writing, the Census Bureau had not released the foreign-born figures for 2010.

2 The figure of 54 per cent for 2009 may be a bit high, given that the ACS did not give the estimated foreign-born populations for Latin Americans in Alabama, Arkansas,

in the South and the majority of Latinos are foreign-born of Mexican descent.

This contrast points to a temporal shift in the socio-demographic context of African Americans and Latinos in the selected region, and it also indicates that an arena of relations already existed, however limited, between African Americans and Latinos in some areas of the South before the mass immigration of Latinos in the 1990s. This observation is contrary to the view that in the 1990s Latinos emerged as “an entirely new population in the South” (McClain *et al*, 2006, 571). As the research by Gamio (1971 [1930]) and Weise (2008) show, Mexican immigrants reached areas of the Deep South at the beginning of the 1900s, and other Latinos did so even earlier, according to historical accounts (for example, Carpenter, 1987). Additional research is needed to reveal the nature of relations between African Americans and Latinos in the pre-1990 context.

Louisiana and Mississippi in 2009, as these numbers did not meet the sampling criteria for a 90 per cent level of confidence for the year. In 2009, the mean rate of Latino foreign-born in the selected southern states was 47 per cent.

Prospects for Relations Between African Americans and Latinos in the South

Many questions need to be addressed in order to assess the prospects of relations between African Americans and Latinos in the Deep South. One question concerns the extent to which Latino immigration in the selected eight-state region will continue to fuel Latino population growth across the South, as it has done since 1990. Historically, the population growth of newcomer groups has affected the intergroup perceptions of established residents (Jones, 1992). Another question concerns Latino population conditions that have implications for local impacts in the South.

This section gives two perspectives for considering the prospects of continuing Latino immigration in the Deep South. One perspective addresses conditions in Mexico, which is the greatest source of Latino immigrants, that may continue to foster, or reduce, the motivation for labor emigration. The second perspective addresses the effects of increased US federal and local enforcement for immigration, as well as for subsequent relations between African Americans and Latinos.

Continuing economic pressures in Mexico

The largest number of Latino immigrants in the selected eight-state southern region of the Deep South migrated from Mexico (Durand *et al*, 2000). Although the 1990s brought greater economic stability to Mexico, compared with the 1982–1992 period of pesos crisis, high unemployment and high inflation, major problems persist in the Mexican economy in the twenty-first century (Molina and Peach, 2005; Villarreal, 2010). These problems include a loss of 200,000

jobs in 2000–2002 in the *maquiladora*-manufacturing sector supported by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Although the Mexican economy has maintained stability with cyclical fluctuations (tied to the US economy), it has not generated sustained growth in a manner that would have affected great numbers of the Mexican labor force. According to Portes (2006, 1), the growth of the Mexican economy remains weak, “averaging less than 3.5 per cent per year or less than 2 per cent on a per capita basis since 2000.” In addition, more than half of the Mexican labor force must depend on the informal economy for survival, a proportion that has increased since the implementation of NAFTA. Jobs in the *maquiladora* industry pay the Mexican minimum wage of about US\$7.00 per day, which forces many Mexicans to consider alternative work in the informal economy or abroad in the United States (Portes, 2006). The US recession that started in 2007 created further economic restriction in the Mexican economy, as it is closely connected to the US economy. The Mexican economy contracted by 6.9 per cent in 2009, and total Mexican exports and imports decreased by more than 20 per cent (Villarreal, 2010). In 2005, about 18 per cent of the Mexican population lived in extreme poverty (living on less than \$1 a day) and 45 per cent lived in moderate poverty (Villarreal, 2010).

Although the future of the Mexican economy remains bleak for many workers, it is important to consider that the US economic decline that began in 2007, and the added pressure of increased US immigration enforcement, appears to have considerably reduced the attraction of Mexican migrant workers. By 2010, the apprehension of unauthorized Mexican migrants at the US southwestern border had dropped substantially since 2005 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2011, table 33), indicating a sharp decline of this long-established migrant flow. Nonetheless, in the absence of major Mexican economic growth, there is no indication that Mexican conditions are changing in a manner that will permanently reduce the motivation of Mexicans to emigrate to look for better work opportunities. Similar to workers in other developing countries who emigrate to look for work, it is likely that many Mexican workers will continue to seek jobs in the United States, although with some fluctuation across the years because of policy changes.

The migration to the United States of millions of authorized and unauthorized Latino migrants, moreover, has produced an international remittance system that annually contributes billions of dollars to migrant sending communities in Latin America. In 2010, migrant workers in the United States sent \$58.9 billion in remittances to Latin America, of which \$21.3 billion were sent to Mexico (Maldonado *et al*, 2011). The most recent state data provided by the Inter-American Development Bank show that in 2008 migrant remittances to Latin America from Georgia and North Carolina reached over \$1.0 billion from each state, and \$200 million to \$500 million from each state of Alabama, Louisiana, South Carolina and Tennessee (Inter-American Development Bank, 2008).

Mexican migrant workers thus have developed an international system of economic survival by working in the United States and sending remittances to support families, and the South has become a significant region for this migrant strategy.

A dramatic population change underway in Mexico, however, requires an examination of the possibility that Mexican migration to the United States can be sustained in the long term. The change concerns a precipitous drop in the total fertility rate, that is, the average number of children born to a woman over her lifetime. In 1970–1975, the Mexican total fertility rate was 6.6, but by 2010 the rate dropped to 2.2 (United Nations, 2005; table VIII.16; Population Reference Bureau, 2010a), and it is projected to fall below replacement level (2.0) within a few years. When the rate falls below 2.0, the population resource for additional population growth will not be reproduced at the same level, and in the long term the Mexican population will decrease, as is happening in Japan, which has a total fertility rate of 1.4 (Population Reference Bureau, 2010b). The implication of this Mexican development for the long term is that competition for jobs in Mexico could fall and wages rise as the size of the labor force becomes smaller, and thus reduce the motivation for Mexican workers to seek work abroad (especially if US immigration enforcement continues to increase).

An opposite argument can be made, however, that a decrease in the size of the Mexican population may not affect the propensity for labor emigration, given that worker emigration actually increased since the mid-twentieth century as Mexican total fertility dropped. This argument views the quality, not quantity, of Mexican jobs as the prime factor motivating Mexican labor migration to the United States.

A review of conditions in Mexico thus offers no reason to expect with certainty that the motivation for Mexican labor emigration will end in the immediate future. A US enforcement perspective, however, gives a different view about Mexican migration to the United States in the short term.

Increased US enforcement

Increased immigration enforcement in the United States, including the intensification of border control, seems to be reducing unauthorized immigration dramatically. For the first time since 1989, in 2007 the annual number of “deportable aliens” located by the federal government fell below one million, dropping to 516,992 in 2010 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2011, table 33). Moreover, according to some reports (for example, Gaynor, 2007), some Latino migrants in the southern region are “self-deporting” in the face of growing federal and local restrictions affecting immigrant communities in the context of an economic recession.

In the mid-1990s, growing public sentiments in favor of greater immigration control led to the enactment of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) in 1996. IIRIRA contrasts with the liberal character of immigration laws enacted since 1965 because it provides numerous measures to increase deportations. Before the enactment of IIRIRA, the US government normally deported fewer than 50,000 migrants annually, but after the enactment of IIRIRA the number of deportations increased dramatically and were a reported 387,242 in 2010 (US Department of Homeland Security, 2011, table 38). Seventy-three per cent of the deported migrants in 2010 were Mexicans.

Deportations are formal removals in which migrants are banned by the US government from returning to the United States for a period of years or permanently. The formation in 2003 of the Department of Homeland Security included the organization of the bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to conduct arrests and deportations and carry out other ICE activities in interior areas of the country. ICE has moved aggressively against “deportable aliens” in the country, including in the South, targeting immigrants who have committed “aggravated felonies” or who are in the country without visas. The total unauthorized migrant population in the country is estimated to have been 10.8 million in 2010, with Latino migrants accounting for at least 79 per cent of the total number (US Department of Homeland Security, 2011).

According to Passel and Cohn (2011), all of the eight states in the selected southern region under study have large numbers of unauthorized Latino migrants. Passel and Cohn (2011) give the range of estimates for the numbers of unauthorized migrants in the eight states for in 2010 as follows: 425 thousand in Georgia, 325 thousand in North Carolina, 140 thousand in Tennessee, 120 thousand in Alabama, 65 thousand in Louisiana, 55 thousand in each of Arkansas and South Carolina, and 45 thousand in Mississippi.

Federal enforcement agents have pursued and apprehended thousands of “deportable aliens” in the southern region: from 2001 to 2010, federal agents in the southern special agent jurisdictions of Atlanta and New Orleans arrested 30,736 and 25,644 migrants, respectively (US Department of Homeland Security, 2011, table 35). Moreover, the federal government is recruiting state and local police departments to join the search for unauthorized and other deportable migrants under the authority of Section 287(g) of IIRIRA. By 2010, 24 state and local police departments in six of the eight states that constitute the southern regional focus of this article had police officers participating in the Section 287(g) program, (US Customs and Immigration Enforcement, 2010). The establishment in Charleston, South Carolina, of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center to train local police in immigration enforcement, and the creation in Memphis, Tennessee, of an ICE Fugitive Operations Team to locate and deport migrants, has increased immigration enforcement in the southern region.

Enforcement impacts on relations between African Americans and Latinos

The consequences of increased immigration enforcement can take different directions for relations between African Americans and Latinos in the Deep South. One direction is that increased immigration enforcement will decrease Latino immigration, which may lessen the perception among African Americans of Latinos as economic competitors. The decline of Mexican immigration seems to have started already in Georgia, the state with the largest Latino population in the Deep South. Whereas the total foreign-born population in Georgia increased by 15.7 per cent from 2005 to 2009, the Mexican immigrant population in the state increased by only 1.2 per cent in the 4-year period (US Census Bureau, 2006; 2010b).

A second direction that the impact of heightened immigration enforcement can take for relations between African Americans and Latinos in the southern region is that it can cause Latinos to turn inward for survival, lessening contact or the potential for contact with other groups. Research in North Carolina indicates that some unauthorized Latino migrants in the state attempt to survive detection by using internal networks to find jobs, safe shopping areas and supportive places of worship and so on (Hagan *et al*, 2010).

In addition, Latino community and civil-rights organizations that normally seek linkages with other minority organizations may become less able to seek intergroup connections as the defense of the Latino immigrant population in the region becomes their priority in the growing climate of restrictive policies toward immigrants. For example, in 2007–2008, an African American educational foundation in Atlanta planned a convening of African American and Latino organizations to develop a common focus and agenda regarding educational issues affecting African American and Latino children in the South. The African American educational foundation suspended the plans for the meeting, as Latino organizations were involved with the urgencies of supporting the survival of the Latino immigrant populations in the region. Yet, this example should not be overemphasized, as Latinos and African American leaders have met in two “summits” in southern states to address inter-group issues since 2007 (Alvarado and Jaret, 2009).

In addition, in late 2011, after the Alabama state government enacted a very restrictive immigration law aimed at unauthorized Latino immigration, Latino and African American organizational leaders began to appear in public events together in the state to criticize the new law (WBRC, 2011). Although the views of African American residents of Alabama regarding the new restrictive law have yet to be assessed, several very prominent African American leaders in the state have criticized the new law as a vestige of the state’s racist history against African Americans (WBRC, 2011). The early reactions of African American and Latinos leaders in Alabama to the new law indicate that the new measure is promoting political unity between the two groups of leaders.

Restrictive immigration policies may limit the ability of some Latino immigrants to develop relations with African Americans not only because of the strategy to turn inward for survival, but also because deportations remove many Latinos that have social and language skills necessary to interact with English-speaking groups in the larger society. Research has found that many deported Latino migrants had been in the United States for over 10 years, had become fluent in English, established stable work careers and had established families with US-born children in the country (Hagan *et al*, 2008). These are conditions that support Latino involvement in the large community.

In the climate of growing restrictions against immigration, the future of Latino population growth in the South remains precarious. In 2009, Latinos immigrants in the selected region accounted for 57 per cent of the Latinos, but only 13 per cent had become citizens (US Census Bureau, 2010b). This means that most Latino immigrants in the region, including legal permanent residents, remain vulnerable or potentially vulnerable to removal for any of the numerous administrative or criminal infractions specified by immigration law. Nonetheless, many Latinos in the South have achieved high levels of social integration. Over half (59 per cent) of the total Latino population in the selected southern region are citizens, and many of the non-citizens have authorization (visas) to live and work in the United States. Moreover, over 50 per cent of Latinos age 5 or older in each of the selected eight states in the region speak only English or are bilingual speakers and speak English very well (US Census Bureau, 2010b).

Local impacts

The effects of developments in international and national arenas eventually materialize in local settings. Partly as a function of immigration, there is significant variation of the Latino population sizes across the South (Table 2), making the ratio of African Americans to Latinos vary considerably across the selected eight states. In 2010, the ratio of African Americans to Latinos ranged from about 3 to 1 in Arkansas to 14 to 1 in Mississippi. A drop of the intergroup population ratio can create an environment with greater intergroup contact opportunities *over time*, simply because there are more members of the smaller group to interact with, either in absolute or relative numbers, not withstanding norms of intergroup separation.

Population ratios and other population variables can directly influence attitudinal formation and intergroup contact among African Americans and Latinos. Population growth can affect perceived group size, which has been associated with perceived threat (Fossett and Kiecolt, 1989; Semyonov *et al*, 2004). Elevated birth rates can be a source of perceived dramatic population growth, especially when media sources report that Latinos have “skyrocketing” birth rates (for example, see Stobbe, 2006).

As the number of Latinos increased rapidly in the selected southern region in the 1990s, especially through immigration, the overall birth rates of Latina women rose sharply and became the highest by 2000 of all the female categories across the selected eight southern states, with the exception of Mississippi (National Center for Health Statistics, 2006, Table 1). The highest birth rate among Latinas in the selected states in 2000 was reached in North Carolina with an overall figure of 33.1 (38.6 for Mexican women), whereas the birth rates for African American and White women were 16.7 and 13.0, respectively.³ The percentage change of the birth rates of the Latina women slowed considerably across the selected states after 2000, but the overall number of births for Latina women remained disproportionally greater than the percentage of Latinos in the state populations. In 2008, for example, Latino births accounted for 17.6 per cent of the 146,603 births in Georgia, whereas Latinos accounted for only 7.9 per cent of the state population.

Public perceptions of elevated Latino births, however, tend to miss differences among groups of Latina women. Whereas Mexican women have the highest birth rate of all women groups in the selected eight states with the exception of Mississippi, Cuban women have the lowest birth rates of all the women categories in the selected states (National Center for Health Statistics, 2006). High Latino overall birth rates will continue to increase the Latino population sizes in the selected states, but not as dramatically as the high levels of immigration that occurred in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Another local variable that has importance for relations between African Americans and Latinos is the condition of residential segregation. Analyzing national census data from 1980 to 2000, Iceland (2004) found that African American residential segregation declines in growing metropolitan multiethnic settings, and that this is particularly associated with the growing presence of Latinos. On the other hand, Latino residential segregation increases in metropolitan areas with growing Latino populations. This latter finding suggests that immigration is promoting Latino segregation, perhaps in the form of ethnic enclaves where new immigrants find culturally familiar social institutions for their initial settlement stages.

The measure of residential segregation between two groups is called the index of dissimilarity, and it measures the evenness (or unevenness) of distribution between the two groups in a geographical area (census tract, block, or block group). Groups that are completely evenly distributed have an index of dissimilarity of 0 and groups that are completely segregated have an index of 100. The index represents the per cent of a group that would have to be redistributed to achieve complete evenness in its geographical distribution vis-à-vis the second group. Table 3 shows the indexes of dissimilarity for African Americans and Latinos in the largest metropolitan areas of the selected eight states in the South. As Table 3 demonstrates, residential segregation between African Americans and Latinos in the South ranges from moderate segregation

3 To an extent, the higher birth rates of the Latino (Mexican) women is because of the high fertility age structure of migrant populations, that is, most migrant populations are composed mainly of younger people, including women of childbearing ages, although fertility is also affected by other variables associated with social class differences.

Table 3: Index of segregation between African Americans and Latinos for selected metropolitan areas, 2000

<i>Metropolitan area</i>	<i>Index of dissimilarity</i>	<i>Total population</i>	<i>Percentage of White*</i>	<i>Percentage of African American</i>	<i>Percentage of Latino</i>
Birmingham, AL	63.1	921,106	66	30	2
Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR	42.5	583,845	74	22	2
Atlanta, GA	57.6	4,112,198	60	29	7
New Orleans, LA	59.2	1,337,726	55	37	4
Jackson, MS	44.1	440,801	52	45	1
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	40.2	1,499,293	71	20	5
Columbia, SC	40.2	536,691	63	32	2
Memphis, TN-AR-MS	52.2	1,135,614	52	43	2

*%White refers to non-Hispanic Whites.

Source: Population Studies Center (2010).

in the specified metropolitan areas in North Carolina and South Carolina to moderately high segregation in Birmingham, Alabama. In the specified metropolitan areas of North Carolina and South Carolina, 40.2 per cent of Africans Americans would have to be redistributed to achieve zero segregation, and in Birmingham 63.1 would have to redistribute to reduce segregation between the two groups to zero.

Another local factor to consider in the prospects of relations between African Americans and Latinos at the local level in the southern region is the social differentiation of the latter group, which is composed of different cultural origins (Central American, Cuban, Mexican and so on) and social classes. Although all classes can have inter-group contacts, middle and upper-middle classes are especially important in reaching out to other groups in society because by the nature of their class behavior they tend to seek participation in a range of civic and professional organizations in the larger society. Moreover, many middle and upper-middle class families send their children to superior schools where their children interact with the children of other ethnic or racial groups in the same social class.

Census data indicate that both African Americans and Latinos in the selected southern region have sizable middle and upper-middle class components, as indicated by managerial and professional occupations, which can promote the prospects for intergroup contacts and coalitions. Although both groups are underrepresented in managerial and professional occupations (lawyers, physicians, teachers and so on) in the selected southern states, nonetheless, their participation in these occupations in 2009 ranged from 21 per cent to 27 per cent among employed African Americans and 13 per cent to 20 per cent among employed Latinos (US Census Bureau, 2010b). These percentages

amount to 1.1 million African Americans and 142.2 thousand Latinos who by the nature of their occupations may have more intergroup contacts than other members of their groups. For example, for several years health professionals of both groups have organized annual conferences to bring together African American and Latino healthcare professionals to discuss HIV/AIDS-related issues in the state of Kentucky (African American/Latino Leadership Conference on HIV/AIDS, 2011).

Intergroup relations transpire across a variety of mediums, such as through individuals and organizations. Each dimension provides different potentials for furthering and sustaining intergroup interaction. Historically, intergroup relations at the level of institutions and organizations have created channels for exchanges between communities, including the development of intergroup alliances and solidarity for political collaboration. The ability of Latinos to establish organizational infrastructures varies among the eight states of the selected region, but Latino expansion in the managerial and professional sectors in the selected southern region, especially in Georgia and North Carolina, indicate that Latinos have a growing potential to advance in this regard.

Entering a New Phase

The discussion above describes the development of the Latino population in the Deep South as having two phases, that is, the pre-1990 phase and the post-1990 phase, in which the Latino population differed by size, rate of growth and composition. Policy developments regarding immigration enforcement have thrust many Latinos in the South into a new phase of restriction and stress. In this new phase, national, state and local policies are creating immense pressure for many unauthorized Latino migrants and their families in communities across the selected southern region (for example, see Capps *et al*, 2011). Federal raids to apprehend and deport unauthorized Latino immigrants in poultry processing, construction, agricultural and other labor-intensive industries in the South are examples of this new development.

Moreover, although Latinos are gaining strong social foundations in areas of the selected eight state region, particularly in Georgia, North Carolina and Louisiana, where their numbers are the largest, they remain relatively small populations with little political power when compared with African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites. In Georgia, for example, which has the largest Latino population in the selected region, the Latino population is less than one-third of the African American population. This factor combined with the condition that many adult Latino immigrants in the southern region are non-citizens (including 85 per cent of Latino immigrants age 18 years and above in Georgia in 2009), and thus ineligible to vote, limits the political power of Latinos in comparison with other populations in the region.

In the new phase of Latino change in the Deep South, the major currents of Latino development will likely include maximizing the survival of unauthorized immigrants, establishing stronger community infrastructures and participating in mainstream institutions, especially to increase resources for social mobility, including the mobility of the US-born Latino generations. These processes require reaching inward to harness social capital and other internal resources, but also reaching outward to seek collaborative intergroup strategies, especially with the group most experienced in the region in struggles for social inclusion – African Americans. The collective reaction of Latinos and African Americans leaders in Alabama after the passage of the restrictive immigration law aimed at Latino immigrants indicates that this outward reach has begun.

About the Author

Néstor Rodríguez is Professor of Sociology at The University of Texas at Austin. His research interests include impacts of national, state and local restrictive policies on migrants, families and communities in the United States and countries of origin, evolving relations between Latinas/os and African Americans, return migration to Mexico and Central America, and the dynamics of state bureaucracies involved in coercive control, such as in immigration enforcement. He is completing a book manuscript on Guatemalan migration to the United States (*Al Norte*) with Susanne Jonas, and his recent publications include “Social Effects of Mass Deportations by the United States Government” in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34 (coauthored with Jacqueline Hagan and Brianna Castro), and the forthcoming article “Border Control: Ethical and Human Rights Issues of a US Enforcement Strategy” in *Hommes et Migration*. (E-mail: nrodriguez@austin.utexas.edu)

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