

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

From Production to Reproduction: Implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations

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Abstract

In new immigrant destinations in the U.S. South and Midwest, early immigrant populations consisted primarily of young, Latino single men recruited to work in food processing, services, and other low-wage and often hazardous occupations. After six or seven years, however, most of these immigrant communities began to see women and children from Mexico and Central America joining these early arrivals and changing the nature of immigrant interactions with host residents and institutions—particularly schools and health care centers. While many natives viewed the presence of single men as similar to guest workers and necessary, directly tied to the performance of specific economic services, the arrival of women and children stimulated ambivalent reactions in small, rural towns in North Carolina and Iowa. This suggests that the perception of immigrants as problems rather than solutions can be traced, in part, to their transformation from a productive labor force to families capable of reproduction.

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

Introduction

Research in Marshalltown, Iowa and Eastern North Carolina, two new immigrant destinations, traced the origins of immigrants in both regions to recruiting efforts by the food industry (Griffith 2008). In Marshalltown, in line with other meatpacking communities across the Midwest, recruitment of primarily Mexican workers began shortly after the passage of IRCA, in the early 1990s, at the same time poultry and seafood companies began recruiting Mexican and Central American workers in Eastern North Carolina (Steusse 2016; Striffler 2005). Outside of the seafood plants, where workers were recruited as temporary, legal guestworkers carrying H-2B visas, and most were female, recruitment in the pork and poultry plants resulted in large numbers of young, single individuals, most of them male, arriving in the two states and finding housing in run-down neighborhoods, small towns, and rural trailer parks, socially isolated from much of the native population. The seafood workers, living in company housing at or near the seafood plants, were similarly separated from natives.

During these initial years, Iowa and North Carolina natives seemed to relate to these immigrants and guestworkers as temporary residents, as they had been relating to migrant farmworkers. Individuals interviewed in city governments, businesses, and other local institutions in poultry and seafood processing communities nearly always referred to them as *migrants* (Grey 1999; Griffith 1993; Stull, Broadway, and Griffith 1995). Many expressed the view that as long as they were there to work, they were not a problem—specifically, not a drain on “the system.” Implied by this view is the idea that the costs of their maintenance during unproductive periods of their lives, and their reproduction, had not and would not be borne locally. This is indeed the case with guestworkers, who are contracted for temporary work as adults, after their maintenance and reproductive costs have been paid by their home governments, work in their host countries without their families, and return home if injured or disabled (Griffith 2006).

In both Marshalltown and Eastern North Carolina, however, natives’ views toward immigrants changed as an increasing number of women and children began to join those who had arrived six or seven years earlier. By the end of the 20th century, it was becoming obvious that the immigrant communities in both states had changed from what locals referred to as a “military model” to one that included more

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

women, children, and elderly. In other words, the immigrant communities in both states began to establish reproductive economies along with their contributions to the productive economy. This was accompanied by increasing interactions with local institutions.

In Marshalltown, the Lutheran church began reaching out to this largely Catholic, growing Latino community, allowing them to place a statue of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the back of the church; later, after a change in leadership, St. Mary's, one of the local Catholic churches, welcomed them, leading to a procession from the Lutheran church to St. Mary's carrying the Virgin. It also led to the flight of most of the native whites from the St. Mary's to another Catholic church in town.

Immigrant Latinos also colonized a Catholic church in Newton Grove, North Carolina, primarily because of its name: Our Lady of Guadalupe. The church had had this name for over two decades without recognizing its significance for Latinos. Once Latinos targeted the church for worship, however, the priest began learning Spanish, both delivering sermons in Spanish (which my Spanish-speaking friends said was not very good) and blessing congregants' homes and trucks in Spanish. Although church leaders engaged in some outreach with the Latino community—assisting them with food, clothing, and information, for example—the priest said, “We don't get too involved in social justice. We leave that to Father Antoine.”¹

A growing church presence wasn't the only change that took place with the growth and elaboration of immigrant communities. In Eastern North Carolina, some of the original guestworkers dropped out of the program, either marrying natives or becoming undocumented workers, and a few of these women established some of the earliest Latino businesses in cities near the coast; these cases of immigrant entrepreneurship were echoed across the state in the emergence of Latino *Tiendas*, restaurants, beauty salons, tax preparation services, clothing stores, *talleres mecanicos*, and other businesses discussed in more detail below. Similar business establishments emerged in Marshalltown. With more women and children settling in the two locations, more and more immigrant families accessed health care systems and local schools. Progressive-minded school officials in Marshalltown founded a bilingual program in one of the local elementary schools, and lawyers with Legal Aid in North Carolina threatened

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

to sue the state Department of Public Instruction if they did not begin providing Limited English Proficient (LEP) programs to immigrant children—both developments indicating increased institutional interest in the growing immigrant population.

These changes were accompanied by increased anti-immigration voices in the two states calling for English-only laws, partnerships between sheriffs' departments and ICE, and other legal mechanisms nearly as draconian as those passed in Arizona and Alabama but subsequently deemed impossible to enforce. The prevailing view among many native knuckleheads² was, "If English was good enough for Jesus, it ought to be good enough for them."

While these voices have fluctuated over time, often nearly silenced as racist, recent scapegoating at the national level has lent additional legitimacy to anti-immigrant sentiments, leading to increased bullying in schools and confrontations in public spaces. Shortly after the 2016 election, Latinos in my adopted home town of Greenville, North Carolina met at a local church to support one another and air their fears. Latino students and parents of students in local schools related stories of increasing bullying following the election of Donald Trump, adding to problems these students face from having to learn English and adjust to North Carolina schools. Sympathetic residents—including public school officials and clergy—joined them in condemning such behaviors and advocating for increased tolerance and understanding.

In Iowa, over time, funding for the Welcoming New Iowans Center dried up even as immigrant and refugee groups continued to arrive in the state. According to the past director of the Center, Mark Grey, Iowa now has people speaking 180 different languages. Nevertheless, in the past few elections, the state has shown that it has a strong republican base and that many of its residents, like people associated with the Trump administration, resent the immigrant presence.

Immigrant responses

Immigrants have not been passive recipients of hostility or resentment, but instead, in both Iowa and North Carolina, have asserted their right to remain in the United States, with and without legal documents. They have done this in a variety of ways, but relying on the public school system and other

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

state and local institutions, as well as churches and ethnic organizations, have been central to a good deal of their resistance. Connecting with these local institutions, as noted above, occurred coincidentally with the growth of an immigrant reproductive economy, a development that tends to alter immigrants' relationships with the productive economy. Although these changing relationships can be both positive and negative, reproductive labor is often viewed as a barrier to or drag on productive labor. Specifically, for example, working parents with children often have to miss work when their children are sick or engaged in special activities at school and the addition of reproductive demands on parents' time make it less possible to achieve the flexibility that employers can achieve with single, childless women and men or with guestworkers. The mere presence of children, moreover, significantly alters the social dynamics between immigrant and native communities and within immigrant families.

The children of immigrants—whether covered under the Dream Act or born in the United States—have played important roles in assisting in settling, often among the most fluent in English in their households and responsible for translating for parents at medical centers, in courts of law, and in everyday settings such as yard sales and grocery stores. Occupying these roles, they often mature more quickly than they otherwise would have and experience pressures that children who are not immigrants or the children of immigrants rarely experience. For example, a woman whom I came to know well as a research assistant on a project on remittances between Puebla, Mexico and Durham, North Carolina, Carmen (pseudonym), migrated from Pauhuatlán, Puebla at 14 to live with her aunt in Atlanta before moving to Durham at 16, where a number of individuals from her home town have settled. She enrolled in high school and began learning English in ESL classes, but after two years still had mastered only a rudimentary knowledge of the language.

Carmen was 18 when she began working for me, part-time, and, even though still attending high school, combined work for me with two other part-time jobs in fast food restaurants in a mall food court, living with *compadres* from Pauhuatlán in a minimally-furnished apartment.³ Around the time she turned 19, her mother, Doña Eusebia, migrated from Pauhuatlán to Durham with Carmen's younger brother, age 10, and younger sister, age 14. The four of them found an apartment together, Carmen's brother and

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

sister enrolled in the Durham public schools, and Doña Eusebia began an informal business making lunches for construction workers and others from Pauhuatlán, each day exchanging a new lunch box, which were small coolers, for the previous day's box. In one room of their apartment she kept cases of bottled water and other supplies for the lunches.

Shortly after I met Doña Eusebia, it became clear to me that there were tensions between her and Carmen and that, between the two of them, Carmen was the more mature. Doña Eusebia entertained her clients in the evening far too frequently in Carmen's view, and paid little attention to either of her two younger children. Eventually, Doña Eusebia moved to Atlanta to be with her sister, the aunt whom Carmen had originally lived with, and Carmen moved into a smaller apartment with her two younger siblings, assuming principal care for them. Carmen confided to me that she had encouraged her mother to move, viewing her as a bad influence on her siblings. Shortly after this change, Carmen's sister, at only 15, became pregnant.

Carmen is an exceptional young woman. Despite being undocumented, she continues to move among jobs at fast food restaurants in the Durham area, has finished high school, and now has two children herself with a young immigrant construction worker from Pauhuatlán. She and her partner have benefited from the fact that entrepreneurs from Pauhuatlán have established bakeries and other small businesses in Durham where they can meet and talk with others from their home community, that there are Pauhuatlán soccer clubs, and that the city is in an area—the Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill Triangle—that is more tolerant of immigrants than many other areas in North Carolina. While she may be exceptional, Carmen's need to mature rapidly is not uncommon among children and young adult immigrants, as they are enlisted to assist with child care, the establishment of informal businesses, and other attributes of the immigrant experience. Those who cannot mature as rapidly as someone like Carmen, unfortunately, often become involved in substance abuse, unsafe sex, crime, and other deleterious behaviors to cope (Garcia 2008).

In this paper, I draw principally on past and current research and recent personal experience and observation⁴ to discuss a few ways that immigrant families have managed to assert their right to stay in

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

new destinations. By claiming their right to stay, they challenge the continued perception among many that they are temporary migrants in the area specifically to perform mostly low-wage, unskilled economic services. Toward the end of the discussion, I contrast their roles in local society and economy to those of guestworkers, who are imported (officially as “non-immigrants”) without their families specifically to perform economic services on a temporary basis and who reinforce the idea that Latino immigrants are migrants. The three methods that immigrants assert their right to stay that I discuss are: 1) the formation of ethnic associations; 2) immigrant entrepreneurship; and 3) everyday local social interaction. All three involve involvement with U.S. institutions—schools, health care centers, churches, businesses, government agencies, etc.—that assist with the reproduction of their families and communities.

Strength in Organization: Ethnic Associations and Immigrant Settlement

During the first decade of the 21st century, after immigrant communities principally from Mexico and Central America had established themselves in Eastern North Carolina and we began witnessing anti-immigrant sentiments expressed in local English-only laws, regulations about drivers’ licenses, letters to the editor, and other native objections to immigrant settlement, immigrants in the region began organizing in a number of ways. Among the first and most enduring organizations has been the *Asociación de los Mexicanos de Carolina del Norte*—or, as it is locally known, AMEXCAN—which was founded by and is still operated by a local Latino leader named Juvencio Rocha Peralta (Peralta, Griffith, and Contreras 2014). Established shortly after the 2000 census, which showed a 400% increase in Latinos in North Carolina, AMEXCAN assists Mexicans, Central Americans, and other Latinos in Eastern North Carolina by acting as a liaison between Latino immigrants and their consulates, providing information about jobs, schooling, and other opportunities, hosting and co-hosting celebrations of Latino culture, seeking funding to address problems facing Latinos (e.g. diabetes, occupational health, discrimination), acting as a strong advocate for human rights, providing internships to local college students, and developing workshops on various issues of interest to the health and welfare of the local Latino immigrant populations (e.g. nutrition information, prenatal and child health and development, domestic violence, entrepreneurship, youth leadership). Juvencio himself has been locally praised for his work in a number of venues, most

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

recently receiving East Carolina University's award for outstanding community outreach and engagement, which was one of a long line of awards from local institutions, governments, and organizations.

AMEXCAN, unfortunately, has suffered from chronic problems with funding, relying on local institutions for free office space, venues for its workshops, and volunteer services. Some of these problems derive from the local and insular nature of the organization and its difficulty cooperating with other, larger organization such as La Raza or the Latino Credit Union, while others can be traced to a lack of interest in sustained commitment to a non-African American ethnic organization in Eastern North Carolina. Yet, in part because of its chronic struggle with funding, AMEXCAN conforms to Coleman's definition of social capital, able to marshal its social capital at strategic moments yet also able to remain dormant for long periods—or, in Coleman's words, “fungible with respect to certain activities.” This social capital consists of a number of connections with local institutions, particularly Pitt Community College and several schools and departments at East Carolina University (mediated by specific faculty members in nursing, sociology, anthropology, and social work interested in immigration issues), with local churches, with African American ethnic organizations, with the Mexican consulate in Raleigh, and with local media outlets.

Following the election of Donald Trump and a rise in local anti-immigrant expression, AMEXCAN succeeded in calling attention to increased bullying of Latino students in local schools. This occurred, first, by assembling Greenville residents—natives and immigrants—in a local church from 7:00 to 9:00 PM to share experiences and discuss methods of dealing with discrimination and, second, developing a workshop to teach students how to deal with bullying in school (Botex 2017). This kind of response to discrimination against immigrants is quite typical of AMEXCAN. Although it depends on buy-in from the local community and various institutions, Juvencio has managed to maintain connections with a number of local clergy, educators, and others who can assist him in his organizational efforts.

Like many small organizations with powerful leaders who are reluctant to share their power, however, AMEXCAN spawned other ethnic organizational activities when some of its members broke off

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

from AMEXCAN to found their own organization. After an internal dispute over the disposition of funding regarding a project involving encouraging increased outreach among Latino *promotoras de salud* (health advisors), several women left AMEXCAN to found a Latino youth organization called *Jóvenes en Acción*.⁵ The organization consisted primarily of the teenaged children and friends of the founders, and its goal was to encourage leadership and entrepreneurship among the members and to perform highly visible community service—cleaning public parks and other public spaces—that would demonstrate to the wider community that they were an asset rather than a drain on community resources. The youth in *Jóvenes* constituted the principal audience for a workshop on entrepreneurship held in April 2011, as part of a USDA-funded research project on immigrant entrepreneurship in rural new destinations (Contreras, et al. 2012).

Other ethnic organizations, however, have not been nearly as successful. During a brief period around 2010, an organization emerged that called itself *Mujeres sin Fronteras* (Women without Borders) in the rural countryside of Wayne and Greene Counties, both of which import large numbers of Latino farmworkers during the summer months. *Mujeres* was an organization formed by around half a dozen female farmworkers that claimed to represent farmworkers across all of Eastern North Carolina. Two organizations enabled them to access a variety of goods and services: Migrant Education and Duke University's Student Action for Farmworkers. They were assisted by a variety of volunteers—mostly undergraduate college students and professors from Duke, UNC Chapel Hill, NC State, and East Carolina Universities—who offered them free labor (one person's in the form of a summer internship) and solicited donations on their behalf.

During its brief life, *Mujeres* managed to engage teams of student and faculty workers, partnering with Migrant Education staff and Student Action for Farmworkers personnel, to accomplish several achievements: 1) building and stocking a chicken coop and greenhouse in the yard of the leader; 2) organizing a clothing drive; and 3) assisting them in establishing a booth at a local flea market to sell eggs from the chickens and produce from the greenhouse. For its part, *Mujeres* offered to assist in organizing workshops for farmworkers to teach them about farm safety issues, nutrition, diabetes, and other issues.

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

Eventually, however, it became obvious that what had originally begun as about half a dozen women working together dissipated into one astute Latino woman using her status as a farmworker and mother of migrant children to continue receiving goods and services for herself. She shared none of the proceeds from the egg sales with others in the organization and sold the donated clothing from her flea market booth rather than distributed it to farmworkers.

These two cases show how ethnicity among immigrants can be marshalled in ways that serve both the larger ethnic community and individuals with fewer scruples who are willing exploit their circumstances for personal gain. Despite that she was ultimately a con artist, in defense of the leader of *Mujeres*, several small conferences and events were organized on her behalf and, at each of these, she was able to educate locals about the plights facing farmworkers in Eastern North Carolina. Although uneducated, she was quite an articulate and emotional speaker, speaking in a soft voice and even tone about the suffering and sacrifice of farmworkers in the region. Our experience with *Mujeres* also shows us how hungry many local residents are to help immigrants, at times overlooking ethically compromising developments to achieve limited, short-term goals. Staff of institutions like Migrant Education are no less susceptible to the promise of ethnic organization than are individuals.

Filling Gaps: Immigrant Entrepreneurship

With the growth of the immigrant community, during the 1990s and into the 21st century, Latino immigrants have been among the most enterprising in terms of establishing new businesses, most of them serving primarily immigrants but a few, particularly in the skilled construction and mechanical trades, catering to a wider clientele. From 2008 to 2010, with researchers from Iowa State University, we conducted a study of immigrant entrepreneurship in Iowa and North Carolina, inventorying immigrant businesses in several small towns and rural counties in each state and conducting more in-depth work on the roles of these businesses in their families and communities. In North Carolina, the project included the outreach component, mentioned earlier, that was populated by youth in *Jóvenes en Accion*, and this section will confine itself to the North Carolina data.

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

Focusing on four rural counties and one metropolitan county with high concentrations of immigrants—two in Western North Carolina and three in the East—we collected information from 128 entrepreneurs/ businesses that fell into the categories in table 1, which shows the distribution of businesses by business sector and by county, using pseudonyms for the counties but giving their general locations in the state.

**Table 1. Inventory of Latino Businesses Contacted By County
(totals not 100% are due to rounding error)**

County/ Total interviews	Stores	Food	Services	Clothing	Other
Merwin/ 35 [rural, eastern]	42% [14]	28 % [10]	11% [4]	11% [4]	8% [3]
Bartram/ 39 [semi-rural, east central]	33% [13]	31% [12]	23% [9]	0	13% [5]
Lawson/ 22 [rural, western mountains]	32% [7]	14% [3]	9% [2]	18% [4]	27% [6]
Wright and Bly/ 19 [rural, western foothills]	21% [4]	42% [8]	10% [2]	5% [1]	21% [4]
Beloit/ 13 [metro, eastern]	46% [6]	31% [4]	15% [2]	0	7% [1]
Totals [128]	44 (34%)	37 (29%)	19 (15%)	9 (7%)	19 (15%)

Almost two-thirds (63%) of the businesses visited fall into those categories that are most common among immigrant entrepreneurs—general convenience stores and restaurants or food stands. Many of the convenience stores also provide services, such as money transfers or referrals to local clinics, and sell clothing. Services include beauty salons, tax services, computing/ communication services (including installation of satellite dishes), immigration/ travel services, and services associated with the construction industry (painting, roofing, masonry, general repair/ renovation work, heating and air conditioning). Other businesses include auto mechanic workshops, furniture stores, light manufacturing, laundries, and book or music stores. Table 2 shows the types of goods and services these businesses provide.

Table 2: Types of Goods and Services

Types of Products	Variations	Examples
<i>Nostalgia Products</i>	<i>Processed/ Prepared</i>	Oaxacan tortillas; Honduran sauces; artwork; oversized spoons for deep frying <i>chicharrón</i> (pork rinds); clothing, boots, belts, etc.; Latino breads/ bread products.
	<i>Natural</i>	Cactus leaves; tomatillas; spices; Honduran red beans; Guatemalan black beans.
<i>Ceremonial Products</i>	<i>Religious</i>	Votive candles; baptismal blankets; images of the Virgin of Guadalupe; wedding dresses.
	<i>Secular</i>	<i>Quinceañera</i> dresses; sports trophies; birthday cakes.

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

Entertainment Products	<i>Live</i>	Performed music; arranged dances; theater performances; billiards; cockfights; boxing/ sporting events; prostitution; alcoholic beverage/ drug sales.
	<i>Electronic</i>	Dish antennae installation; Spanish-speaking television playing in stores; video games.
	<i>Other media</i>	DVDs (some locally produced); CDs; books/ comic books; games.
Work-Related Products	<i>Services</i>	Income tax service; accounting; legal advice (especially regarding immigration status).
	<i>Goods</i>	Box lunches; food sold at work sites; hard hats, work boots, work gloves.
Migration Industry Products	<i>Communication</i>	Phone cards; FAX services; internet services; packaging/ shipping services.
	<i>Financial Services</i>	Wire transfers; money orders; check-cashing/ loan services.
	<i>Transportation</i>	Bus ticket sales.
Health & Beauty Products	<i>Services</i>	Hair cutting/ styling; manicures/ nail decorating; tattooing; curing services (herbal, conventional medical)
	<i>Goods</i>	Herbal remedies; lotions; shampoos; Mexican prescription pharmaceuticals sold over-the-counter.
Repackaged Products (sifted into comfortable cultural settings)	<i>From Retail Giants (e.g. Sam's Club)</i>	Snacks (e.g. chips in individual bags); canned/ dry goods; packaged meat products.
	<i>From distributors</i>	Frito-Lay/ snack products; local dairy products; eggs.
Products Related to Trust	<i>Common cultural background</i>	Health care/ curing; assistance with Temporary Protective Status (Hondurans); auto mechanics; referrals to health care centers with bilingual staff; assistance with finding housing; child care services.
	<i>Communication</i>	Translation services.
	<i>Legal issues</i>	Referrals to lawyers, consular staff, immigration specialists, etc.

The names of businesses often reflect the origins of the owners (e.g. La Tienda Michoacana), and although most are owner-operated, each business tends to generate one to a handful of additional jobs outside of the owner's family. As such, they are sources of employment within the Latino community (with the exception of a few waitresses at Latino owned restaurants, few other employees are non-Latino). Bilingual Latino youth are the most common employees hired, putting these businesses more or less on par with other sources of teen employment (e.g. fast food/ restaurant work, clerks, cleaning and support staff, etc.).

For this discussion, one of the more interesting findings was that many of these businesses are as often owned, managed, and staffed by women as by men. Self-employment among immigrant women,

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

several Latino women reported, has been a way that they can care for children while generating income for the family. Even when the principal business person is male, women and children provide so many support services to immigrant businesses that immigrant entrepreneurship is deeply entwined in the immigrant reproductive economy.

In a broader sense, these businesses have become part of struggling rural communities' attempts to revitalize their economies and reproduce themselves. Many immigrant businesses have moved into areas of rural counties—country road strip malls, crossroads, the downtowns of small communities, etc.—that have been abandoned by native merchants but have potential business space and, if applicable, commercial zoning. We encountered several other venues of Latino businesses in our research as well, including an increasing share of stalls and food stands at county flea markets. Most flea markets operate between one to three days per week, and several of the Latino businesspeople we encountered at flea markets follow a circuit that includes two or three different flea markets in either neighboring or more distant counties. Most of the produce sales in rural flea markets have been entirely or nearly entirely Latinized, as have most of the cooked food stands and stalls. Clothing is another popular Latino stall in rural flea markets, as are Latino CDs and DVDs, while tools, cell phone accessories, used goods (e.g. lamps, comic books, DVDs, guns), and general packaged merchandise (e.g. school supplies, toys, underwear, socks, etc.) are more likely to be sold by whites, blacks, or Asians.

In addition to the flea markets and formerly abandoned storefronts and offices, Latino entrepreneurs have set up temporary structures and stands in parking lots, usually selling produce or cooked food. Some store owners have outfitted vans with shelves to travel on weekends to Latino neighborhoods or labor camps, selling products ranging from phone cards and snacks to clothing, blankets, boots, and produce. Finally, a number of Latinos operate businesses out of their homes, including one photographer and one artist, signaling a move into the visual arts.⁶

One key way in which many Latino artisans, craftsmen, and people skilled at trades like welding or masonry become entrepreneurs is through subcontracting, which dovetails with recent labor market trends in many fields that utilize immigrant labor. Subcontracting takes a variety of forms, from crews on

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

construction sites who provide specialized services (e.g. framing, hanging and taping sheetrock, providing electrical services) to labor contracting and temp agencies who place people in companies but continue to serve as the employer of record, absolving the firms utilizing the workers' labor from compliance with labor and immigration laws. For example, between Charleston, South Carolina and Wilmington, North Carolina, there are more than 120 golf courses, each of which needs around 18 landscaping workers working around 12 hours per day during the high season (roughly Memorial Day to Labor Day). A labor contracting company provides workers to these golf courses for landscaping services, maintaining employment records, payroll, and other human resources materials, and the golf courses that are landscaped assume no responsibility for those workers. To avoid paying overtime and health insurance, the labor contracting company switches two crews for every two golf courses, working each crew six hours on one course and six hours on another and claiming that every worker has two part-time jobs. Although these workers are the employees of the labor contracting company, they consider each worker an independent contractor for tax and employment records purposes.

Once largely restricted to the farm, construction, and garment labor markets, subcontracting has become more and more popular across the U.S. economy. Proponents of subcontracting argue that these arrangement allow capitalist enterprises to remain flexible, expanding and contracting their labor forces with fluctuations in demand for their products, just as garment manufacturers could hire and fire multiple seamstresses as fashion cycles swung up and down with the hems of ladies' dresses. Although subcontractors can consider themselves entrepreneurs, being technically self-employed, these relations often become highly exploitative. As emerged during the 2016 presidential campaign, people who hire contractors, such as Donald Trump, can withhold or reduce payments by claiming that the job was not done to their satisfaction.

Subcontracting does allow immigrant artisans and craftsmen to teach their trades to their children, however. As such, they can fill in the gaps in opportunity for those without papers and even without proper schooling, allowing children of immigrants to drop out of school if bullying or other circumstances become too difficult and still find work. Unfortunately, in some households I have encountered, parents

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

have encouraged their children to leave school to contribute to the family income as soon as they become capable of earning, again speeding up maturing.

Another day in the diaspora: daily interactions between natives and immigrants

Like the speaker in Robert Frost's poem, Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, like everyone, immigrants have errands to run and promises to keep. They have people to feed and clothe and take to the doctor, gifts to give and receive, places to go and people to see. Performing these activities, they inevitably interact with natives, often without much more meaning than offering a greeting, holding a door, or helping an elderly person retrieve a bottle of juice from a high shelf in a supermarket. While gestures this small are unlikely to alter the social structural and institutional foundations of discrimination, they are nevertheless helpful in smoothing relations between natives and immigrants.

Somewhat more meaningful daily interactions with natives derive from immigrants' use of institutions such as schools, health care centers, churches, and government offices. For example, during much of my recent research on immigrant issues in North Carolina, both of my daughters have been young mothers with children in North Carolina public schools. Like most elementary school classes these days, in their sons' classes are immigrant children whom they have befriended and have invited to birthday parties, play dates, and other events. Instead of dropping their children off at these events, as most native parents do, immigrant parents often stay for the duration of the festivities; this is the case at soccer matches and other school-sponsored events as well. Even though they often cannot speak English, they participate in the activities of these events through their children and, in this way, become more intertwined with local society.⁷ Thus the children of immigrants, whether their parents like it or not, become a medium of assimilation.

Errands, birthday parties, carrying children to the doctor for inoculations, and similar activities all qualify as reproductive labor. They can also be examples of affective labor (Hardt 1999), or the labor involved in love, caring, warmth, sex, and other emotionally positive behaviors between parents and children, between lovers, and between friends—behaviors that are often expressed openly, in displays of affection, creating feelings of good will toward those receiving such affections and those who witness

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. *David Griffith, ECU*

them. It is chiefly in the contexts of the reproductive and affective economies, with their children—with, that is, the yield of reproductive labor—and with other objections of their affection, that immigrants, little by little, learn more and more about living in the United States and that natives, little by little, learn more and more about immigrants. Through reproductive activities, with the assistance of institutions that facilitate the reproduction of the community, immigrants' rights to have a place in local society and local culture are asserted, if gently, every waking hour of every single day.

Conclusion

The above observations suggest that the process of immigrant settlement and resistance to deportation involves engagement with institutions and that, among all institutions, those involved with reproducing society and community—schools, health care centers, churches, etc.—provide the most critical liaison functions between immigrant populations and the wider society. As such, they complement the reproductive labor that immigrants marshal and deploy to construct the conditions of permanent settlement, in the process establishing a reproductive economy with ever more and ever deeper links to the productive economy. In rural Iowa and North Carolina, it wasn't until women and children began joining young working class men that these processes became fully elaborated.

Once this occurred, political forces representing anti-immigrant sentiments strengthened their efforts to separate immigrants from schools and other public institutions by denying access to them to people living in the country without documents that authorities consider legal. These processes are extremely disruptive to reproductive economies and a cornerstone of exploitative labor relations that separate productive from reproductive labor, as with guestworker programs. As efforts to cut off immigrants from public resources and deportation efforts increase, more and more employers of immigrants have been lobbying for guestworker programs to gain access to legal, temporary, non-immigrant labor from abroad. Not only do these programs separate productive from reproductive labor, they also bind workers to single employers without free access to the labor market, approximating, in many worker advocates' minds, slavery. The new Trump Policy of separating children from their parents at the border as a deterrent is therefore little more than yet another phase in a long tradition of separating

From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

productive from reproductive labor—from the settings and protections of reproduction—that have been the source of slavery, human trafficking, and guest worker programs. Among the principal methods immigrants have to resist these efforts is, quite simply, to reproduce.

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From production to reproduction: implications of the transformation of immigrant social structure in new destinations. David Griffith, ECU

¹ Father Antoine (pseudonym) is a well-known Episcopalian priest in Eastern North Carolina who does assist with human rights and social justice issues involving Latino immigrants. On Sundays his church serves free lunches and gives away bags of produce donated from surrounding farms, and people can listen to his sermons on loudspeakers as they sit at picnic tables outside.

² I have to thank Mark Grey, the former director of the now-defunct UNI Welcoming New Iowans Center, for this term. He used it during a speech to Marshalltown residents on immigration, talking about people writing vitriolic and racist letters to the editor about immigrants, saying, "We're always going to have knuckleheads like that."

³ By minimally-furnished I mean that the apartment, like many immigrants' apartments I have visited, included few pieces of furniture beyond what was absolutely necessary: mattresses in the bedrooms, one chair in the living room on which sat a television across from a couch, and a kitchen table. There were no book shelves, no wall hangings, no dressers, and no other chairs.

⁴ Drawing on personal experience and observation has, without a doubt, influenced many of the statements I make in the text, some of which, I admit, may be difficult to back up with literature and may be the result of my own biases.

⁵ This is a pseudonym because tensions still exist between parents of this youth group and AMEXCAN.

⁶ The interest in visual arts among Latino entrepreneurs has included at least one foray into filmmaking. Wilmington, NC has a film industry that has struggled over time but has remained operating, producing shows for cable television, films, and spawning theaters throughout the city and beyond. It may have been the influence of Wilmington's film industry across eastern North Carolina that encouraged one particularly enterprising Latino entrepreneur to produce a film, *Lágrimas del Corazon* (Tears of the Heart), available on DVD, which is set mostly in eastern North Carolina and stars member of his family along with some fairly well-known Mexican actors.

⁷ During current research in Germany on refugees, one event organized to help refugees adapt to German society is a weekly meeting where refugee and native mothers have an opportunity to play together with their children, sharing coffee, cake, and other foods and providing a setting where the refugees can learn German and the natives can learn more about the lives and backgrounds of the refugees, both groups becoming more comfortable with one another.