

## The Relationship of Local Hispanic Population Growth to Morale within the African American Community

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Disadvantages faced by African Americans continue to command the attention of scholars and public policy analysts. Inequities in tangible outcomes such as longevity, education, employment, and income have been comprehensively documented (for example, see Farley 1996). But race gaps have also been demonstrated in such non-tangible dimensions as anomia, life satisfaction, self-reported health, happiness, and trust in people (Thomas and Hughes, 1986).

The impact of America's expanding immigrant population on the well-being of African Americans has been a focus of recent debate and empirical analysis. In his 1996 book, William Julius Wilson includes economic competition from immigrants among causes of the shift from more livable "institutional ghettos" of the past to the jobless ghettos in which so many black Americans are mired today. The assumption that immigrant competition harms black Americans, however, has not escaped challenge.

In response, recent research has asked detailed questions about the impact of immigration on African Americans. Labor-market outcomes have been one focus, and the conclusion is that growth in the immigrant population has brought at least modest decline in labor market outcomes of African Americans, particularly the lowest-skilled (Hamermesh and Bean, 1998). No such negative impact of immigration was found on the likelihood of self-employment among African Americans (Fairlie and Meyer, 1998), or on residential segregation, where the impact is if anything positive (Zax, 1998). But the swelling immigrant population may hurt the chances of African Americans to

complete high school (Betts, 1998) and to gain entrance to certain types of higher education programs (Hoxby, 1998).

The present project extends the focus of the immigrant impact question, asking about implications of growth in the Hispanic population for morale in the African American community – both sense of psychological well-being and confidence in government and other social institutions.

The sources of the social psychological data are the 1998, 2000, and 2002 General Social Surveys (GSS). In recent years the GSS has not over-sampled black respondents; thus any one of the recent biennial surveys includes only about 400 blacks. By pooling three of the surveys, however, a black sample large enough for serious analysis is obtained.

Social psychological measures assessing black morale include: financial and job satisfaction; predictions for employment stability; perceptions of past and current rank in American society; assessments of the trend in conditions for blacks; happiness and self-reported health; faith in people; trust in government; and confidence in civic institutions.

Over the 1998-2002 period, the GSS has drawn respondents from 100 metropolitan areas and non-metro counties. Census data describing the 1990 and 2000 Hispanic population share for these 100 localities, along with other contextual information, has been linked to the GSS files.

Multi-level analysis will be used to assess the impact of change in local Hispanic population share on the morale of black residents, before and after the introduction of black socioeconomic status and other relevant controls. Our understanding of the impact

of immigrants on tangible outcomes for blacks will be complemented by this look at important social psychological dimensions of African Americans' lives.

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