

A Spatial Study of the Mobility of Hispanics in Illinois and the Implications for Educational Institutions

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Working Paper No. 43

November 1998

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the demographic pattern of Hispanic migration to Illinois, the forces which encouraged this migration and population growth, and the impact it has on societal institutions. It first presents demographic data on population and growth, educational attainment and dropout rates, economic patterns, and population and diversity in Illinois. It then considers a case study of Hispanic population growth and its impact on local institutions in one rural Illinois town. Several observations are drawn from this examination of Hispanic demographic change in Illinois. Without a strong attractive force, people are unlikely to move and resettle. The smaller the community and the larger the potential of new employment bases, the greater will be the disruption of new settlers. On the other hand, the more unsettling the impact of new settlers might be, the greater will be their positive economic impact in the community. The analysis takes on a special emphasis when the persons recruited to meet an employment need are easily identified as non-native to a community. Difference has always been an ally of fear. Thus, skin color, facial characteristics, stature, language, or any other easily identifiable difference can be a source of rejection. Negative community interaction will occur where person-to-person contact is unavoidable. On the other hand, every community will have individuals willing to reach out to welcome strangers. No single institution or entity can, by itself, bring about the integration of an alien populace into a small town. It takes the efforts of many individuals and organizational structures.