

**Emerging Research Themes derived from**  
***A Journey Across Our America***  
[www.journeyacrossouramerica.blogspot.com](http://www.journeyacrossouramerica.blogspot.com)

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1. Culture adaptation and exchange is ongoing. It is *not* uni-directional. Most folks experience neither complete assimilation nor simple accommodation but live bi-culturally.
2. To comprehend this phenomenon as living human history one must connect transnational histories of contemporary migrants to understand *why* they left their homeland and *how* they came to be here: **Stories about displacement and crossing.**
3. Understanding the impact of IRCA (1986) sheds insight into the new geography of Latino immigration. **This reform allowed eligible migrants to move freely in the U.S., compare labor markets, and settle in new areas.**
4. Small Town USA: A unique story of out-migration of local groups and an aging and low-growth population have led local business to depend on foreign labor.
5. There exists a strong acknowledgment of the role of new immigrants in maintaining the economy and continuity of small towns.
6. The national dependency on immigrant workers is less “visible” for many due to the nature of much immigrant work (**in fields, service industry, domestic workers, etc.**)
7. Employers utilize a variety of recruitment strategies: i.e. **Temp. migration programs, recruiters, signing bonuses, encouragement of chain migration, etc.**
8. Local leadership sets + or – tone for how new immigrants are received (**politicians, law enforcement, schools, employers, civic leaders, churches, grassroots efforts**)
9. There exists a strong awareness among new immigrants of human and civil rights. This is both enabling and controversial.
10. The intense entrepreneurship of Latina/o community is pervasive.
11. Many migrants are experiencing a fragmentation of families—from those who remain in the homeland from other family members within the U.S.
12. Latino communities face threats to community cohesion. **There is an ongoing displacement of urban communities & disruption of local economies through gentrification & border wall**
13. Efforts to establish and resist local ordinances have intensified racialization of the entire Latino community and generated organized response efforts (grassroots and legal).
14. Despite polarization of debate in media, courts, and political campaigns, indicators reveal that people get along quite well (**intermarriage rate, recognition of mutual interdependence, respect for immigration legacy of US, etc.**).
15. Contradictions: A certain amount of Latina/o unity has intensified as a result of immigration debates even as efforts to “prove” our worthiness as (or to be) “Americans” has increased. The challenge is to balance distinctiveness of community with greater awareness of common ground.

i journey across our America  
over the hills and through the plains of urban and rural realities  
wheeling my way across streets and highways of endless disrepair  
i join the multitudes who wonder what America is becoming,  
has become, what happened to its roots

Along Hwy 1 i pass the workers in fields of corn and wheat,  
patches of strawberries, groves of grapes and olives  
who move all day long up and down the rows to bring the harvest home  
so you and I can take our time diligently picking their harvest under the fluorescent lights of  
air-conditioned supermarkets

[Or, if Sally and Sam are feeling especially connected to mother earth  
they pay a fee to a local organic farmer  
for the privilege of picking his fruits and vegetables  
playing like farmworkers along the sea shore on Saturdays  
while the real workers who tend the farm are out of sight]

These hijos and hijas del sol shield themselves in long sleeves and hats  
from the sun--who is their god and who is their enemy.  
They toil for endless hours for wages unwanted by homegrown workers,  
yet they are an unwanted and unwelcome harvest of a broken system  
“Go back you where you came from” follows their every move  
as they follow the sun and the harvests across the nation’s horizon  
so we can have affordable food at our table.

Lorenzo, a farm worker in N. California tells me,  
as we ride a commuter bus over a treacherous hill,  
of a wife in Michigan and a sister in Tejas  
under the same sky but not in each other’s sight or arms  
because their arms are filled instead with food for others.  
Yet, even with the scorn, this *is* a better life.  
than the home where the food was ever absent.  
We trade bike-tales, his a bright yellow \$20 garage sale refuge  
my black dream machine a 150 x more expensive.  
With a whistle he smiles and waves as we cycle down different roads.

