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CHANGING PATTERNS OF LATINX IMMIGRATION OVER THE PAST DECADE: FINDINGS FROM AN ESTABLISHED IMMIGRANT RECEIVING COMMUNITY

Background: Shifts in US immigration patterns within the past decade have indicated steep increases in South and Central American immigrants. These immigrants often arrive seeking asylum from political upheaval and high rates of crime and poverty in their countries of origin. Nonetheless, they are now arriving in the US amidst a tension filled sociopolitical climate. This study explores differences in demographics and immigration related factors between two cohorts of recent Latinx immigrants (RLIs) arriving in Miami Dade County, Florida (MDC) during the past decade.

Methods: Baseline data comparisons were conducted from two longitudinal cohort studies in MDC collected 10 years apart. Data for Cohort 1 was completed in 2010 while data for Cohort 2 was completed in 2020. Both studies had equivalent inclusion criteria: 18-34 year old Latinx immigrant, residing in MDC, who immigrated to the US in the past year. Chi-square tests examined differences between cohorts on demographics, context of immigration, and immigration stress. Chi-Square tests between each variable and cohort stratified by country of origin were used to compare distribution of the variables across South Americans, Central Americans, and Cubans.

Results: Cohort 1 were 520 RLIs (41.3% male; Age: M= 26.98, SD = 4.96) while Cohort 2 consisted of 518 RLIs (45.9% male; Age: M= 27.44, SD = 5.06). Significant increases in South American and decreases in Cuban RLIs were found in the 2020 Cohort. Cohort 2 was more likely to be married, currently employed and less likely to have immigrated to the US alone. Immigration status differences by country/region of origin between 2010 and 2020 were as follows: In 2020 Cubans were more likely to report undocumented immigration status; South American were less likely to report permanent residency status and Central American were less likely to report undocumented immigration status. Cubans in 2020 were more likely to report fears of deportation. Overall, RLIs in 2020 reported less immigration stress compared to those 2010.

Conclusion: Findings reveal distinct changes in demographic immigration patterns of RLIs over the past decade. While tensions over immigration policies continue to rise in the US, our findings suggest that well-established Latinx immigrant-receiving communities with dense ethnic enclaves, such as those in MDC, continue providing increased availability to supportive environments that may shield RLIs from immigration related stress.