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Book Review: Tacos and Tacquerias in North Cackalacky

The Latino Migration Experience in North Carolina: New Roots in the Old North State. *Hannah Gill.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010, 240 pp.

In her book, Gill addresses the various issues that pertain to Latino immigration in the state of North Carolina, and she dispels the vast assumptions and stereotypes that usually cling to immigration debates such as taxes and employment opportunities. Gill takes a holistic approach by referencing multiple hot spots for Latino immigration, including the Raleigh-Durham area and other more rural counties in North Carolina. She makes clear links between the local and global forces that continue to dominate immigration politics in both North Carolina as well as the South in general; all of this is accomplished without alienating the voices of many different native North Carolinians about Latino immigration, including the racial mixture of whites, blacks, and Native Americans.

Gill points out in the preface that this book was written in order to reach those who would not normally pick up a book about immigration, and this includes college students, educators, policy makers, law enforcement officials as well as anyone in the faith communities. Clearly, this is a scholarly work aimed at mainstream audiences who might have ill-informed opinions on immigration. I personally enjoyed reading this book because the writing style is accessible and not overloaded with academic jargon; it is informative without being overwhelming. The book is well laid out and follows the path set out in the table of contents, covering the history of immigration to North Carolina, the economic and social realities of Latino immigration, community building, and lastly, how Latino immigrant youth view their experiences and opportunities in the State as well as the future of immigrant families.

Gill combines her skills as an anthropologist as well as an educator in Latin American immigration studies to produce an ethnography that reaches a wider audience, not the usual suspects for such ethnographies. She incorporates participant observation both in North Carolina and various towns in Mexico. Gill relies heavily upon interviews, primarily with a small group of Latino immigrants themselves, in order to produce a more personal dimension to this ethnography. Also important, her research is backed up by an extensive bibliography of pertinent literature which gives this book a solid framework of evidence.

What I found to be the strongest points of this book are Gill's capacity to rebuff the various myths associated with Latino immigration and to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform. She addresses the controversial issues at the center of current debates and ties them to North Carolinian immigration policies.

If readers take nothing else away from this book, it should be that the children of undocumented immigrants bear the brunt of the lack of sound immigration policy. Inevitably, these kids are hindered from pursuing higher education and are forced to follow employment paths similar to their parents'. Gill uses interviews with several Latino youth to illuminate this desperate and unforgiving situation. If we have learned anything from history, it is that education is key to social mobility as well as to becoming active agents and citizens in communities around the United States.

Gill promotes better understanding of immigration and the factors fueling it. By using the voices of immigrants themselves, she provides personal insight into the lives and experiences of Latino immigrants in North Carolina. Only by understanding immigration on this level will acceptance and tolerance be fully realized.

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