Research on Family Migration/Reunification: Issues and Challenges

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The Need for a Research Agenda

• Migration and decisions related thereto take place at the level of the family

• The family as primary socializing agent is central to integration.
Challenges

- Temporal, circular and multidirectional nature of family migration
- Competing discourses of “best interests”
- Moral imperatives
Discursive Issues

- Theoretical marginalization of family migration
- Dominance of human capital model
- Crisis of nuclear family
Methodological Issues

- Lack of an empirical reality
- Tensions between quantitative/qualitative and macro/micro
- Variability in eligibility criteria and definition
Tensions

• Entitlement vs. minimizing fraud/abuse
• Needs of migrants vs. established residents
• Identity vs. social solidarity
• Retention vs. integration
Research Areas

• Mapping patterns, trends and influencing factors in family reunification

• Network analysis of relationships among sponsor/sponsored
Research Areas (cont’d)

• Analysis of relationship between family reunification and inter/intra group social capital formation

• Calculation of socio-economic costs of family separation