

The Integration of Latino Immigrants in the Rural United States

Heather Koball,¹ William Kandell,² Randolph Capps,³ and Rosa Maria Castañeda³

SIGNIFICANCE

Immigration is fueling rapid growth of the Latino population in rural communities across the United States, against a backdrop of an aging, mostly white population.

Rural communities will increasingly rely on the productivity, economic well-being, and civic participation of Latino workers and their children in the coming decades.

RESEARCH QUESTION

The first phase of the project compares the integration of Latino immigrants in rural (non-metropolitan) and metropolitan areas and in new and established destination states.

As the map shows, states with established rural Latino populations include Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas. All other states are considered new destination states.

DATA AND MEASURES

Based on data from Census 2000, 5 percent sample, restricted to Latino immigrants ages 15-64, initial integration measures include:

- **Civic integration:** Measured by linguistic isolation (i.e., no one in the household speaks English) and citizenship status.
- **Family formation in U.S.:** Measured by presence of immigrants' own children in household.
- **Economic security:** Measured by household poverty level.

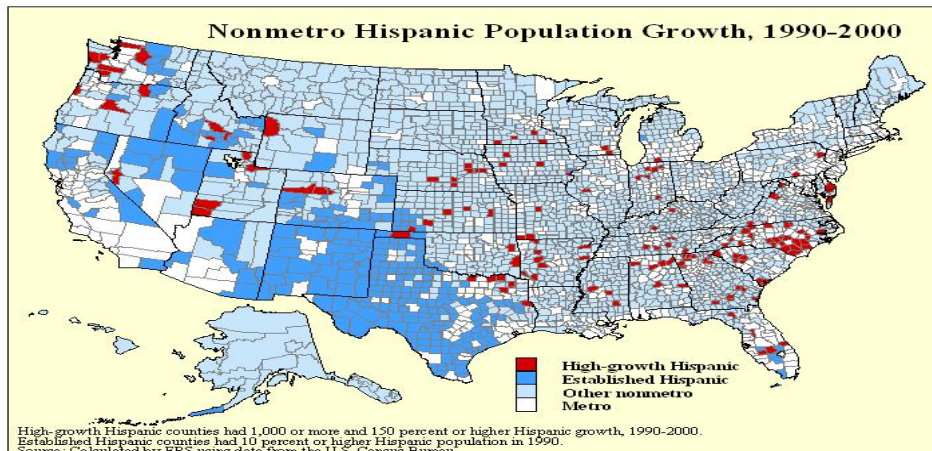


Table 1: Characteristics of Latino Immigrants by Residence

	Rural New	Rural Established	Metro Area
Born in Mexico	81%	97%	64%
In U.S. Less than 5 Years	37%	19%	24%
Mean Age	32	37	35
Male	63%	53%	54%

Note: Rural areas are defined as non-metropolitan areas

FINDINGS

Latino immigrants in new destination, rural areas have lived in the U.S. for less time, tend to be younger, and are more likely to be male than immigrants in other areas (Table 1).

Reflecting these characteristics, they are more likely to be linguistically isolated, not a citizen, and live with no children. However, they are also less likely to live in poverty than are immigrants in rural established areas, perhaps reflecting better economic opportunities in new destination states (Figure 1).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research efforts will expand (1) the research questions, (2) the data sets, and (3) the measures of integration.

1. Future Research Questions

- Do integration patterns differ across rural and non-rural areas and across new and traditional destination states?
- What characteristics of rural areas contribute to differences in the integration process of immigrants?

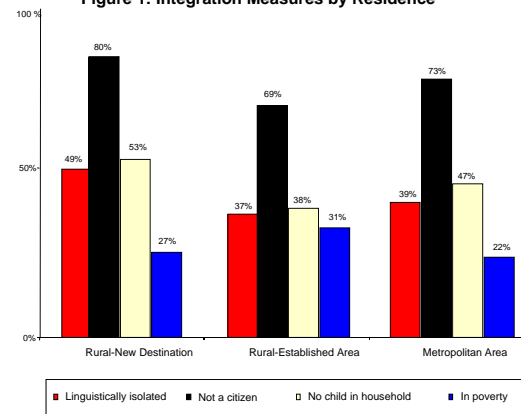
2. Additional Data Sets

- Trend analyses will include the 2006 American Community Survey and the 1980 and 1990 Census data.

3. Additional Measures of Integration

- Home ownership, employment, annual income, health insurance coverage, educational attainment, family formation in the U.S., and integration of immigrants' children.

Figure 1: Integration Measures by Residence



¹Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; ²Resources and Rural Economics Division, USDA; ³Urban Institute