CHAPTER 16

Latinos/os (in) on the Border

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In the early 21st century, no other area in the United States appears to have been as profoundly transformed by recent immigration from Latin America than the Southwest. This region, alongside the 2,000-mile stretch that separates the United States and Mexico, includes California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas.[1] According to the latest estimates from the U.S. Census, the Southwest is currently home to more than half of all Latinos (nearly 56%). Because of intensive and extensive Latino geographic clustering, some have even gone so far as to label the region "Mex-America" and/or "New Aztlan." This categorization, in turn, encourages the broadly accepted notion that this ethnic concentration is both recent and the result of unprecedented and unparalleled growth.

In reality, the ancestors of Latinos were present in the Southwest territory of the United States even before it was a nation-state. Spanish exploration and settlement began in the 16th century, and during the 17th and 18th centuries, the Latino population continued to slowly grow, through both natural increase and net immigration, especially in New Mexico and Colorado. Then, after the Mexican-American war and U.S. jurisdiction, and especially in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas saw tremendous change, as more Latino immigrants and their descendents (especially from Mexico) settled in the region. Thus, Latinos are both one of the oldest and one of the newest groups of U.S. immigrants; the Southwest, too, is one of the oldest and one of the newest regions of Latino settlement.

In this chapter, we describe the role of Latino immigration and settlement in the historical development of the Southwest border region. We confirm aspects of the broad narrative that already exists regarding Latinos in this region, but we also argue for a more dynamic view of the geography and demography of the Southwest.[2] The analysis links geographic data to demographic and economic conditions to assess the location and composition of the Mexican-origin

population within the Southwest in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and it concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of these patterns in the early 21st century.[3] We focus specifically on Mexicans as a subset of the larger Latino population primarily because this group represents the vast majority of those living along the Southwest border during the period of study, although we do address how the composition of this region has changed in the present day with the immigration of other Latino subgroups.

In this analysis, we use the integrated public-use microdata samples of the U.S. Census (IPUMS), which we have designed to identify persons of Mexican-origin, using language, birthplace, and Spanish surname.[4] Designating State Economic Areas (SEAs) as our primary geographic unit, we reveal settlement patterns and major destination points from 1880 to 1950. We examine the 15 southwestern SEAs that capture more than 60% of the total population of the ethnic group across the period 1910–1950 (1880 is excluded for sampling reasons). We then compare the demographic experiences of persons residing in significant clusters of settlement along the Southwest border region during the first half of the 20th century. We find that the following:

- The Southwest has always been a Latino cultural region: until the early 20th century; however, the resident Mexican-origin population was small and confined to very particular communities within individual states along the border.
- By 1920, a rapid process of geographical expansion across the entire Southwest fortified and confirmed its status as a Latino cultural region: Nearly every SEA along the border had residents of Mexican origin and this development was largely a product of immigration from Mexico.
- This settlement process was highly urbanized: Cities were the site of expansion in the ethnic Mexican population in the Southwest.
- Urban areas became still more attractive across time, generally because they offered better job opportunities.
- Women immigrants played an important role in this new urban culture and were more likely to settle in cities.
- Female immigration led to declines in transitory household structure and the dominance of nuclear household patterns among persons of Mexican origin in all regions.

Throughout the analysis, we contend that place matters: The geographical context of arrival and settlement were key factors in differentiating Mexican American communities and the lives of those who lived within them in the early 20th century.

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF SETTLEMENT: THE ROLE OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

The resident population of ethnic Mexicans in the United States in 1850 was rather small, amounting to about 80,000 persons (Gratton & Gutmann, 2006). In part, this was because indigenous groups in the area resisted efforts by, first, the Spanish and then, the Mexican government's efforts to broadly colonize the region with new settlers (Meinig, 1971). When the U.S. government eventually annexed the region, more difficulties ensued, especially in Arizona and New Mexico; even so, a natural increase encouraged the steady growth of the ethnic Mexican population from 1850 onward (Gutmann, Frisbie, & Blanchard, 1999). By 1880, around 290,000 persons of Mexican

origin lived in the United States, nearly all in the Southwest and a majority of whom were native-born (Gutmann, McCaa, Gutiérrez-Montes, & Gratton, 2000).

Low levels of immigration to the United States from Mexico in the late 19th century was due in part because Mexican federal and state authorities saw emigration as threatening to the nationalist project and thus discouraged out-migration (Fitzgerald, 2006). As a result, fewer than 15,000 immigrants from Mexico arrived per year during this period (Gutmann et al., 2000). However, fundamental changes in the economic structure in the Southwest, accompanied by rapid modernization in Mexico, led to steep increases in immigration in the early 20th century. The expansion of mining enterprises, commercial agriculture, and the railroad networks needed to serve these enterprises occurred simultaneously under the Porfiarto regime in northern Mexico and in the southwestern United States, creating a unified economic system that, in turn, escalated labor demand. Both sides of the border saw a dramatic rise in their migrant populations, but because substantially higher wages were available in the United States, the northern side of the border saw the most growth (Arreola & Curtis, 1993). Indeed, immigration to the United States from Mexico rapidly became institutionalized, as both formal and informal mechanisms emerged to move labor across the border (Krissman, 2005; Peck, 2000). By 1910, annual immigration rates had reached an estimated 20,000 Mexicans per year (Gutmann et al., 2000).

The next two decades saw even more dramatic increases in Mexican immigration to the United States, largely as the result of political and economic circumstances. Although the Mexican Revolution had some effect on pushing workers north, even more critical was the disruption of European immigration streams by World War I, which was followed by a rising antagonism and xenophobia among U.S. citizens against Southern and Eastern Europeans in particular (Fernandez, Gonzalez, & Fernandez, 2003; Gutmann et al., 2000). When the National Origins Acts was passed in 1924, most immigration was prohibited, with the curious exception of Mexicans. In a story often told, the Congressmen representing the economic interests that had arisen in the Southwest exchanged their votes for general restriction so long as Mexican immigrants continued to be admitted. As the U.S. economy expanded, Mexican immigrants looked north for economic opportunities, at the same time that they became attractive to employers (and their recruitment agents) looking for an alternative (and easily exploited) source of immigrant labor (Krissman, 2005). In the Southwest, especially, jobs were available in commercial agriculture, mining, ranching, and railroads (Rosales, 1981). Labor contractors (*enganchistas*), too, responded by directing Mexican workers to particular employers in the region (Fitzgerald, 2006; Peck, 2000). Many of these migrants moved back and forth between the United States and Mexico as temporary laborers, but others became permanent settlers; as a result, given rapid growth in the Mexican origin population after 1920, when the population exceeded 1.2 million, it is likely that more than 1.5 million individuals of Mexican origin lived in the United States by 1930 (Gratton & Gutmann, 2006).

However, the Mexican immigration flow was again influenced by U.S. actors in the 1930s, as the ongoing economic depression, combined with growing animosity toward Mexican laborers and diminished demands from employers, created an abrupt halt to immigration. At the same time, return migration to Mexico began to occur. Many of those in the United States returned voluntarily, because the lack of job opportunities and a nativist backlash discouraged them from staying. Others (especially in California and Texas) were subject to forced repatriation to Mexico (Guerin-Gonzales, 1994; Hoffman, 1974). This strategy was used by the U.S. government as one way to ease the country's financial hardship. As a result, thousands of ethnic Mexicans were deported in the 1930s, including some Mexican American citizens born in the United States (Hoffman, 1974).

Once the U.S. economy began to recover during the Second World War, however, Mexican immigration began anew, as employers again searched for an inexpensive and flexible labor

source to fill jobs at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy (Massey, 1999). The Bracero program was initiated in 1942 to allow Mexican nationals to take temporary agricultural work in the United States (Fitzgerald, 2006; Gamboa, 1990). Over the program's 22-year life, more than 4 million Mexican nationals were legally contracted for temporary work in the United States. In theory, the program was created to favor both the United States and Mexico, as a pool of unemployed laborers would facilitate the business of farming in the United States (because temporary guest workers were willing to take jobs at wages scorned by most Americans); at the same time, the emigrants would become a source of remittances. In reality, the Bracero program fed the circular migration patterns of Mexican migrants and created a "culture of migration" whereby, as Massey, Alarcon, Durand, and González (1987) argued, migration became difficult for state governments to regulate or control, because "the process of network formation lies largely outside their control and occurs no matter what policy regime is pursued" (p. 47).

Despite vacillating flows because of recruitment spikes and repatriation campaigns throughout the first half of the 20th century, a significant and increasing core population was now established: The number of persons of Mexican origin reached about 1.6 million in 1940 and 2.5 million in 1950. Importantly, by 1950, the ethnic Mexican population was now largely made up of persons born in the United States. Whereas in 1920, about half of the population was foreign-born, by 1950 only about 20% had been born in Mexico (Gratton & Gutmann, 2000, 2006). Significantly, the vast majority of ethnic Mexicans called the Southwest border region "home." This high concentration along the U.S.-Mexico border had important implications, especially in terms of altering the sociocultural, political, and economic landscapes of this region.

MAPPING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHWEST BORDER REGION, 1880–1950

Figures 1–4 illustrate the key role of the Southwest as a Latino culture region starting in the early 20th century. Using SEAs as the unit of analysis confirms the broad historical geography of this ethnic group (see Boswell & Jones, 1980; Durand, Massey, & Zenteno, 2001; Haverluk, 1997; Nostrand, 1975), but more clearly captures specific communities and the process of movement and settlement within states. To describe patterns of settlement, the number of ethnic Mexicans within an SEA was analyzed using a set of five population levels, beginning at 3,000 persons per SEA. These absolute measures identified communities better than relative measurement proportional to total population, especially when the numbers of migrants reached a certain magnitude. Both large and small population clusters suggest the establishment of permanent communities, to which subsequent migrants (both from abroad and domestically) have been pulled. What do these maps communicate about the role of individual communities in the Southwest border region in Mexican immigration and settlement? The early maps demonstrate that persons of Mexican origin had a significant presence in only a few select SEAs within the Southwest region of the United States. In 1880 (Figure 1), a small resident population (about 290,000), composed largely of native-born Mexican Americans, lived in a limited number of places close to the Mexican border, extending north only in New Mexico, Colorado, and California. This population was largely composed of *Hispanos*, a distinctive subgroup of Latinos whose cultural ancestry derives from the earliest Spanish colonial settlement of New Mexico and whose descendants continue to predominate in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado to this day. These individuals created what Nostrand (1993) described as a distinctive "Hispano homeland" with a unique history and

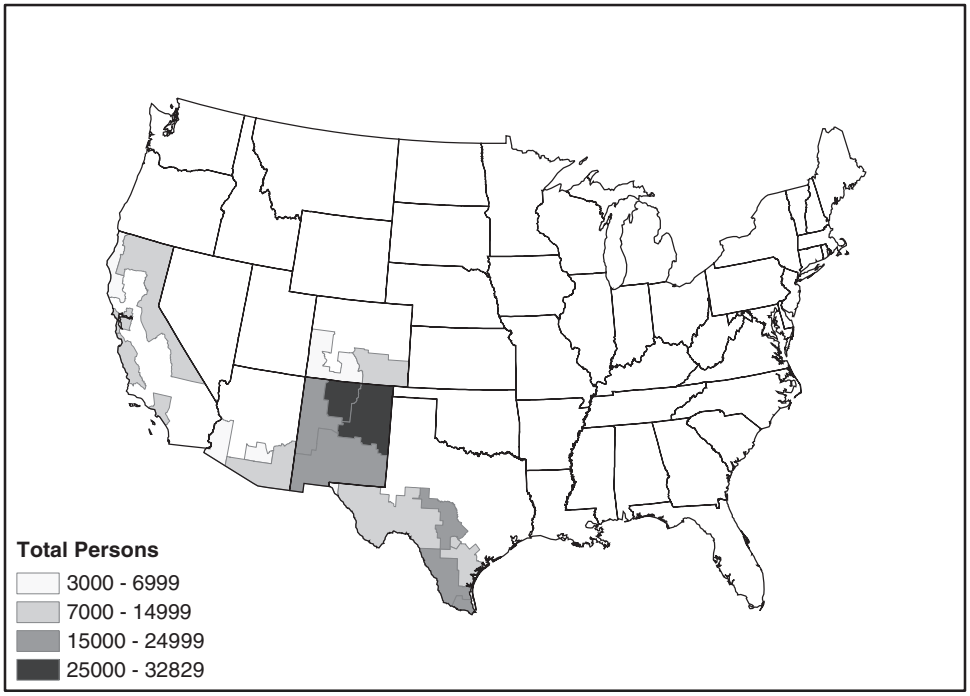

Figure 1. Number of Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1880.

culture; interestingly, the subgroup's remnants still linger in this area, especially in the cultural landscapes of northern New Mexico (Smith, 2002).

By 1910 (Figure 2), expansion into new communities in the Southwest was noteworthy, a finding that has heretofore not been measured in the ethnic group's geographical history. Across this 30-year period, increasing portions of states within the Southwest became settled by persons of Mexican origin. For instance, whereas Northern California and San Francisco, rarely described previously as important magnets for migrants, had a significant Mexican ethnic presence very early in the ethnic group's settlement history, Southern California, a mecca of contemporary concentration, only became an important settlement area by 1910.

However, even in 1910, large areas of states like Texas were not home to ethnic Mexicans. Instead, south Texas and the lower Rio Grande Valley stood out as primary settlement areas. In this cultural province, as Arreola (2002) charted, Texans of Mexican ancestry established a unique subregion along the Texas-Mexico borderland that is unlike any other. Here, many factors made *Tejano* South Texas distinctive from other places along the border: the physical spaces of ranchos, plazas, barrios, and *colonias*; the cultural life of the small towns and the cities of San Antonio and Laredo; and the foods, public celebrations, and political attitudes that characterized the subregion.

It was only in 1920 (Figure 3) that the entire Southwest achieved its status as a distinctly Latino cultural region, when nearly all SEAs in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas reported at least 3,000 residents of Mexican origin. This broadening geographical shift again reveals the key role of labor demand and the deficiency of European immigrant sources in

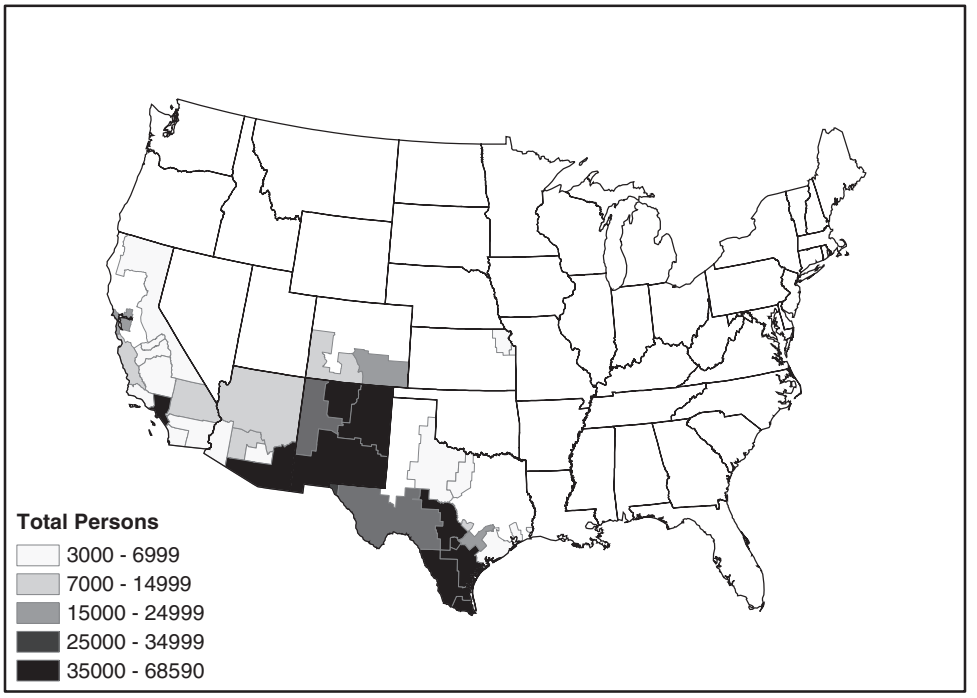

FIGURE 2. Number of Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1910.

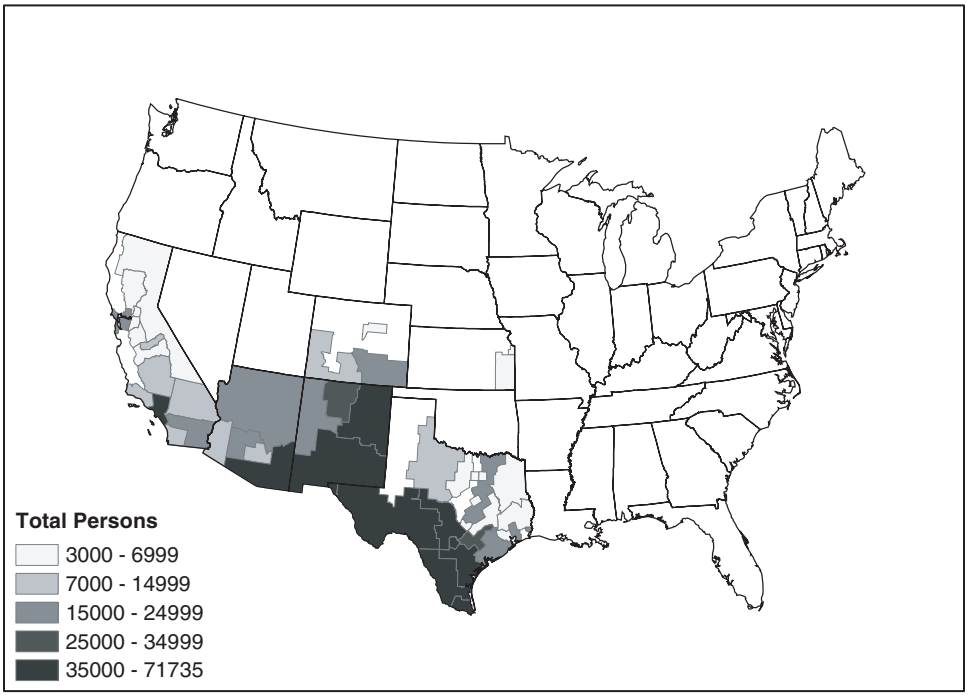

FIGURE 3. Number of Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1920.

prompting the expansion of settlement. At the same time, the cumulative effect of migration and the social networks it created also began to prompt the expansion of settlement throughout the Southwest. The propensity for migrants to move along the same channels produced high levels of migration to certain destinations. As a result, greater cultural diversity began to appear within the broad Southwest region, as old *Hispano* settlements slowly made way for new communities composed largely of Mexican immigrants and their descendants.

Shifts in immigration law in the 1920s, which imposed national-origin quotas and reduced access of employers to European immigrant labor, accelerated flows from Mexico. This demand transformed the geography of the ethnic group in the Southwest, with new settlements visible throughout California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Texas. Furthermore, labor shortages in the manufacturing sector drew Mexicans and Mexican Americans toward new areas of settlement. Indeed, growers' desire for inexpensive agricultural labor as well as manufacturers' need for inexpensive industrial workers eventually began to draw substantial numbers of Mexicans to northern Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas, Michigan, Illinois, and northwestern Ohio (Carlson, 1976; Oppenheimer, 1985; Rochen, Siles, & Gomez, 1996). The new levels of immigration created extensive social networks that then facilitated and encouraged still more migration northward from Mexico (Alvarez, 1966; Cornelius, 1992; Durand & Massey, 1992; Peck, 2000; Durand, Massey, & Charvet, 2001; Longmore & Hitt, 1943).

The unexpected hiatus of movement from Mexico to the United States and the increased deportations of laborers to Mexico from the United States in the 1930s meant that immigration was not a particularly important source of growth during this decade. Even so, population densities in certain areas of the Southwest increased, indicating the growing presence of Mexican Americans (and the role of natural increase in fueling growth) in this region. Additionally, with the initiation of the Bracero program in 1942, old migration routes were renewed and new ones established, once again revealing the way in which immigration can alter group demographics and settlement patterns.

By 1950, the rapid transformation and expansion of ethnic Mexican settlement outside the Southwest into other parts of the United States becomes apparent (Figure 4). The total number of SEAs in which persons of Mexican origin lived increased rapidly over time: In 1910, ethnic Mexicans were enumerated in 101 SEAs; in 1920, this number increased to 161; by 1950, there were 223 SEAs. Thus, by mid-century, ethnic Mexicans had sizable settlements in most SEAs in Colorado, a northward extension into portions of the upper Rocky Mountain States and the rather sudden appearance of ethnic Mexican workers in Midwestern industrial cities, including notable clusters in Chicago, Detroit, and other industrial Midwestern cities.

Despite the appearance of ethnic Mexicans in distant locales, the majority of ethnic Mexicans continued to concentrate in the Southwest, albeit in a diverse number of both smaller and larger communities. In fact, nearly 75% of ethnic Mexicans lived in the Southwest in 1910. By 1950, despite decreased immigration from Mexico and new out-migration to other parts of the United States, 62% of ethnic Mexicans continued to live in the Southwest. In every southwestern SEA, the ethnic group represented at least 5% of the total population, and in places like Southern and Central California, ethnic Mexicans represented between 11% and 35% of the total population. Meanwhile, the lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas had significant proportions of ethnic Mexicans; in some south Texas SEAs, the group was not only the majority but constituted upward of 70% of the total population living in the area. Thus, not only was the absolute population increasing through time, but the relative proportion of the Mexican-origin population compared to other ethnic groups in various SEAs increased as well. This remarkable concentration would have important implications not only for the immigrants and native-born residents living in the region at the time but also for their descendents and other newcomers who would arrive in the Southwest in the years to come.

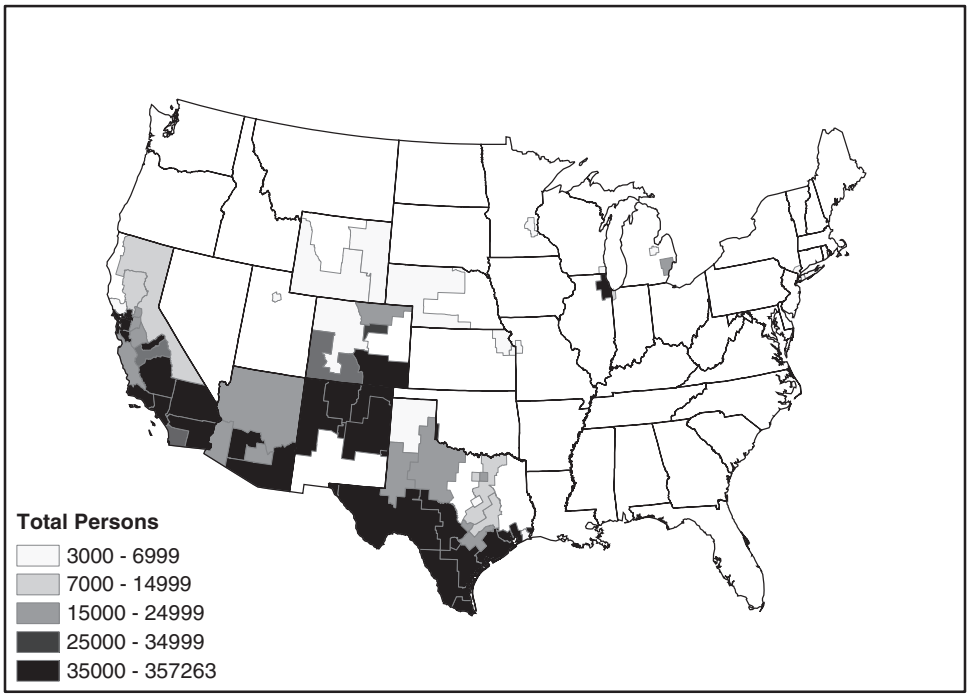

FIGURE 4. Number of Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1950.

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC DIVERSITY IN THE SOUTHWEST BORDER REGION, 1910–1950

The links between the historical geography and the demographic and economic characteristics of Mexican American communities in the Southwest are useful to explore; they reveal the remarkable diversity that exists within/between particular communities in the Southwest during the first half of the 20th century.[5] The most striking characteristics in these results are the differences between SEAs in certain demographic and economic traits. The percent foreign-born and the percent male, along with the divergent compositions of households (whether nuclear or augmented by nonrelatives, such as boarders and lodgers) and the occupational status for active workers, begin to capture the differentiating role of immigration in the process of settlement and geographic expansion. These individually measured, place-based characteristics also provide a novel picture of early Mexican-origin experience in the United States. Such distinctions imply the following: (1) The life of persons of Mexican origin was dissimilar from one area to another, especially *within* states and (2) across time, some areas went through significant changes, dictated largely by migratory forces. Much of this is a chronicle of the rise of an urban ethnic Mexican life, and much of the force behind this new life was immigrant and female.

Figure 5 illustrates the dramatic effects of immigration from Mexico in the various SEAs along the border during the first half of the 20th century. Most places in New Mexico (excepting the counties around Las Cruces nearer to the Mexican border) had very low percentages of Mexican immigrants. These figures reaffirm Nostrand's (1993) description of the distinctiveness of northern

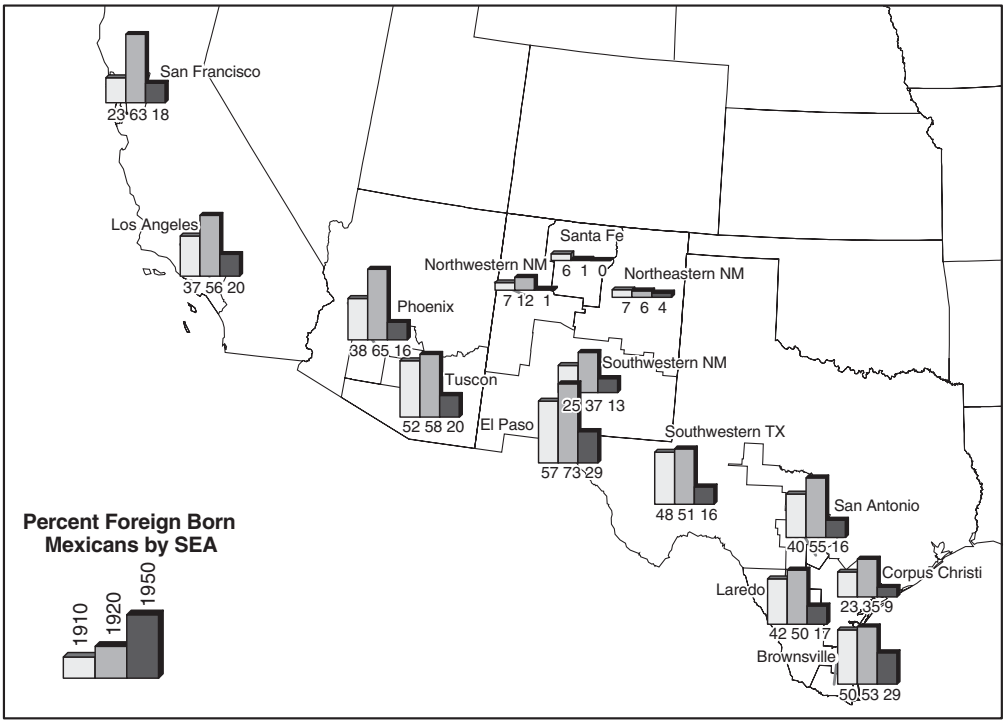

Figure 5. Percentage of Foreign-Born Mexicans by State Economic Area, 1910–1950.

New Mexico as the Hispano homeland, because the vast majority of Latino residents in these SEAs (95% or more) were native-born throughout the study period.

Whereas most of New Mexico had only a remote connection to Mexico (and, some claimed, a more direct one to Spain), other places in the Southwest were thoroughly and very recently Mexican. For instance, El Paso, Texas, directly on the border, had extremely high levels of immigration at all times. Foreign-born Mexicans exceeded 70% of the population in 1920, a remarkable percentage that illustrates the importance of this city as a gateway for migration from the south.

In 1910, when immigrants made up 38% of the entire Mexican-origin population of the Southwest, they were 42% of the Texas population and 49% in Arizona. California and Arizona SEAs tended to have large proportions of immigrants, revealing the capacity of cities like Los Angeles and Phoenix to attract newly arriving immigrants. Thus, the Southwest was sharply divided into two types of state: those that exhibited very little immigrant activity (i.e., New Mexico) and those that attracted large numbers of Mexican immigrants, like Arizona, Texas, and California.

By 1950, despite the emergence of the temporary Bracero guest worker program and increased migration from Mexico since 1942, the native-born represented nearly 80% of the ethnic Mexican population residing in the United States. The ethnic Mexican community, even in the new regions of the Southwest opened up by immigration in the early 20th century, was, by 1950, predominately native-born. In no area of settlement in the Southwest did the percentage of foreign-born exceed 30%, indicating the key role of a natural increase in weakening most immigration effects.

Still, in general, cities within the Southwest experienced more immigration from Mexico than rural areas. The economic advantages and opportunities to be found in cities were not lost on those individuals contemplating a long-distance move, and as a result, immigrants led the way in urban settlement, as was the case with nearly all immigrant groups in this era. In 1880, the proportion of foreign-born Mexicans living in urban places (defined as incorporated places with 2,500 or more residents) was small (14%) and lagged behind the national average of 24%. In 1910, as immigration from Mexico began to rise, 29% of the population lived in urban places and 10% lived in the central core of metropolitan areas. By this time, immigrants and their children were becoming increasingly likely to be residents of cities. In the first and second generation, nearly one-third lived in urban places, compared to only 22% of those in the third and higher generation. In 1920, when the nation first reported a majority of its population in urban places, the urbanizing influence of immigration was fully felt: Forty-five percent of Mexican immigrants lived in urban places.

By 1950, the urban/rural distribution of the Mexican-origin population was very similar to that of all persons in the United States, with the first indications that central cities, rather than the suburbs around them, would characterize ethnic Mexican urban life until at least the most recent period, when, as Frey (2006) demonstrated, the suburbs have become an increasingly important destination for all Latinos. In 1950, the majority of immigrants and their children lived in metropolitan areas and nearly a third resided in the central city. The main story, then, of the first half of the 20th century's process of expansion and settlement is urbanization, led by immigrants.

Some scholars have argued that the role of urban settlement has been exaggerated and that Mexican-origin men, in particular, remained tied to rural areas (Gamboa, 1990; González, 1994; Foley, 1998). Yet, there are few differences in urban/rural location by sex in any of the data we analyzed between 1910 and 1950; by 1950, the overall sex distribution was relatively balanced. Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of males of Mexican origin in each SEA. The highest male proportion for Phoenix, for instance, occurred in 1910 (when males represented 57% of the Mexican-origin population). In San Antonio, 53% of the population was male in 1920. Yet, by 1950, it was women who made up that percentage of the population. Similar patterns can be seen for Los Angeles, where the impact of female immigration was also clear. In 1920, when 56% of the population was in the first generation, women already made up more than 40% of the group. By 1950, male/female percentages reached near parity.

It would be logical to argue that labor demand would induce considerable migration by single native males, but our research indicates that the better explanation is that cities equally attracted female immigrants, keeping sex ratios close even during immigration. Just as our analysis confirms the preponderance of males in initial immigration streams, female immigration quickly followed. This is most clearly the case in Brownsville, Texas, where a disproportionate number of males resided in 1920. By 1950, however, the sex ratio had nearly equalized, indicating the important role of female migrants (and their U.S.-born daughters) in shifting community composition.

That female immigration closely followed male immigration from Mexico is clear. Male preponderance is relatively short-lived, repeating classic patterns found among most immigrant groups. The figures indicate that all communities had become considerably more balanced by 1920, with males at or slightly below 50% of the population. The typical pattern of single, male sojourner migration had been transformed into more permanent settlement as more women migrants crossed the border, a process prompted by the demands of the rapidly

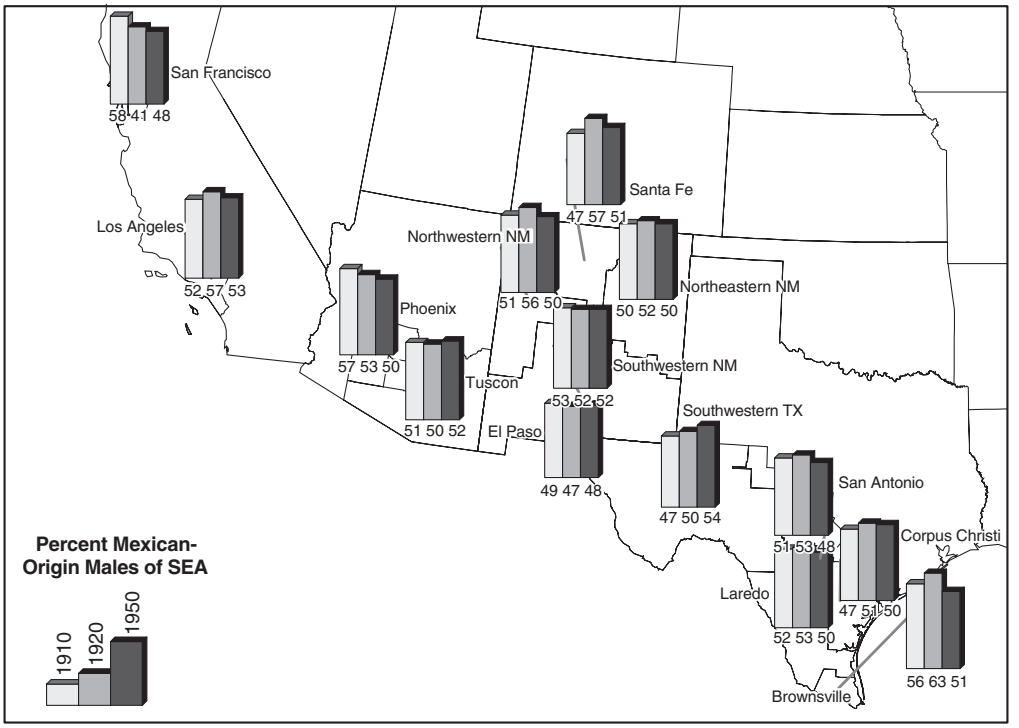

Figure 6. Percentage of Male Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1910–1950.

industrializing economy of the Southwest and facilitated by U.S. immigration policy during the 1920s.

The transformation of household types early in the 20th-century history of the Mexican-origin population also reflects the arrival of female immigrants into the Southwest. In particular, the emergence of nuclear families rather than those households augmented by boarders or lodgers, a common housing choice of single males, signals the appearance of women in migration streams (Gratton, Gutmann, & Skop, 2004). Nuclear households typically develop when immigration becomes sex-balanced and becomes dominant when immigration wanes and more permanent settlement occurs. Figure 7 shows the proportion of persons living in nuclear households in the SEAs across the Southwest. Nuclear households always had a larger presence in the traditional, nonimmigrant region of northern New Mexico, extending into west Texas. Ethnic Mexicans were less likely to reside in nuclear households in California and Arizona, where immigration played a more dynamic role in the growth of the Mexican-origin population. In general, however, the nuclear family type increased over time and generally became more common throughout the Southwest by 1950, indicating not only the important influence of female immigration from Mexico but also the growing number of native-born ethnic Mexicans living in nuclear household living arrangements.

The impact of immigration on household formation is seen more clearly in Figure 8, which displays the percentage of persons living in augmented households (i.e., those households that include nonkin, such as boarders and lodgers). Rural SEAs in New Mexico show none of the boarding and lodging arrangements common to more urban immigrant communities. Yet, high

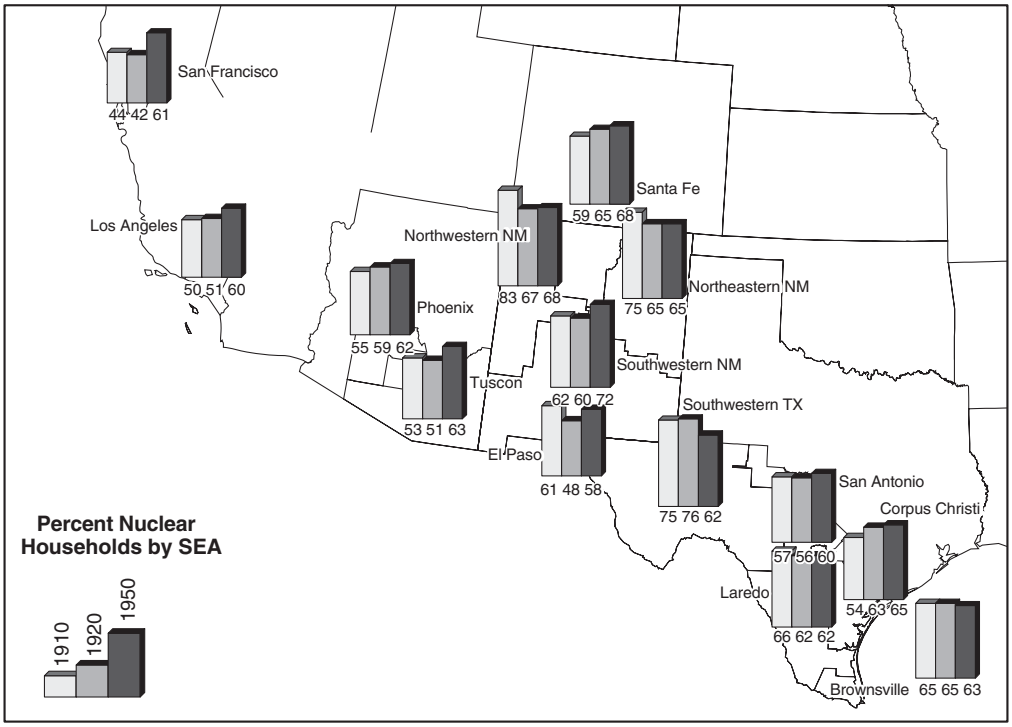

FIGURE 7. Percentage of Mexican-Origin Individuals Living in Nuclear Households by State Economic Area, 1910–1950.

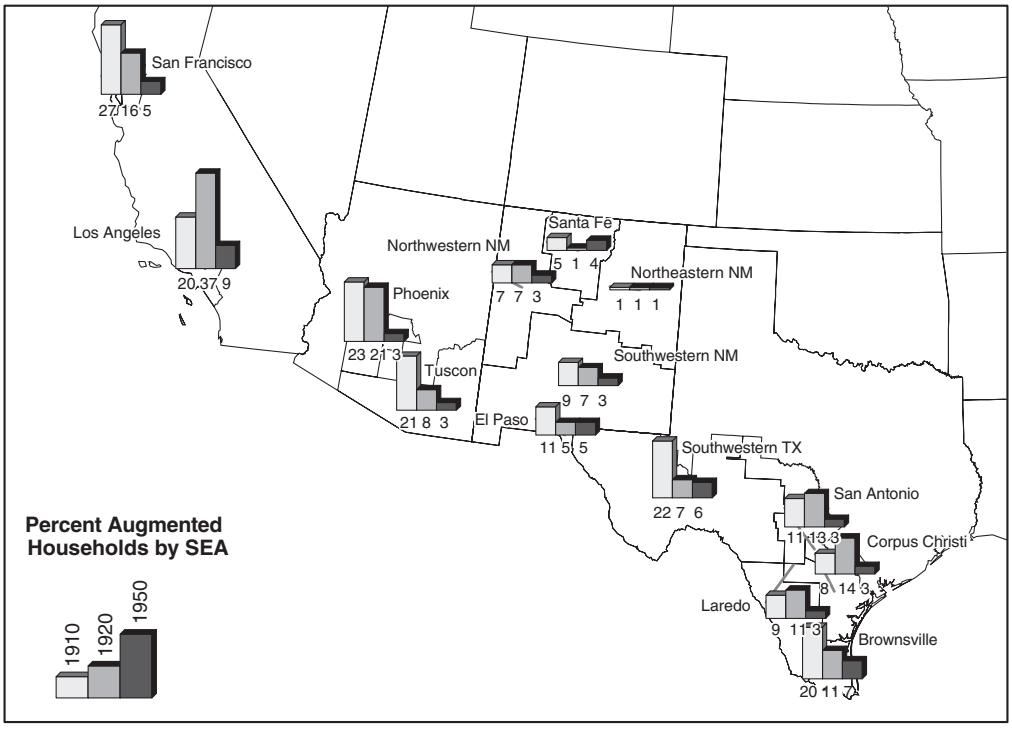

FIGURE 8. Percentage of Mexican-Origin Individuals Living in Augmented Households by State Economic Area, 1910–1950.

percentages of ethnic Mexicans residing in cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, El Paso, Phoenix, and Brownsville lived in augmented households, especially in 1910 and 1920, when immigrants were most likely to gravitate toward these urban gateways. Indeed, heavy immigration revealed itself in the 1920 spikes seen in many of these places. Most Texas SEAs, on the other hand, lie between the extremes, reflecting their dual function as both areas of traditional settlement and entry zones for immigrants during that period. Still, the overall drift was clearly away from augmented households by 1950. This was in concert with the decline in augmented households for all ethnic groups in the United States during the 20th century (Gratton, Gutmann, & Skop, 2004).

To partially capture the economic implications of these patterns, Figure 9 illustrates the disparity in occupational levels among ethnic Mexicans living in different communities across individual states along the border. Occupational status is measured from 1910 to 1950 by using the "occscore" variable provided in the IPUMS dataset. "Occscore" is a constructed variable that assigns each occupation in all years a relative value for the median total income (in hundreds of 1950 dollars) of all persons with that particular occupation in 1950; that is, it provides a continuous measure of occupations according to the economic rewards enjoyed by people working in particular jobs in 1950 (see Ruggles, Sobek, Alexander, Fitch, Goeken, et al., 2004).

In all areas, occupational scores ranked toward the bottom end of the range, indicating the predominance of lower-skilled, lower-paying manufacturing, mechanical, mining, and service jobs among persons of Mexican origin. Across time, however, mean occupational scores rose for this population, and urban areas provided more economic opportunities than rural communities. For instance, northern and southwestern New Mexico had the lowest occupational ratings, joined by the poor agricultural regions in Texas's Rio Grande Valley. Conversely, cities in Arizona

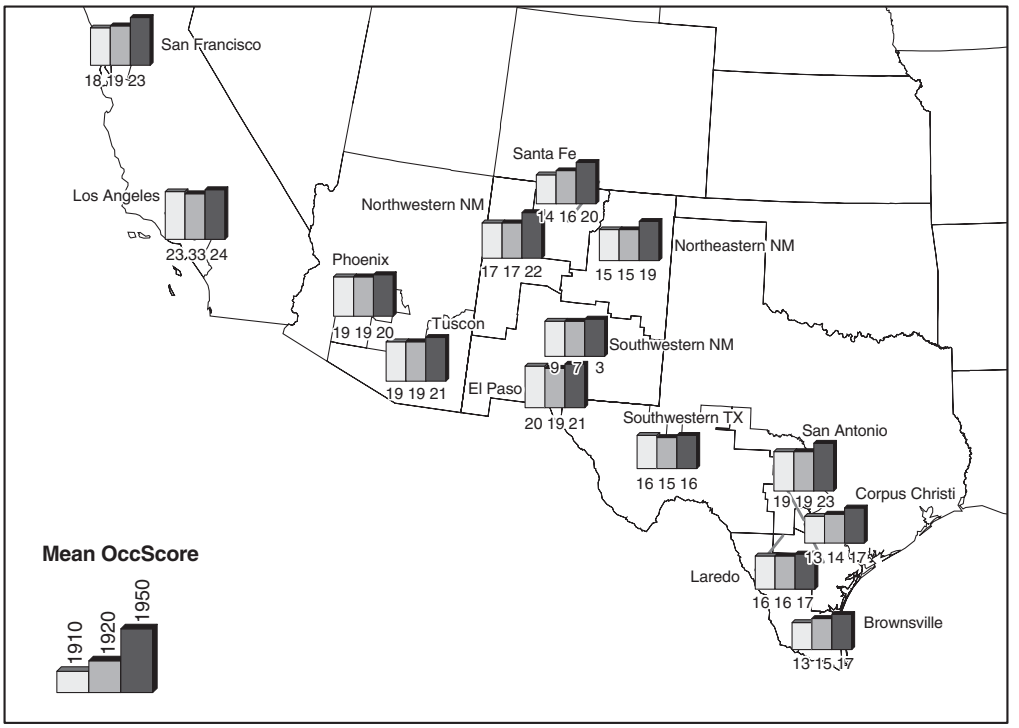

Figure 9. Mean Occscore for Mexican-Origin Individuals by State Economic Area, 1910–1950.

and California offered ethnic Mexicans better job prospects, as did El Paso and San Antonio in Texas. Thus, in 1920, the mean occupational score in urban SEAs averaged 20, whereas the mean occupational score in rural SEAs averaged 16. In other words, ethnic Mexicans working in urban SEAs earned, on average, 25% more than those working in rural SEAs. Even though improvement was evident in the rural areas that lagged behind originally by 1950, in general, cities in the Southwest offered more opportunities. These advantages were not lost on ethnic Mexicans and were particularly clear to immigrants, who led the way in making the ethnic group an urban rather than a rural people.

PLACE MATTERS: THE IMPLICATIONS OF SETTLEMENT IN THE SOUTHWEST BORDER REGION

Although many studies have shown that ethnic Mexicans remained largely confined to the five Southwestern states until very recently and that the Southwest is clearly one of the oldest regions of Latino settlement in the United States, the findings presented here suggest a more complex view of the historical geography of the Mexican-origin population, by including the significant role of immigration, and female immigration in particular, in shifting patterns of settlement, especially to urban destinations. So, in 1880, most regions within the vast Southwest had little in the way of an ethnic Mexican presence; the resident population after the Mexican-American War was both small and confined to limited areas. After 1900, and until about 1930, however, a dramatic process ensued whereby ethnic Mexicans became increasingly concentrated in the Southwest border region. During these three decades, parts of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas saw tremendous change as more Latino immigrants and their descendents (especially from Mexico) settled in the region. By 1920, persons of Mexican origin lived in almost every SEA in California and were becoming an important minority group in southern and central Texas, among other places. With the rapid rise of second- and third-generation Mexican Americans, the filling in of the Southwest was largely complete by 1950. At this point, the Southwest was well established as a Latino culture region.

Even so, settlement did not expand traditional, rural community arrangements. Indeed, the rapid development of communities in urban centers in the Southwest, driven by immigrants, takes us away from the emphasis on the propensity of persons of Mexican origin to follow rural, agricultural pursuits. Instead, like most immigrant groups in the classic era, they pursued the better opportunities and socially distinct life of the city: By 1920, the ethnic Mexicans were not only as likely as other Americans to live in urban areas but, in concert with their fellow immigrants, still more likely to live in the urban core. No two sites are more evocative of this ascendancy of urban life than the demise of the traditional Hispano homeland of northern New Mexico and the rise of the dynamic city of Los Angeles. Whereas 9% of the Mexican-origin population in 1910 lived in northern New Mexico, only 2% of the total population lived there in 1950; in contrast, fewer than 6% of ethnic Mexicans lived in Los Angeles in 1910, but by 1950, 13% of the total population lived in that rapidly growing metropolis.

The shifting geography of ethnic Mexican settlement in the United States had important implications. The overriding consequence was that place mattered: In Southwest cities, regular contact with other groups was much more likely than in isolated rural regions, which, in turn, prompted greater opportunities, even in the face of segregation, discrimination in employment, and other prejudicial practices in everyday life (Moore & Pinderhughes, 1993). At the same time, large enough concentrations in urban centers permitted ethnic Mexicans, especially those in the

first generation, to create facsimiles of life in the old country, the *México Lindo* of memory. Compared with other immigrant and migrant groups, persons of Mexican origin might not have formed a very large percentage of an urban SEA, but they were often great in number, as in Phoenix, where more than 50,000 ethnic Mexicans lived in 1950. Such numbers were sufficient to re-create, for a time, that image of a homeland so common and important to those who had to endure the difficult transition to a new life in a foreign land. In contrast to northern New Mexico or Colorado, where long-time settlements had created a distinctive Hispano culture, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Phoenix, and other cities had a decidedly Mexican stamp, one that undoubtedly altered the sociocultural, political, and economic landscapes of the Southwest for generations to come (Arreola, 2004).

Place also mattered for fortune. Our data illustrate much disparity in occupational levels among the ethnic Mexican communities in the Southwest. Clearly, better opportunities existed in cities like Los Angeles and Phoenix than in the New Mexico and Texas countryside. The traditional regions of settlement might have enjoyed familial stability, but they paid in terms of socioeconomic status, at least until 1950, when differences between urban and rural places leveled off. Across time, the wages of those living in urban places were often 25% higher than the wages earned by those living in rural places, especially in places like Los Angeles and San Francisco. Cities on the border, like Brownsville and El Paso, however, lagged well behind other urban centers and even behind some rural SEAs. These border towns attracted immigrants making their first step out of Mexico, but better wages in other areas of the country certainly beckoned many to venture further.

Women are an essential component of this urban history. Mexican immigration, like nearly all immigration in this period, was led by men and earlier censuses exhibited striking misbalances in sex ratios. In 1910, there were more than 150 males for every 100 females in the first generation. However, these ratios moved toward parity rapidly, falling to 135 in 1920 and 106 in 1940. The female immigrants who joined the male pioneers were very likely to move to cities, in part because they offered better -paying jobs (Ruiz, 1998). Urban SEAs, dominated by immigrants, had rather high male ratios at the onset of immigration; yet, these wide disparities collapsed with time, and more sex-balanced communities emerged.

Women also encouraged the rise of more stable living arrangements and family structure. The boarding and lodging choices characteristic of all immigrants—noticeable for ethnic Mexicans only in the regions to which immigrants moved—fell precipitously across the first half of the 20th century. In Los Angeles, nearly a quarter of the Mexican-origin population lived in augmented households in 1910, but only 9% by 1950. The proportion of nuclear households followed the reverse pattern in immigrant cities, becoming more common across time. Ironically, in the rural, traditional zones, there was a modest downward tendency in nuclear structure, likely a consequence of the out-migration of young males seeking better opportunities elsewhere.

In this dynamic historical geography of the southwestern United States, once-dominant communities fell behind newly emergent centers of settlement, and these changes resulted in important differences between rural and urban communities. The story owes more to the strategies employed by immigrants from Mexico than to the characteristics of native-born persons in the more established Hispano homelands. Settlement and growth occurred in places that captured the attention of immigrants, in general, and immigrant women, in particular. In Southwest cities particularly, a new Mexican American life was created, shaped by the hands of immigrants. It was these urban communities, firmly established by 1950, that greeted new waves of Mexican immigrants in the post-1965 era and, thus, reinforced the role of the Southwest in becoming what is today sometimes labeled “Mex-America” and/or the “New Aztlan.”

CONCLUSION

We have argued that the geographic, demographic, and economic characteristics of ethnic Mexicans that emerged in the Southwest during the first half of the 20th century were the consequence of a variety of social, economic, and political processes. The results point especially to the key role of immigration policy and economic growth in contributing to the changing characteristics of the ethnic Mexican population living in the Southwest border region during this time period. As we have noted, this change was the product of an economic system that extended across the border, and that tied the United States and Mexico in an embrace of mines, farms, and railroads along the border. The higher demand for labor on the northern side and the higher wages that were offered, however, led to a powerful impetus for movement north, one sustained by both formal labor procurement and informal networks. This instrumental economic exchange was then furthered by political events. First, a world war interrupted the stream of European immigrants that had satisfied most American employers for 60 years. Second, common Americans' growing hostility toward Southern and Eastern European immigrants led to their exclusion. These forces created the context by which Mexican immigrants became the alternative source of labor for U.S. employers seeking an unskilled, flexible labor supply. The result was a U.S. immigration policy that facilitated higher levels of immigration from Mexico and that continued until the collapse of the American economy in 1929.

So, despite the fact that many areas in the Southwest had few or no residents of Mexican origin in the late 19th century, by 1930 geographic expansion had begun to emerge and ethnic Mexicans were now a significant minority group (and in some cases, a majority group) in a variety of places along the border. Even with the demise of immigration in the 1930s (and even the emergence of reverse flows), this area was firmly established as a Latino cultural region by 1950 and was largely composed of native-born, Mexican Americans. The stamp of ethnic Mexicans in the Southwest had by then become so clear that this region had become the standard by which the ethnic group was geographically imagined. The region housed a distinctive subculture, the long-time existence of Latino settlements, a rich Latino legacy, and even the presence of some Anglo-Americans who had been "Hispanicized" (Nostrand, 1970).

Importantly, this region has continued to govern Mexican settlement after 1950 and is especially important in the present day. Natural increase has played a significant role in the growth of the native-born Mexican American population, and immigration continuously reestablishes the Southwest as a Latino cultural region. Indeed, with the escalation of Mexican immigration after the 1965 Immigration Act, the concentration of Mexicans in the Southwest intensified in those areas where ethnic Mexicans had already established a foothold. Estimates suggest that more than 90% of Mexican immigrants from 1970 to 1990 moved to the Southwest, with the vast majority living in California (Durand, Massey, & Charvet, 2000). The clear trend in Mexican immigration and settlement, until very recently, has been one of growing concentration in the Southwest border region.

At the same time, because of dramatic shifts in U.S. immigration policy since 1965 (including the abolition of national quotas and the enactment of occupational and family preference measures), a burgeoning non-Mexican Latino population in the Southwest has also begun to increase significantly. Drawn by the growing importance of particular Southwest cities like Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Phoenix as large urban conglomerates that have become increasingly linked to the global economy, a rapidly diversifying Latino population now calls the Southwest "home" (Arreola, 2004; Menjivar, 2000; Skop & Menjivar, 2001). In contrast to earlier migratory movements from Mexico, however, new Latino immigration, especially from Central

and South America, includes more refugees and people displaced by environmental and ethnic conflicts; at the same time, the racial and ethnic composition of these new flows is also more heterogeneous, as, for instance, indigenous Guatemalans (Mayans) and black Cubans begin to arrive in significant numbers. Importantly, new Latino immigrants bring different types of social and human capital that has begun to direct them in dissimilar paths of incorporation (see other chapters in this volume). Also, the growing feminization of migration from Latin America and the contribution of women in the settlement process influence how these immigrants have been received (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2004).

Thus, the Southwest has changed with regard to its composition of Latino groups. Yes, Mexican Americans continue to constitute the majority of Latinos in the region, but other Latino groups have arrived and continue to settle in this region. Indeed, there is a need for further research that both outlines the geography and demography of new Latino/a subgroups in the Southwest and that articulates how these patterns are transforming the way in which the cultural region is geographically imagined by residents and nonresidents alike.

Given the historical importance of the Southwest border region as the primary destination for both established and newer migrants, it might come as a surprise that new patterns of settlement among ethnic Mexicans have emerged in the United States since the 1990s. The number of alternative immigrant destinations in cities and regions where ethnic Mexicans have never had a presence has sharply risen in the past 15 years (Godziak & Martin, 2005; Jones, 2007; Suro & Singer, 2002). In part, this shifting geography is the result of the 1986 massive legalization campaign, which occurred against a backdrop of new employer sanctions, fluctuating economic conditions, and growing hostility against immigrants, especially in the Southwest border region (Durand, Massey, & Charvet, 2000). However, this recent geography is also emerging as a new class of second-tier metropolitan immigrant gateways emerge in the Southeast (Atlanta, Raleigh-Durham, and Charlotte), Southwest (Dallas/Fort Worth, Austin, and Las Vegas), upper Midwest (Minneapolis-St. Paul) and Northwest (Portland and Seattle), many of which have seen their immigrant population triple and quadruple in size as a result of recent immigration flows (Singer, Brettell, & Hardwick, 2007).

These unprecedented settlement patterns among ethnic Mexicans suggest that a new process has begun, linked to different economic and political circumstances and likely to lead to a shifting geographical map. As in the previous era, the new arrivals are largely immigrants, rather than those of native origin who migrate to new areas. Again, like the previous process, the stream is male-led but with relatively rapid movement toward sex parity. Importantly, drawn from still more distant parts of Mexico, these immigrants are participants in a much broader, global economic system that is not dependent on the specific ties between northern Mexico and the southwestern United States as in the early 20th century. Instead, formal and informal mechanisms have risen up to serve different employers, who are spread across the United States and who are often willing to take advantage of both documented and undocumented workers. At the same time, in the previous era, political circumstances (i.e. restrictive immigration policy) had a separate and determining effect. Also, it appears that politics might again have an important role to play in the vacillating flows of migration and new geographies of settlement from Mexico. A rising resentment against immigrants is once more becoming increasingly visible in the United States, and Mexican immigrants are at the very center of the controversy. Thus, as in the previous era, if restrictionists achieve victory, the new process of Mexican settlement that is unfolding in the early 21st century, might, in turn, be disrupted. What this means for the establishment of a broader, perhaps national geography of ethnic Mexicans remains to be seen, but it will surely have an impact, as previous policies did in the early 20th century.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Support for the research was provided by a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (HD37824-02) on "Assimilation Trajectories in Mexican American Families," Principal Investigator: Brian Gratton. The authors wish to acknowledge Paul A. Peters, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Texas at Austin, for helping to create maps for this research.

NOTES

1. This research focuses on four states that actually sit alongside the U.S.-Mexico border (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas) along with one other nonborder state (Colorado, which is commonly treated as part of the Southwest).
2. A longer version of this essay appeared in Skop, Gratton, and Gutmann, The Professional Geographer, 58(1), 78–98, 2006. Permission was granted to the authors by Blackwell Publishing to use the material and on the understanding that nowhere in the original text do the publishers or authors acknowledge another source for the requested material.
3. Following Gutiérrez (1995), we use Mexican immigrants or Mexicans to describe persons born in Mexico and Mexican American for persons born in the United States or to refer to settings in this country, such as a Mexican American community or Mexican American history. To refer to the combined population, we use ethnic Mexican or Mexican origin.
4. A full description of the methods we used for identification can be found in Gratton and Gutmann (2000). Instructions on how to access the datasets and reconstruct them for analysis can be found at the Mexican American Trajectories Project Web site (www.icpsr.umich.edu/ATMAF/). For details on IPUMS, see Ruggles et al. (2004) and the Web site www.ipums.umn.edu.
5. Colorado is not included in this portion of the chapter because no SEAs in the state are among the 15 southwestern SEAs that capture more than 60% of the total population of the ethnic group across the period 1910–1950.

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