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978-0-521-88953-7 - Hispanics in the United States: A Demographic, Social, and Economic History, 1980-2005

Laird W. Bergad and Herbert S. Klein

Excerpt

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Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century the Hispanic, or Latino, population of the United States replaced African Americans as the single largest minority in the country and they are projected to increase to about 30% of the national population by 2050 according to the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimates. The Hispanic presence in the United States has a long historical tradition, even though it has been only recently that their demographic, economic, cultural, and political importance has received a great deal of public attention. With the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, or the War of U.S. Intervention as it is referred to in Mexico, the United States absorbed a large Mexican population into its national borders in the Southwest and in California. Additionally, from the early 19th century on there was a small but steady stream of migrants from the Hispanic Caribbean who settled mainly in the states of New York and Florida. This included both political exiles fleeing a repressive Spanish colonialism, which lasted until 1898 in Cuba and Puerto Rico, and the migration of Cuban tobacco workers to the cigar industry that developed in Florida, principally in the Tampa Bay area. There was also a significant migration of Mexican workers from the late 19th century until the Second World War who labored in a variety of economic sectors from agriculture to railroad building, mainly in the Southwestern states along the Mexican border. Much of this migration was seasonal rather than permanent as these workers usually returned to their homes in Mexico rather than settling in the United States.

Thus, the presence of Hispanics within the United States is not a new phenomenon nor should it be considered unexpected given the common border with Mexico and the political and economic power wielded by

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the United States in the Americas. What changed during the 20th century was the extraordinary growth of migration from the region in the aftermath of World War II until today, as well as the impressive natural demographic increase of the resident Latino population. Moreover unlike earlier migrations from Europe or Asia to the United States, the settlement patterns of Latin American and Caribbean migrants and their offspring have been more evenly spread across the United States from 1980 on. While the Hispanic population had traditionally been concentrated in the Southwestern states, California, New York, and Florida, by 2010 Latinos had spread in significant numbers to nearly every area of the nation.

It should be made clear at the outset that the Hispanic population of the United States is not one homogenous ethnic or racial group as often perceived by the non-Hispanic public. The term itself may be a convenient label for those who do not understand the complexities of this very diverse population. It is made up of many different national subgroups that arrived in different time periods and for a variety of reasons. It consists of white upper-class Cubans and poor Dominicans and Puerto Ricans with mixed racial backgrounds. Hispanics include northern, predominantly white, Mexicans and Guatemalan Mayan Indians. There were political refugees fleeing the civil wars of Central America or Colombia, which raged in the 1980s and on, and migrants from many nations seeking economic opportunities where few exist in their countries of origin.

The terms “Hispanic” and “Latino” have not historically been used as self-identification references for first-generation migrants. They have conceived of themselves as Mexicans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Ecuadorians, and other national identities who often have little in common with one another, at least from their perspectives. There may be a shared language and somewhat similar religious beliefs. But these commonalities have been overshadowed by the powerful nationalism existing in Latin America and the Caribbean itself, and the sharp rivalries and even animosities that have been reproduced in Latino immigrant communities throughout the United States. Highly romanticized notions of a common identity and political solidarity have been forthcoming from some academics and activists within the various Hispanic subcommunities, to be sure. In our view, however, it would be a mistake to cast overarching and sweeping generalizations about Hispanics in the United States. This is certainly not to deny that second, third, and subsequent generations slowly have embraced the concept of a shared Latino identity, or that Latinos of all nationalities may often define themselves collectively in contrast to the non-Hispanic population in the same way that they are

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identified by “outsiders.” However, even within domestic-born Latino communities, nationality continues to be the first and most important reference point for self-identification, even though sometimes these lines are blurred because of mixed parentage. Among domestic-born Latinos it is now common to find many individuals who have parents of different nationalities.

Some scholars have contended that Latinos are different from previous waves of migrants to the United States. It has been argued that they have held on to their Spanish language usage longer than previous migrant groups who maintained their native languages. Another argument is that Latinos have not been integrated into the mainstream as quickly as prior immigrants because so many are not predominantly “white,” have experienced enduring racism and discrimination, and have remained mired in poverty. We emphatically do not hold these views and have found that in fact the evolution of the Hispanic population differs very little in the most fundamental ways from earlier waves of migrants who arrived in the United States from its foundation in the late 18th century. In its patterns of social, cultural, and political integration, language retention, economic and geographic mobility, class structures, multiple impacts upon popular culture, and even return migration, the experiences of Hispanics in the United States are similar to the classic patterns found in all immigrant communities of the 19th and 20th centuries. Only the forced migration of Africans from the 17th to the early 19th century through the slave trade remains an anomaly in the history of migration and the evolution of domestic populations in the United States.

We want to be very clear about our purposes in writing this book. As historians we focus upon what to us is the essence of history – measuring change over time. The ability to “measure” quantitatively how specific population groups have been transformed within U.S. society has been revolutionized by the recent generation and accessibility of extraordinary statistical databases on every population sector in the United States including, of course, Hispanics. We describe these later. Both of us have spent a significant part of our respective careers working with and analyzing similar kinds of voluminous statistical databases. We have also, hopefully, honed our abilities to present the results of data analysis in what we believe are fairly understandable formats.

We have focused much of our individual prior research and writing on demographic, social, and economic history. Thus, it is not surprising that when we discussed this project in its early stages, these themes became the focal points of this book. We do not delve into thematic areas that

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are currently in vogue and that largely revolve around cultural themes. This is not because we don't feel that these are important. It is rather that so many outstanding scholars from different disciplines have produced so much innovative and pioneering work on the cultural aspects of the Latino experience in the United States. We felt it would be useful to produce a book that would present and analyze time-series quantitative data on demographic, social, and economic themes. One of our purposes in discussing and presenting these quantitative data in many graphs and tables – some admittedly quite dense – is to make available analyzed statistical information that we deem to be important, to other researchers, students, journalists, politicians, and the interested public who may not have the quantitative skills to analyze the voluminous raw databases used for this book.

Our data sets for analyzing the Hispanic population have come from a variety of sources provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and the University of Minnesota, Minnesota Population Center's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). IPUMS has prepared the raw data files for the Census Bureau's PUMS, or Public Use Microdata Sample, in comparable formats for U.S. decennial censuses from 1850 to the American Community Surveys (ACS) of 2001–2008.¹ We have used the 5% sample files provided by IPUMS for the censuses of 1980, 1990, and 2000, and the American Community Survey 2005 to analyze a wide range of demographic, economic, and social variables. On occasion, and indicated clearly in footnotes, we have utilized data for 1990, 2000, and 2005 from the American FactFinder data sets provided by the Census Bureau at the following Web site: http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en. This is primarily because of the difficulty of integrating some of the state-designated PUMS geographical areas into more easily understandable administrative entities such as counties across the United States.²

¹ See Steven Ruggles, Matthew Sobek, Trent Alexander, Catherine A. Fitch, Ronald Goeken, Patricia Kelly Hall, Miriam King, and Chad Ronnander. *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 3.0* [machine-readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], 2004 found at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

² PUMS data are collected by the Census Bureau from geographical units designated by each state labeled as Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs). For the 1980, 1990, and 2000 censuses these areas had a minimum of 100,000 people. For the 2005 American Community Survey these areas had a minimum of 65,000 people. For a visual representation of each state's PUMAs, see http://www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/sup_puma.htm.

The Census Bureau collected data on households and the population. These data sets represent samples of the population which are weighted to provide profiles for the total population. Although there is unquestionably an undetermined margin of error in each

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The data collected for the ACS 2005 have been recognized as both problematic and difficult to compare to earlier census years. Not only were sample data collected exclusively on areas with a minimum of 65,000 people, but they were also collected only on people living in households. Persons living in group quarters were not enumerated. Additionally, different methods were employed in the collection of particular data from one census year to the next such as those on income and other variables.³ Thus, some of the data presented here for 2005 may be not be as accurate as would be the case had we used the subsequently released ACS data for 2006 and 2007. However, we began this ambitious project in 2006, about a year before the data for that year were released, and had completed the construction of our data sets and their analysis prior to the availability of subsequent data. Despite the problems with the 2005 ACS, we strongly believe that the fundamental statistical trends, tendencies, and structures we present here from 1980 to 2005 may be used with confidence and that they are an accurate depiction of how the variables we focus on changed over time. Since we wrote this book, we have run a series of statistical tests on the 2006 and 2007 ACS data released

of these data sets, the data provided in them are more detailed than those found in the Summary Files released by the Census Bureau and thus permit a more sophisticated analysis of numerous variables than other Census Bureau data files. Scholars working with census data files have generally considered the PUMS data to be reliable.

For a discussion of the 1980 PUMS data sets, see “Chapter 4, Sample Design for the Public-Use Microdata Samples,” *Census of Population and Housing, 1980: Public-Use Microdata Samples Technical Documentation*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC, 1983, pp. 35–42, reprinted at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/1980samp.shtml>; for 1990 PUMS data sets see “Chapter 4, Sample Design and Estimation,” *1990 Census of Population and Housing: Public-use Microdata Samples Technical Documentation*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC, 1992, pp. 4–1 to 4–7 reprinted by IPUMS at <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/voliii/1990samp.shtml>; for 2000 PUMS data sets see “Pums Accuracy of the Data, 2000” found at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/C2SS/AccuracyPUMS.pdf>; for the ACS 2005 data sets see “Pums Accuracy of the Data, 2005” at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2005/AccuracyPUMS.pdf>.

For comparability issues related to the ACS 2005 PUMS data see “Ten Things to Know about the American Community Survey (2005 Edition)” published by the Missouri Census Data Center at http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/pub/data/acs2005/Ten_things_to_know.shtml. Also see “Census 2000 Acs 2005 Comparison Issues” found at the New York State Data Center Web site at <http://www.empire.state.ny.us/nysdc/Census.ACS2005.Comparison.pdf>.

³ These problems are considered in “PUMS Accuracy of the Data, 2005” found at <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2005/AccuracyPUMS.pdf> and in “Census 2000 ACS 2005 Comparison Issues” found on many Web sites including <http://dola.colorado.gov/dlg/demog/census/ACS2005comparison.pdf>.

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by the Census Bureau. These tests confirmed that the basic patterns we describe here, on the variables we focus upon from 1980 through 2005, are accurate.

We want to reiterate that unlike most studies on Hispanics, which are statistically static in that they concentrate upon particular variables in specific years, this study presents and analyzes statistical indicators of change over time. It is clear that the absolute numbers on population, income, educational attainment, and the other topics we consider in detail would obviously have been different and more current had we used later data sets. However, to repeat, the fundamental trends and tendencies between 1980 and 2005 would have remained precisely as presented in this book. As in all quantitative studies, there is an unknown margin of error, and we are aware that the data presented in this book certainly reflect this basic inescapable fact. We are, however, confident that this margin of error is relatively small.

To obtain detailed data on Hispanic national subgroups, we have recalculated the data provided by the census in the Hispanic self-identification section of the Census Questionnaire that has been given since the census of 1980. As several scholars and even the Census Bureau itself have noted, there has been a considerable undercount of national groups because of the use of generic categories such as “Hispanic,” “Latino,” or “Latin American” by informants. To correct for this, we have categorized a great many of these generic “other Hispanic” category persons into nationality groups by using data provided by the same person as to their place of birth and their first and second ancestry. For example, we have recoded people who define themselves as Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American, but who were born in the Dominican Republic and/or whose parents (ancestry) indicated the Dominican Republic, as Dominican. Thus, through use of the raw data PUMS files, our data for Hispanic national groups are greater than those provided by the Census Bureau in the summary files for each census year.⁴

⁴ The issues of Hispanic responses to the census questionnaire and recoding issues are discussed in Arthur R. Cresce and Roberto R. Ramírez, “Analysis of General Hispanic Responses in Census 2000” Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 20233, Population Division Working Paper Series No. 72. It is found at the following web site: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0072/twps0072.html>. For a detailed analysis of all studies on this issue, see U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. *Simulated Totals For Hispanic National Origin Groups [In Census 2000] By State, Place, County, And Census Tract: [United States]* [computer file]. ICPSR release. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census [producer], 2003. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social

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We have followed several basic rules in our recording of raw PUMS data, and these ought to be carefully noted. All persons of Iberian origin, both from the European mainland or the Atlantic Islands, have been excluded from the Hispanic category. Their inclusion as Hispanics by the Census Bureau is puzzling as the general connotation of the term suggests persons of Latin American and Hispanic-Caribbean origin. Despite the fact that the Census Bureau does not treat Brazilians as Hispanics, we have included them in our data sets for the simple reason that Brazil is in fact a part of Latin America. As a general rule we have excluded anyone listing themselves as with imprecise terms such as *Tejano* or someone from Texas. We have also excluded anyone using terms such as *criollo* or *mestizo* even if written in Spanish. These cases, or records, were not statistically significant. We have grouped all the numerous Mexican type listings into one category – Mexicans. They are the only national group appearing in the census with several alternative designations. For example in the 1990 census the following self-identifications – “Mexican,” “Mexican American,” “Mexicano/Mexicana,” “Chicano/Chicana,” “La Raza,” “Mexican American Indian,” “Mexico” – were grouped together as Mexicans. We use the term “Mexican” throughout this book to refer to persons of Mexican origin whether born in the United States or not. The same principal was used with every Latino national subgroup.

This book builds on the study of Frank Bean and Marta Tienda, which analyzed the Hispanic population in 1980 using the published census data of that year.⁵ This was a pioneering work since prior to that year the Census Bureau had not treated Hispanics separately from the non-Hispanic white population; they were only included in enumeration through the use of surname data. Beginning in 1980, however, an imperfect question on “Spanish/Hispanic origin and descent” was added to the Census Bureau’s

Research [distributor], 2004 available at <http://webapp.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/CENSUS-STUDY/03907.xml#methodology>. This study addresses issues raised in John Logan, “The New Latinos: Who They Are, Where They Are” available at <http://mumford.albany.edu/census/report.html> and Robert Suro, “Counting The “Other Hispanics” How Many Colombians, Dominicans, Ecuadorians, Guatemalans And Salvadorans Are There In The United States?” issued by the Pew Hispanic Center and available at <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=8>. It ought to be underlined that these studies did not use the PUMS data but rather data from the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey and the March 2000 Current Population Survey issued by the Census Bureau. Our recalculations of nationalities using PUMS data differ marginally from the Suro, Logan, and Census Bureau simulation model reports, agreeing with them on the generalized undercount of nationalities.

⁵ Frank D. Bean and Marta Tienda, *The Hispanic Population of the United States* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1987).

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questionnaire, which began the modern enumeration of Hispanics in the United States.⁶ The amount of data on the Hispanic population produced since then by the Census Bureau, the Center for Disease Control, and many other government agencies collecting population data for the nation has been enormous. Yet surprisingly there has been no large-scale and systematic study of the Hispanic population beyond the original work of Bean and Tienda for 1980, except in highly specialized studies. In our presentation of the 1980–2005 data we have concentrated on presenting our basic findings, but without using advanced, and sometimes arcane, statistical procedures that nonspecialists find difficult to understand. Like Bean and Tienda, we have focused on presenting data in a format that we believe is accessible and understandable and that may be used by a wide audience from the general public to specialized researchers.

⁶ The Census Bureau has redefined how data on Hispanics are collected in each subsequent decennial census and in the American Community Survey data from 2001 on.

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Immigration to the United States to 1980

The only native groups residing in the region that would become the United States in 1492 were the 2 million or so Amerindian peoples whose ancestors had migrated from Northeastern Asia some 15 thousand to 25 thousand years before.¹ All subsequent inhabitants and their descendants originated in migration from Europe, Africa, Asia or through migration between different regions of the Americas. The migration process has been an ongoing one, and in fact the foreign-born and their first-generation sons and daughters born in the United States have represented a third or more of the total U.S. population from the foundation of the republic until today. Migration has clearly been one of the most dominant themes in the history of the United States.

The colonial period in the history of the Americas was defined by two distinct and quite different international migrations. The first consisted of the migration of free workers, a large portion having contracted significant debts to pay for transatlantic passage. The second was the forced migration of slaves from Africa. Throughout the Americas the slave trade was numerically greater than the migration of free peoples from the late 17th century until the 1830s.² Although this was the case for the Americas as a whole, in British colonial North America the African slave trade was a

¹ Herbert S. Klein and Daniel C. Schiffner, "The Current Debate About The Origins of The Paleoindians of America," *Journal of Social History*, 37:2 (Winter 2003), 483–92.

² See David Eltis, *Economic Growth and the Ending of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000); David Eltis, editor, *Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

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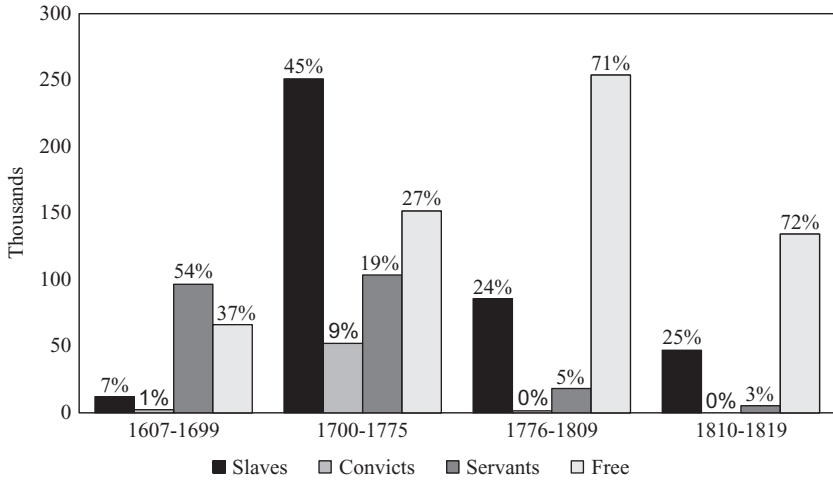
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GRAPH 1.1. Relative Share of Slaves, Convicts, Indentured Servants and Free Persons Among All People Arriving in British North America, 1607–1819. Sources: Aaron Fogelman, “From Slaves Convicts and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution,” *Journal of American History*, 85:1 (June 1998), 43–76 and Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

minor part of overall migration, and this pattern continued after independence was achieved in 1783 until 1808 when the slave trade to the United States was permanently closed.³ The dominant migrants to the future United States during the colonial period were Northern Europeans, primarily from Great Britain and the Germanic states. Many contracted their labor prior to leaving Europe in return for free passage to the Western Hemisphere. Until the end of the 18th century free migrants who paid for their own passage were only a small part of the movement from Europe (see Graph 1.1).⁴

³ For a survey of this migration see Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴ It is estimated that over half of the some 307,000 European immigrants arriving in British North America from 1700 up until the Revolution were indentured laborers, which would have meant that something like 156,000 of them arrived in the period to 1775. Aaron Fogelman, “From Slaves, Convicts and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution,” *Journal of American History*, 85:1 (June 1998), 71, Table A3; Aaron Fogelman, “Migrations to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700–1775: New Estimates,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XXII:4 (Spring 1992), 698, Table 1.