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NEXO

The Official Newsletter of **The Julian Samora Research Institute**
The Midwest's Premier Latino Research Center



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NEXO is the official newsletter of the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI), University Outreach and Engagement at Michigan State University (MSU) in East Lansing, Michigan. All contents remain the property of the original authors or artists, JSRI, and/or MSU.

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JSRI at Michigan State University is committed to the generation, transmission, and application of knowledge as it relates to Latinos and Latino communities throughout the Midwest and the nation.

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Julian Samora Research Institute
University Outreach and Engagement
Michigan State University
219 S. Harrison Road, Room 93
East Lansing, MI 48824

Phone: (517) 432-1317

Fax: (517) 432-2221

Email: jsamorai@msu.edu

Web: jsri.msu.edu

Facebook: facebook.com/JSRIMSU

Acting Director, Julian Samora Research Institute
Dr. Kwesi Brookins

Editor
Dr. Francisco A. Villarruel

Contributing Writers
Brian Buehler
Abby Cardona
Richard Cruz Dávila
Elizabeth Dorrance Hall
Jean Kayitsinga
Neelima Krishnagiri
Maria D. Molina
Marcelo E. Siles
Erika Lee Vallejo

Copy Editor
Patricia Mish

Graphic Designer
Mike Davis

Letter from the Directors

by Kwesi Brookins, Ph.D., Francisco A. Villarruel, Ph.D.

Few could have predicted what this past year would mean for the Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI), Michigan State University and the state of Michigan, our nation, and our world. The dramatic changes and uncertainty across all sectors of our globe have forced higher education institutions to adapt and change to continue their mission to contribute to the public good.

In addition to the demographic growth of Latinos across Michigan and the United States, the challenges faced by communities and institutions of higher education call for both entities to find meaningful ways to establish and maintain collaborative relationships. At MSU, for example, University Outreach and Engagement is working with constituents across Michigan to redefine how it fulfills its mission to address issues of local concern, encouraging faculty and staff to contribute to as opposed to lead and “study” efforts to transform and strengthen the vitality of communities. Similarly, the Samora Institute is focused on redefining its work with community partners to enhance engaged relationships across Michigan’s Latino communities. Efforts to engage MSU Latino scholars to share their ongoing research have been highlighted in recent issues of NEXO so that communities can envision opportunities to learn with and from MSU scholars interested in Latino well-being.

Established in 1989, JSRI has conducted, disseminated, and applied research that has addressed issues of importance to Latino communities: health disparities, entrepreneurship, and service delivery system gaps, to name a few. While the mission and commitment of the Samora Institute have not changed, the future will look to embrace new methods, expanded partnerships within and outside the university, and innovative approaches to engaged scholarship. JSRI and MSU scholars will continue to define and generate data and programmatic efforts that can transform the lives, health, and vitality of Michigan’s Latino population and residents.

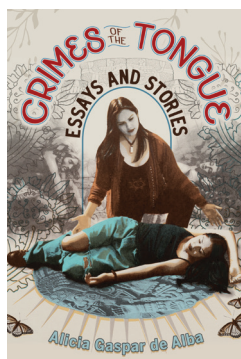
In partnership with University Outreach and Engagement, JSRI has begun searching for a visionary and dynamic engaged scholar to direct the institute’s future. Through active relationships and authentic programmatic and scholarly activities, this leader will facilitate efforts to ensure MSU’s commitment to being the university for Latino communities in Michigan and the Midwest.



Kwesi Brookins, Ph.D.,
Acting Director of Julian
Samora Research Institute and
Vice Provost for University
Outreach and Engagement



Francisco A. Villarruel, Ph.D.,
Former Acting Director, Julian
Samora Research Institute



Crimes of the Tongue: Essays and Stories

by Alicia Gaspar de Alba (2022)
Arte Público Press

Reviewed by
Erika Lee Vallejo,
Ph.D. candidate

Gaspar de Alba appeals to a broad audience in this book, and most chapters draw from historical, Chicana scholarly work; the author combines both academic and fictional work successfully. There are also various images of beautiful art scattered throughout. Most of the chapters focus on the Mexican American border town identity, specifically El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The author interrogates what it means to be beyond one culture and language; what it means to metamorphosize into something more. A common theme throughout the book is one of being a betrayer or traitor to one's own people and culture. The meshing and blending of Chicana, Mexicana, Tejana, Latina, and Americana into an identity that is neither here nor there.

The first chapter, *Crimes of the Tongue, or, a Malinche Tree Inside Me*, is primarily a historical revisioning by the main character, presumed to be the author, about La Malinche as a feminist woman as opposed to “a traitor to her own people” (p. 5). We learn La Malinche was a victim of rape by Hernán Cortés, a Spanish colonizer, and she was betrayed by her mother. Yet, La Malinche used her own intellect and skill in multiple languages to survive. The author argues she was not a traitor; but rather her actions were a result of multiple betrayals, such as being given into slavery and being a victim of rape. La Malinche may have helped the Spanish conquistadores not necessarily because she was against her own people, but as a means of survival. Similarly, Gaspar de Alba argues that even though La Malinche is seen as the mother of *mestizaje*—someone with both Indigenous and Spanish blood—and the betrayer her own people, she is used as a scapegoat rather than the Mexicans admit their defeat by the Spanish.

The second chapter, *The Border Beat, 1921*, is a fictional narrative. The main character, Alberto Morales, a milkman, is dehumanized while trying to get a better job opportunity as a reporter at *The El Paso Herald*. Without his wife Rosemary expressing her frustrations and support, he would have never felt qualified enough to apply for the job. Yet, upon Alberto's arrival, the boss, Mr. Gaines, needs proof of his Americanness with a birth certificate even though he had presented his high school diploma. Colorism and racism play a role here. Alberto also talks about Rosemary, who is biracial and can pass as white;

this is not an advantage he has. This chapter also presents a theme of all Mexicans being the same regardless of citizenship and education status. As Mr. Gaines says, “You look like them” (pg. 25). Mr. Gaines and the editor-in-chief, Mr. Corbitt, ask if Alberto speaks and writes English, again denying him his Americanness. Both Mr. Gaines and Mr. Corbitt suggest applying for a job in Ciudad Juárez even though he doesn't write in Spanish; again, assuming all Latinx are the same. Alberto finally agrees to being a research specialist for another reporter, referred to as Peters, but only after successfully negotiating for higher pay. He worries he will be betraying his people by being this insider they want. Thus, this theme of being a *vendido* or traitor, like the previous chapter, comes up again. Even though Alberto accepts the job, his co-worker Peters steals and plagiarizes the piece he wrote years ago, and Peters also gets *The Border Beat* column to himself. This is all ironic given that Mr. Gaines does not consider Alberto either worthy or qualified enough for the reporter position, and yet it is his words that will be published under the guise of a so-called “objective” (p. 23) white man, Peters, instead of Alberto with his “bean-brained opinions” (p. 29). Perhaps more glaring, Mr. Gaines still wants proof of Alberto's citizenship before finalizing his job contract.

Chapter 3, *Ten Fronteriza Meditations on La Llorona*, captures themes of betrayal and abandonment. The main character, Alicia, states, “I was born in the occupied territory north of the Rio Grande, land of the betrayer and betrayed” (p. 32). Alicia is abandoned by her mother at an early age first due to her busy job, and then after her mother's divorce. She ends up living with her father's parents. “La Llorona was my mother . . .” (p. 35), she states. Similarly, in Juárez the women murdered in 1993 are betrayed by the government and border society. Their many femicides are ignored. Only their mothers and activists cry for them like La Llorona did for her children. These poor, young, and dark-skinned women were subjected to horrible, painful deaths. The Juárez women, as they are often referred to, were often sterilized at work. Their employers controlled their bodies and considered them inhuman. Rather than invest in safety protocols to keep the women alive, they invested in control; the women were treated as objects and dehumanized. This chapter also portrays themes of arbitrary border lines set by the government, first with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848, and then in 1964 with the Chamizal Treaty that returned some of the stolen land, El Chamizal, to Mexico. Alicia also faces an identity crisis as confusion is raised by the “cultural schizophrenia . . . that happens to someone who grows up in the borderlands” (p. 37). Somehow forbidden to speak English at home, but only allowed to speak English at school. Somehow both Mexican and American all at once or not at all. With the passage of the Chamizal Treaty, the clinic Alicia was born in was now a part of Mexico, so why did she have to identify as American to the Border Patrol agent at the border checkpoint? How was she both Mexican but not, and American but not? Such confusion creates identity issues, which are a common theme of this book.



Chapter 4, *The Mystery of Survival*, begins rather ruthlessly with the main character, Xochitl, being brutally harassed and raped by her stepfather. This causes Xochitl and her mother to move to her aunt's house, since the stepfather no longer allows Xochitl to stay there, perhaps plagued by his disgusting, vicious acts. Perhaps more alarming is Xochitl's mother's response, "You think you hurt now . . . later you'll know what real suffering is" (p. 56). They prepare for their long three-day travel from Querétaro to her mom's cousin Lucía's home near the border in Juárez. Xochitl says, "I understood then that the same thing that happened to snakes could happen to people" (p. 59). In other words, it was possible for people to shed their old skin, which in this case was Xochitl leaving her life behind for a new city closer to family. Upon arrival at Lucía's shack, Xochitl passes out and awakens with fear that she will be hurt by Lucía's father; this displays the fear of men she now has due to the pain she endured. Her mother tells her to never repeat and expose this terrible secret again, or La Llorona will come for her and drown her. Perhaps her mother is ashamed she allowed this to happen, because she tells Xochitl, "You embarrassed me in front of Lucía" (p. 66). Then one of Xochitl's fears is realized when her mother explains she is leaving to cross the border to the U.S.; the feelings of abandonment are raised. Her mother states she will visit her each Sunday, and once Xochitl turns 15, she should have her green card, and they can both live in the U.S. Her mother tells her she will learn English from Doña Ines, who is both a *curandera* and owns an English teaching school. Thus, learning English is a survival tactic and a way back home to her mother.

Chapter 5, *Mujeres Necias/Decolonial Feminists Unite!* Dorothy Schons and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, is a scholarly piece on the history of decolonial feminists, starting with Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a 17th-century nun. She is one of the first, if not the first, feminist of her time. Sor Juana wrote a famous poem entitled "Political Satire," about needy, complaining men who like accusing women without reason and for their own wrongdoings or "hombres necios que acusaís/a la mujer sin razón." The narrator sought to write a historical fiction novel on Sor Juana and did plenty of research and read all the translations and Sor Juana's own words in Spanish. While conducting her research, the narrator encounters work by Dorothy Schons. Schons was the first scholar to write about the importance of Sor Juana, also known as the first *sorjuanista*, but her novel remained unpublished. The narrator challenges the argument that Octavio Paz was the first to study and write about Sor Juana; much of his work pulled from Schons, but, since her work remained unpublished, many did not give her proper credit. While Schons maintains Sor Juana was a suffragist and fought against the patriarchy of her time, the narrator argues Schons too was a suffragist. Impressively Schons was the first woman in Texas to get a Ph.D. and the first woman Ph.D. in the Romance languages field in the entire country. Schons too faced many struggles for being a woman; her work was neither respected nor valued because it was about a Mexican woman, and Schons

was ultimately fired after not being granted tenure. Shortly after being fired, she ended her own life. Schons unfortunately did not stand a chance against the sexist men scholars in her department who greatly undermined her work. Through Schons we learn that Sor Juana joined the convent because she sought to "write, read and publish whatever she wanted . . ." (p. 91) and because Sor Juana sought to "inhabit a gender-neutral state" (p. 92). The narrator suggests Sor Juana may have been queer. This resulted in Sor Juana being nearly excommunicated by the church. Sor Juana sought equality for women by committing rebellious acts of her time. Thus, the narrator argues, both Sor Juana and Dorothy Schons were decolonial feminists who were "otherized" due to them both speaking and creating their narratives in a way that examines and critically engages with racial and gender disparities and inequalities.

Chapter 6, *The Piñata Dream*, begins with a main character named Xochitl Maria Espinosa, often referred to as Mary. The setting is in Iowa City. Mary decides to meet with a Tarot dream interpreter, known as Hazel Eaves. Even though Mary herself was a writer, she struggled to fill out the questionnaire that would help Hazel interpret her dreams. Hazel referred to the unconscious mind as "Pandora's Jungle," and this was also the name of her business (p. 102). Since Mary was unable to write her dream due to "writer's block," she decides to verbally discuss her dream with Hazel (p. 103). In Mary's dream she is a young girl of 8 or 9 years. Her mother dresses her for a birthday party across the border in Juárez. In her dream, Mary is not thrilled about this party, but her mother forces her to go. She then notices a piñata right at the bridge of the border in the shape of a star. They then head toward the *colonias*, or the poorest communities across the border. As Mary gets closer, she begins to hear the laughter and yelling of kids speaking Spanish. This causes young Mary great discomfort because she cannot speak Spanish well. Her shame causes her to not interact with anyone at the party, and she feels embarrassment because she is wearing a large, white dress while the children are dressed in rags. As she gets closer, she sees the piñata is made of beautiful glass and decides this piñata is too magnificent to break. Mary then tells her mother she wants to leave, but her mother disagrees and says it would be rude to leave before breaking the piñata. Her mother then blindfolds her to prevent glass from getting into her eyes. This causes Mary great fear and anxiety because she thinks if she breaks this piñata, she will get in trouble. Her mother tells her she does not have anything to fear. When it's Mary's turn, she is so afraid she begins to pee her pants. The children begin to push her closer to the piñata, but she keeps screaming that she wants to go home. Suddenly she swings and hears a great shattering sound. She knows she has "killed" the piñata (p. 107). She then wakes up with great fear.

After listening to her dream, Hazel proceeds to take out a deck of tarot cards and instructs Mary to go through them and choose five she thinks represent her dream. While Mary is trying to decide which cards to select, we learn her mother killed herself

by shooting up too much insulin to help her get into “trances to speak to the Virgin [Mary]...” (p. 109). This resulted in her mother’s heart attack. Hazel reviews the tarot cards she chose and says the primary significance of her dreams is that she will be reborn; Mary is changing and both her American and Mexican identities are becoming one. This causes Mary emotional and physical pain. She begins to cry—perhaps the revelations of her dreams were too much—and she decides to leave. Mary continues crying even when she arrives home and is reminded of the way she cried at her mother’s funeral, reliving the pain she had not let go. Later, Mary writes a letter to Hazel, where we learn Mary is the same character from Chapter 4. Mary and her mom traveled to Mexico when she was 10 years old. Her mother married whom she now refers to as Mary’s dad and gained citizenship in the U.S. Yet, she became very sick upon crossing the border and lost many of her memories, potentially mind and body trying to rid her of the terrible, painful memories and the assault she experienced at the hands of her stepfather. While Mary considered herself a writer, she decided to leave her Americanized, white writing program in Iowa because she realized they did not understand her identity. Instead she joins a bilingual class at a local college in El Paso. She recalls how her teacher used to terrorize her in front of her classmates because she was “illegal,” and yet now she does not remember Spanish (p. 119). Mary is reborn and now proud of her “pocha power,” or the power to be considered a traitor by her ancestors by “forgetting Spanish” (p. 1), which allows her to be cognizant of both identities (pg. 119).

Chapter 7, *Ella Tiene Su Tono: Conocimiento and Mestiza Consciousness in Liliana Wilson’s Art*, is a scholarly piece that ties Gloria Anzaldúa’s work, particularly the concept of *conocimiento*, or self-knowledge, to the Chilean artwork by Liliana Wilson (p. 121). For Gaspar de Alba, Wilson’s work “[awakens] mestiza consciousness,” or the awareness of having a combined identity, both Mexican and Spanish (p. 122). The author interprets several of Wilson’s art pieces by using Anzaldúa’s “seven stages of the *conocimiento* process...” (p. 122). The author presents a common theme of embracing a mestiza identity despite the confusion or “alien” feeling it may hold (p. 140).

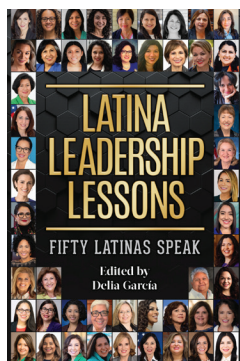
Chapter 8, *Bad Girls Rise Again: The Sinful Saints & Saintly Sinners at the Margins of the Americas Exhibition*, focuses on artwork by Alma Lopez, particularly the revisioning of saints, such as La Virgen de Guadalupe. Gaspar de Alba addresses the 2001 and 2013 public outrage surrounding artwork by Lopez of La Virgen dressed in promiscuous ways, such as wearing a bikini and drinking a margarita (p. 157). Yet, Lopez argues “it’s the people who create their own saints...” (p. 161). Through Lopez’s artwork, women saints are “rebel[s]” who do not conform to a gendered society (p. 164). This theme is also portrayed by the queer saints created by Lopez. Like the previous chapter, the author ties Lopez’s work to the border identities explained by Anzaldúa. In sum, both chapters argue the importance of the pocha identity that can be expressed in visual media.

Chapter 9, *Malinche’s Rights*, is a fictional piece that focuses on the toxicity of machismo culture. The main character dreams of her dead father being alive. While her sister breastfeeds, her father asks to be brought food, signifying his needs are greater than her own child’s. Her sister ignores him twice, and he continues to express “how hungry he [is],” but only the main character listens (p. 176). She takes her father milk and cookies to eat. Her father wanted his family to write about him, but no one did. The young main character decides to write a letter where she explains her father needs to rest to heal. She recalls when her father asked her not to cut her hair, which appears to symbolize control of his daughter’s femininity. Later in life, her father was angry because she chose “life without a man” (p. 178). Her lesbian identity stood against her father’s controlling machismo culture. We learn one night his daughter “got drunk,” and as she puked, she experienced a cleansing and liberating feeling (p. 179); her father could no longer control her now that he had passed away. In the proceeding section, a fictional piece presents La Malinche as rebelling against Cortés, even though he approaches her as her Christian savior. Cortés baptizes her and La Malinche, or Marina, no longer fights against him. She is soon raped by him. This chapter contains various poetic imagery and symbolism. A common theme is to fight against the patriarchy, even when they think you’ve resigned.

Finally, chapter 10, *The Codex Nepantla Project: Transinterpretation of Pocha Poetics, Politics and Praxis*, discusses the issue of most Chicana feminists’ work not being translated in Spanish and therefore inaccessible to Mexican feminist readers and activists; this is the task the Codex Nepantla Project tackles. Gaspar de Alba also addresses the issue of disconnection and being seen as “outsiders” by Mexican women due to their “hybrid language of the border” (p. 188). The author tackles ideas of linguistic assimilation and the separation between Mexicanas and Chicanas that has resulted and explains the importance of uniting based on their commonalities. The author introduces the concept of *transinterpretation* since many Chicana feminists who are American-born lack the capacity to write in Spanish fluently, due to the historical discrimination and racism experienced by their ancestors and themselves. Instead, *transinterpretation* is a form of writing and translation that combines an understanding of the pocha identity and experiences.

In conclusion, Gaspar de Alba brilliantly demonstrates the complexities of the Mexican American identity. She states, “Yes, I am a pocha, not a Mexican, not an American, but both, and neither. ¿Y qué?” or so what? (p. 195). The author eloquently describes how dynamic identity is, and the history, culture, and experiences that make it like a flowing river, constantly changing and never static or in one place for long. The multidimensional aspects of a border town identity are what make it unique, and the author often encourages other Chicanas to claim it and fight against the feelings of shame that are instilled in us from a young age.





Latino Leadership Lessons: Fifty Latinas Speak

Edited by Delia Garcia (2022)
Arte Público Press

Reviewed by
Abby Cardona,
former MSU undergraduate student

In an incredible collection of Latina personal life stories from 50 inspirational and successful Latina women, “three generations of Latinas from twenty-four states and different corners of our country share their leadership lessons and wisdom” (ix). This book is powerful and motivational. Not only will you find it incredibly interesting to read, but you will also get an insight into where they grew up, how they became successful, and the fantastic journey it took them to get there. While every Latina who reads this book will find at least one story they can personally relate to, the real jackpot is found at the end of each one of those stories. They each provide 10 leadership lessons that helped guide them to their successful careers. That amounts to 500 priceless lessons cultivated from their upbringing, including many that were learned in a boardroom. No one knows how to become a leader until they are brought into that position. It took dedication and learning from their mistakes to be where they are right now.

The introduction states, “It is said that to empower a woman is to empower a community” (xii). Latinas have dealt with challenges such as being told that something can’t be done. These stories encourage Latinas to persevere and follow their dreams despite obstacles. It’s the sense of direction that needs to be found, and from there, “We shall stand tall (even if we are 5 feet tall), shoulders back, chin up, and adopt a power pose—hands on our hips—as our abuelitas taught us when we witnessed their fierceness” (xiii).

Dolores Huerta, a civil rights leader, organized several effective movements for social justice and wanted to help the young farmworkers’ parents “win more equitable working conditions” (xvii), even working with Cesar Chavez to organize the National Farm Workers Association. The originator of the phrase, “Si se puede,” Dolores had made sacrifices, overcoming racial discrimination, and being told “by society and persons close to them that roles they aspired to were ‘not for them,’ that they were not ‘not qualified’” (ix). This generation is changing, and right now a woman’s leadership is needed. It is time to acknowledge the wisdom and the lessons in this collection. Sharing and learning are the most impactful ways to become stronger as an individual, and to show people around you it is possible to be a leader.

Each story includes a picture of a Latina, then a summary of their commitment: how they came to be, and from there what colleges they attended and their degrees, as well as the dedication they bring to the community, then the importance of their 10 lessons. Whether from outside the U.S. or born in the States, every Latina’s lesson shares a common thread: to listen and not to give up what you believe in. As Helen Iris Torres said in her lessons, “If you believe in yourself, make time to invest in your future and the future of your community by having a plan that leads you to your goals” (161). By taking time and reflecting on the importance of what the future may hold, remember the why and the how once becoming a leader. Respecting others, learning to stand up for yourself, and enjoying the moment of the value of the goals that are being accomplished from the ground up. Latinas especially value their parents, grandparents, and the coming generations.

This book is powerful and motivational. Not only will you find it incredibly interesting to read, but you will also get an insight into where they grew up, how they became successful, and the fantastic journey it took them to get there.

Lastly, don’t be afraid to ask for help. It takes dedication and gratitude to start a journey, even if starting from the lowest point or not knowing how to go from one point to another. Knowing details and simply starting small can lead to something greater. Delia Garcia has even written 10 leadership lessons of her own. “Make the time to take care of your health, family, and social life. Invest in the things that make you happy” (186). Always understand that life has unexpected turns, and take the time to reflect on the events and simply live to be happy. Cherish the ones that are the closest and learn what’s suitable for the big journey.

Latino Population Profiles in Michigan

By Jean Kayitsinga, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Data from the 2020 Census in the United States show that the Latino population numbered about 62.1 million, representing 18.7% of the total U.S. population. Latinos are the second largest ethnic population in the country after white Americans. They are also the largest ethno-racial minority population, surpassing African Americans in over half of all U.S. metropolitan areas (Frey, 2011). The Latino population in the U.S. increased from 50.5 million in 2010 to 62.1 million in 2020, reflecting a growth rate of 23%. In Michigan, the Latino population in 2020 was about 564,422, or 5.6% of the total population. The Latino population in Michigan increased from 436,358 in 2010 to 564,422 in 2020, a 29.3% change. As of 2022, the Latino population in Michigan has increased to 573,514, or 5.7% of the total population.

PHOTO BY OMAR LOPEZ / UNSPLASH.COM



Although much has been written about Latinos in the Southwest and West (e.g., Massey, 1987), less is still known about Latino recent migration and settlement in the Midwest. Latinos have settled in nontraditional metropolitan cities, suburbs, and rural areas (Kandel & Parrado, 2006). The Latino population growth in nonmetropolitan county destinations represents one of the more profound social transformations affecting rural places, altering not only their social, economic, and political profiles but also the broader national perception of rural and small America (Kandel and Parrado, 2006).

Historically, Latinos in the United States have concentrated in the largest metropolitan areas in the Southwest (Mexican Americans) and the Northeast (Puerto Ricans). Latinos have traditionally resided in six states: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. Within those states, Latinos have tended to concentrate in gateway and ethnic hub cities such as Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas, New York City, Miami, and Chicago. More recently, Latinos have settled in new destinations outside of traditional gateway metropolitan areas, particularly in the Midwest and Southeast, and in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. They were attracted by, or recruited for, employment opportunities in agriculture, meat packing, other food processing jobs, timber harvesting and processing, and other industries.

According to the 2020 Census, 47.4% of U.S. Latinos resided in 12 metropolitan areas with at least one million Latinos, including Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA; New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX; Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA; Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN; Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX; Phoenix-Mesa-Chandler, AZ; San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX; San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA; Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV; and San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA. In 2020, Latinos were also residing in other nontraditional metropolitan destination areas outside of the Southwest such as Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA.

The influx of Latinos in new destination communities does not occur by chance. They are pulled by employment opportunities in those areas, such as working on fruit and vegetable farms, dairy farms, and meat processing industries in the rural Midwest and Southeast (Kandel & Parrado, 2005). Economic restructuring nationwide and globally and associated regulatory processes, including employment discrimination, layoffs, and community resistance, are primary factors that push Latino workers to migrate to different regions in the United States, including Michigan, in search of better opportunities. Other factors include lower housing costs and safer communities.

In Michigan and in the Midwest region in general, increased mechanization and consolidation of farms, loss of union and skilled agricultural jobs, decline in local small businesses, withdrawal of local state services (Sassen, 1990), and persistent poverty of rural communities contribute to the increased availability of a low-wage and unprotected jobs.

Dairy farms and new agricultural businesses, such as the meat processing industries, tend not to hire local residents. Instead, they actively recruit workers from other areas, including Latino, Asian, and African immigrants. Latino workers and their families have relocated to communities in Michigan and become permanent members.

The objectives of this article are twofold: 1) to describe the Latino population profiles in Michigan, including how the Latino population has changed over the past five decades, the age and sex composition, and the socioeconomic resource shares of Latinos; and 2) to highlight the spatial concentration of Latinos in Michigan by county.

DATA AND METHODS

DATA

Data were drawn from the 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, and 2020 decennial censuses, the 2022 one-year American Community Survey, and U.S. Population Estimates by state, age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. Data were retrieved from IPUMS-NHGIS (<https://www.nhgis.org>) or from the U.S. Census Bureau (www.census.gov).

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

First, the analysis provides a description of the population size by race/ethnicity, highlighting the share of the Latino population in Michigan. Second, the analysis describes the Latino population growth and the change in its share from 1980 to 2022. Third, there is an analysis of the age and sex composition of Latinos as compared to that of non-Latino whites. The final analysis focuses on the spatial concentration of Latinos in Michigan by county. The analyses are purely descriptive (percentages, median, charts, and a map), focusing on Latino characteristics in Michigan.

FINDINGS

POPULATION SIZE BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2020

According to the 2020 Census, the U.S. population was 331.4 billion as of April 1, 2020. The Latino population was 62.1 million, representing 18.7% of the total population. In Michigan, the total population in 2020 was 10.1 million, and the Latino population was 564,422, representing 5.6% of the total population (Table 1). The non-Latino white population in 2020 was 191.7 million (57.8%) in the U.S. and 7.3 million (72.4%) in Michigan. The African American population in 2020 was 39.9 million (12.1%) in the U.S. and 1.4 million (13.5%) in Michigan. The Asian population, including Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, was 20.2 million (6.1%) in the U.S. and 334,891 (3.3%) in Michigan. The American Indian or Alaska Native count was 2.3 million (0.7%) in the U.S. and 47,406 (0.5%) in Michigan (Table 1).

POPULATION SIZE BY LATINO SPECIFIC ORIGIN, 2022

As of 2022, there were 572,405 Latinos living in Michigan. As Table 2 shows, this population constitutes 5.7 percent of the total population in Michigan. Latinos are not a monolithic group. In

2022, 67.6 percent of Latinos in Michigan were of Mexican origin; 8.9 percent were from Puerto Rico; 3.3 percent from Cuba; 0.9 percent from the Dominican Republic; 6.0 percent from Central America; 4.8 percent from South America; and 8.4 percent were other Latinos including Spaniards (Table 2).

Table 1. Total Population by Race and Ethnicity for the United States and Michigan: U.S. Census, 2020

Ethnicity/Race	United States	Percent	Michigan	Percent
Total	331,449,281	100.0	10,077,331	100.0
Latino	62,080,044	18.7	564,422	5.6
Not-Latino white	191,697,647	57.8	7,295,651	72.4
Not-Latino Black or African American	39,940,338	12.1	1,358,458	13.5
Not-Latino American Indian and Alaska Native	2,251,699	0.7	47,406	0.5
Not-Latino Asian	19,618,719	5.9	332,288	3.3
Not-Latino Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	622,018	0.2	2,603	0.0
Not-Latino some other race	191,697,647	57.8	7,295,651	72.4
Two or more races	191,697,647	57.8	7,295,651	72.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC)
<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/data/>

Table 2. Michigan Latino Population by Specific Origin, 2022

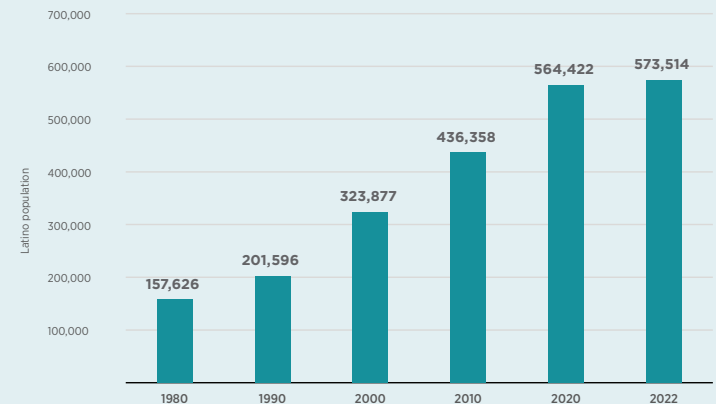
Specific Origin	Total Population	Percentage of Total Population	Percentage of Latino Population
Total population	10,034,118		
Latinos	572,405	5.7	
Mexican	386,713	3.9	67.6
Puerto Rican	51,116	0.5	8.9
Cuban	19,170	0.2	3.3
Dominican	5,430	0.1	0.9
Central American	34,554	0.3	6.0
South American	27,424	0.3	4.8
Other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino	47,998	0.5	8.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates
<https://data.census.gov/tables/text=B03001&g=040XX00US26&tid=ACSDT1Y2022.B03001>

MICHIGAN LATINO POPULATION CHANGE, 1980 TO 2022

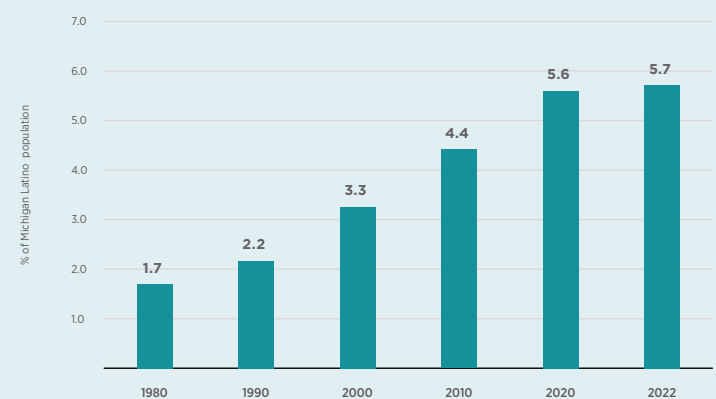
The Michigan Latino population has increased steadily over the past five decades, from 157,626 in 1980 to 573,514 people in 2022 (Figure 1). As a share of the Michigan population, Latinos continuously increased from 1.7% in 1980 to 5.7% in 2022 (Figure 2). Another way to look at it is to compare the Latino population change in each decade. The Michigan Latino population change was 27.8% between 1980 and 1990, 60.7% between 1990 and 2000, 34.7% between 2000 and 2010, and 29.3% between 2010 and 2020 (Figure 3).

Figure 1. Michigan Latino Population Change, 1980 to 2022^a



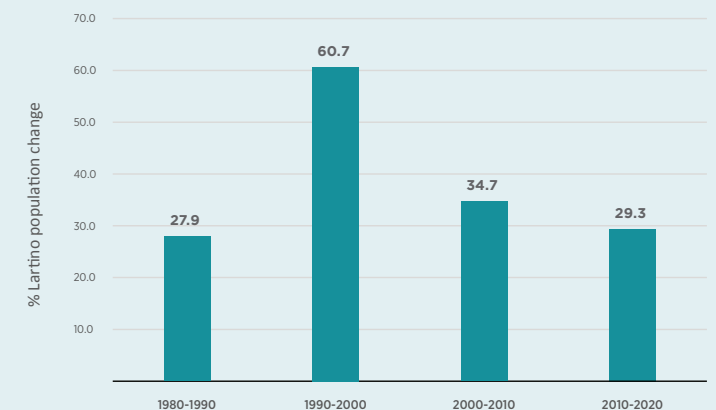
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020). Data retrieved from IPUMS-NHGIS (<https://www.nhgis.org>); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (release date: June 2023). Note: a. 1980 – 2020 data are from Decennial Censuses (as of April 1). 2022 data are population estimates as of July 1, 2022.

Figure 2. Percent of Michigan Latino Population, 1980 to 2020^a



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020). Data retrieved from IPUMS-NHGIS (<https://www.nhgis.org>); U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division (release date: June 2023). Note: a. 1980 – 2020 data are from Decennial Censuses (as of April 1). 2022 data are population estimates as of July 1, 2022.

Figure 3. Percentage of Michigan Latino Population Change in the last four Decades



Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010, 2020). Data retrieved from IPUMS-NHGIS (<https://www.nhgis.org>).

MICHIGAN POPULATION CHANGE
BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 2010 TO 2020

This section focuses only on the population change by race/ethnicity in the last decade (2010 – 2020). Michigan’s population change in the last decade is mostly attributable to, on one hand, the growth of Latino and Asian populations and, on the other hand, the decline of the non-Hispanic white, Black, and American Indian/Alaska Native populations. The Latino population in Michigan grew from 436,358 people in 2010 to 564,222 in 2020, or a gain of 29.3%. The Latino percentage share of U.S. population growth was 66.1%. The Asian population, excluding Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, grew from 236,490 in 2010 to 332,288 in 2020, an increase of 40.5%. The Asian percentage share of the Michigan population growth was 49.5%. In contrast, the non-Latino white population decreased from 7.6 million in 2010 to 7.3 million in 2020, a decline of 3.6%. The non-Latino white population share of the Michigan population change was -141.6%. The African American population decreased from 1,383,756 in 2010 to 1,358,458, a decline of 1.8%. The Native American or Alaska Native population declined from 54,665 in 2010 to 47,406, a decrease of 13.3% (Table 3).

AGE AND SEX COMPOSITION

The Latino population in Michigan is younger than the non-Latino white population. In 2022, 32.5 percent of the Latino population in Michigan was under 18 years of age, compared to 18.4 percent of the non-Latino white population. Few Latinos were 65 years of age and older (6.4%) compared to non-Latino whites (21.6%) (Figure 4).

Table 4 displays the median age by sex, race, and ethnicity in 2020 in Michigan. The median age in 2020 for Latinos was 29.8 years (29.3 years for males and 30.3 years for females), compared to the median age for non-Latino whites of 43.7 years (42.3 years for males and 45.3 years for females) (Table 4).

The age and sex distributions for the Latino and non-Latino white populations for 2022 in Michigan are displayed in population pyramids (Figure 5). The shapes of the pyramids indicate a much younger Latino population compared to the non-Latino white population. The Latino population pyramid shows larger proportions at younger ages and progressively smaller proportions at older ages. The wider base of the pyramid reflects relatively high proportions of the young Latino population. In contrast, the non-Latino white pyramid is more rectangular, indicating an older population. The base of the non-Latino pyramid is narrower, reflecting relatively few young people. The non-Latino white pyramid also reveals a larger proportion of older age groups.

SOCIOECONOMIC RESOURCE SHARES

POVERTY LEVELS

As displayed in Table 5, the poverty rate in Michigan was estimated at 13.4 percent. The Latino poverty rate (18.3%) was significantly higher than that of non-Latino whites (10.6%) (Table 5).

Table 3. U.S. Total Population Change
by Race/Ethnicity, 2010-2020

	2010		2020		Change		
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	% Share
Total	9,883,640	100.0	10,077,331	100.0	193,691	2.0	100.0
Hispanic or Latino	436,358	4.4	564,222	5.6	128,064	29.3	66.1
Not-Hispanic White	7,569,939	76.6	7,295,651	72.4	-274,288	-3.6	-141.6
Not-Hispanic Black or African American	1,383,756	14.0	1,358,458	13.5	-25,298	-1.8	-13.1
Not-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native	54,665	0.6	47,406	0.5	-7,259	-13.3	-3.7
Not-Hispanic Asian	236,490	2.4	332,288	3.3	95,798	40.5	49.5
Not-Hispanic Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	2,170	0.0	2,603	0.0	433	20.0	0.2
Not-Hispanic some other race	9,866	0.1	37,183	0.4	27,317	276.9	14.1
Two or more races	190,396	1.9	439,320	4.4	248,924	130.7	128.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 and 2020 Census Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC)

Table 4. Median Age by Ethnicity/Race, Michigan, 2022

	Both sexes	Male	Female
Latinos or Hispanics	29.8	29.3	30.3
Non-Hispanic white	43.7	42.3	45.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Table 5. Poverty Rates by Ethnicity/Race, 2022

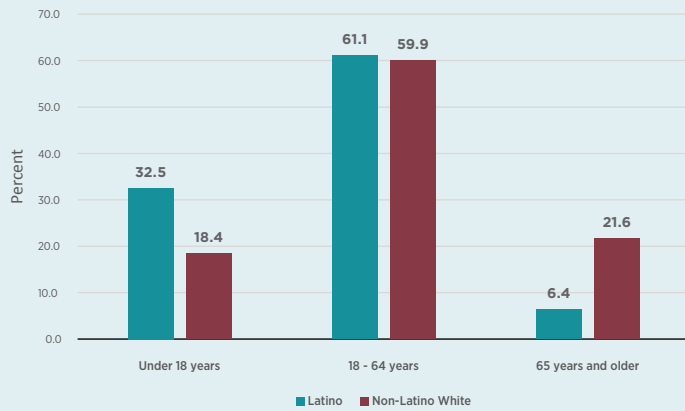
	Total ^a	Poverty	Percent
All	9,828,430	1,315,899	13.4
Latino	558,250	101,908	18.3
Non-Latino white	7,165,227	756,468	10.6

Note: a. Population for whom poverty status is determined.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

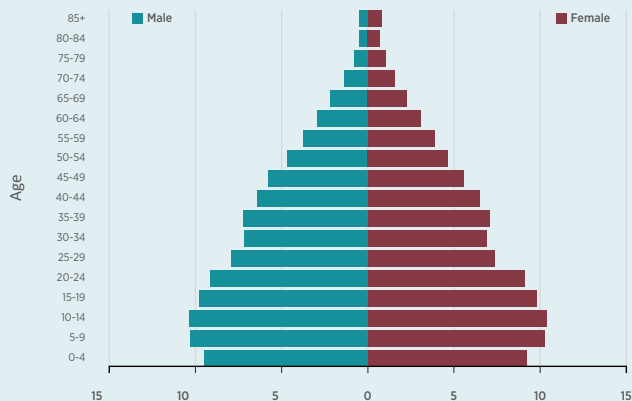
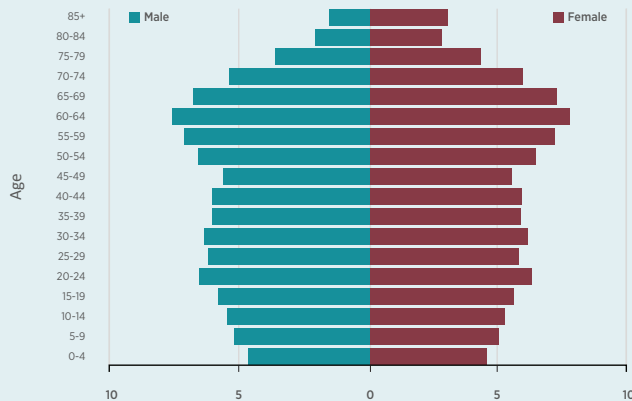
Table 6. Median Household Income by Ethnicity/Race, 2022

Median Household Income (\$)	
All households	66,986
Latino	62,497
Non-Latino white	71,829
The ratio of Latino to white	0.93

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Figure 4. Michigan Latino and Non-Latino White Population by Age Groups, 2022

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

Figure 5. Michigan Latino and Non-Latino White Population Pyramids, 2022**Latino Population****Non-Latino White Population**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

INCOME

Table 6 displays the median household income by ethnicity/race. The median household income for Latinos (\$62,497) was lower than that of non-Latino whites (\$71,829). Latino median household income was about 7 percent times lower than non-Latino white median household income (Table 6).

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Table 7 displays the educational attainment of Latinos compared to that of non-Latino whites in Michigan. For both males and females, the levels of education attained by Latinos were below those of non-Latino whites. The educational attainment of Latinos at high school or lower levels was higher than that of non-Latino whites. In contrast, the educational attainment of Latinos at both some college and college or higher levels was lower than that of non-Latino whites (Table 7).

Table 7. Educational Attainment by Ethnicity/Race (Population 25 years and over) (percent)

Education	Latino			Non-Latino White		
	All	Male	Female	All	Male	Female
Less than high school	22.6	23.8	21.4	6.4	7.0	5.9
High school or GED	29.0	31.1	26.7	28.2	28.9	27.4
Some college	25.0	23.6	26.4	31.8	31.3	32.3
College or more	23.4	21.5	25.5	33.6	32.8	34.3

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Table 8. Employment Status of Latino and Non-Latino Whites

Ethnicity/race	Percent in the Labor Force	Percent Employed	Percent Unemployed
All	61.6	95.4	4.6
Latino	70.0	93.9	6.1
Non-Latino white	60.9	96.5	3.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

EMPLOYMENT

Table 8 displays the percent of the population 16 years and older who are in the labor force and the percent of the civilian labor force that is employed and unemployed by ethnicity/race. In 2022, about 62 percent of the population 16 years and older in Michigan were in the labor force. The unemployment rate was estimated at 4.6 percent. Although Latino civilians had higher labor force participation than non-Latino whites, they had nonetheless higher unemployment rates than non-Latino whites (Table 8).

OCCUPATION

Table 9 displays occupational distributions by ethnicity/race. There were relatively more persons in the non-Latino white population (42.3%) in managerial and professional occupations,

whereas 30.6 percent of Latinos work in these jobs. There were also more non-Latino whites working in sales and office (19.7%) than Latinos working in those jobs (17.1%). In contrast, there were more Latinos working in service (18.6%), natural resources, construction, and maintenance (11.1%), and production, transportation, and moving (22.5%) occupations than non-Latino whites working in service (14.6%), natural resources, construction, and maintenance (8.6%), and production, transportation, and moving (14.8%) occupations, respectively (Table 9).

HOUSING TENURE

Table 10 displays housing tenure overall in Michigan and that of Latino and non-Latino white householders. About 73 percent of housing was owner-occupied. Latino householders had lower housing ownership (59.2%) than non-Latino white householders (Table 10).

THE SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF LATINO POPULATION IN MICHIGAN BY COUNTY, 2020

Figure 6 shows a map of Michigan that displays the total Latino population by county in 2020. The map displays the concentration of Latinos in each county in Michigan. The largest concentration of Latinos was in Wayne County (117,649). Other counties, in order of the number of Latinos, include Kent (75,228), Oakland (60,838), Ottawa (29,382), Macomb (26,214), Ingham (24,422), Washtenaw (20,731), Saginaw (16,904), Genesee (16,259), and Kalamazoo (14,776) (Table 11). Table 11 also shows the top ten counties with the highest proportions of Latinos in Michigan. The highest proportions of Latinos were, in order of the percentages, in Oceana, Van Buren, Kent, Ottawa, Lake, St. Joseph, Saginaw, Ingham, Lenawee, and Allegan counties, ranging from 15.4 percent to 7.8 percent (Table 11).

Table 12 displays the top ten counties with the highest number and percentage of Latino population change between the 2010 and 2020 decennial censuses. The largest Latino population increase between 2010 – 2020 was in Wayne County, followed by Oakland, Kent, Macomb, Washtenaw, Ottawa, Kalamazoo, Ingham, Genesee, and Berrien counties. The highest percent change in Latino population between 2010 – 2020 was in Lake County, followed by Oscoda, Keweenaw, Marquette, Menominee, Delta, Kalaska, Missaukee, Dickinson, and Cheboygan counties (Table 12).

CONCLUSION

The Latino population in the U.S. has been increasing. It increased significantly from 14.6 million in 1980 to 62.1 million in 2020, an increase of 325%. In 2020, Latinos represented 18.7% of the U.S. population, almost three times the Latino share of the U.S. population than in 1980 (6.4%). In Michigan, the Latino population was 564,222, or 5.6% of the total population in Michigan. The Latino population in Michigan increased from

Table 9. Occupation by Ethnicity/Race, 2022 (population 16 years and older)

Occupation	Latino		Non-Latino White	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Management, business, science, and arts	81,573	30.6	1,518,568	42.3
Service	49,706	18.6	522,912	14.6
Sales and office	45,695	17.1	706,497	19.7
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance	29,725	11.1	307,440	8.6
Production, transportation, and material moving	60,112	22.5	530,761	14.8
Total	266,811	100.0	3,586,178	100.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Table 10. Housing Tenure by Ethnicity/Race, 2022

Housing tenure	All		Latino		Non-Latino White	
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent
Total housing	4,089,794	100.0	168,471	100.0	3,124,790	100.0
Owner occupied	2,991,685	73.2	99,784	59.2	2,478,577	79.3
Renter occupied	1,098,109	26.8	68,687	40.8	646,213	20.7

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Table 11. Top Ten Counties with the Highest Number and Percentage of Latino Population, 2020

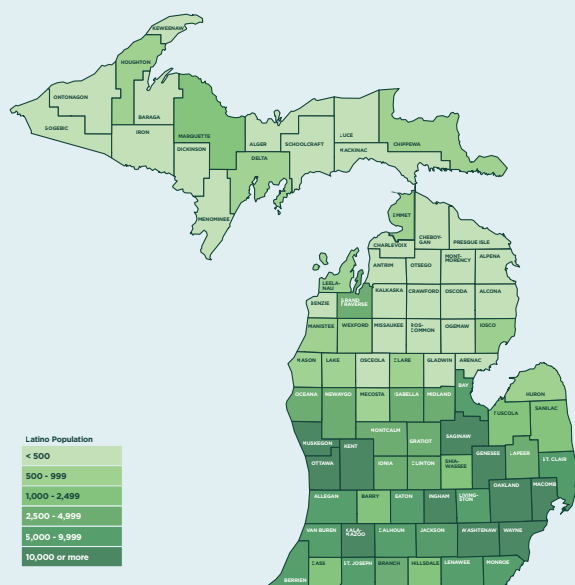
County	Total Population	Rank	Latino Population	Percent Latino
Number				
Wayne	1,793,561	1	117,649	6.56
Kent	657,974	2	75,228	11.43
Oakland	1,274,395	3	60,838	4.77
Ottawa	296,200	4	29,382	9.92
Macomb	881,217	5	26,214	2.97
Ingham	284,900	6	24,422	8.57
Washtenaw	372,258	7	20,731	5.57
Saginaw	190,124	8	16,904	8.89
Genesee	406,211	9	16,259	4.00
Kalamazoo	261,670	10	14,776	5.65
Percent				
Oceana	26,659	1	4,108	15.41
Van Buren	75,587	2	8,966	11.86
Kent	657,974	3	75,228	11.43
Ottawa	296,200	4	29,382	9.92
Lake	12,096	5	1,195	9.88
St. Joseph	60,939	6	5,427	8.91
Saginaw	190,124	7	16,904	8.89
Ingham	284,900	8	24,422	8.57
Lenawee	99,423	9	8,494	8.54
Allegan	120,502	10	9,389	7.79

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171)

Table 12. Top Ten Counties with the Highest Number and Percentage of Latino Population Change, 2010 - 2020

County	Total Population	Rank	Latino Population	Percent Latino
Number				
Wayne	-27,023	1	22,389	23.50
Oakland	72,033	2	18,918	45.13
Kent	55,352	3	16,791	28.73
Macomb	40,239	4	7,119	37.28
Washtenaw	27,467	5	6,871	49.57
Ottawa	32,399	6	6,621	29.09
Kalamazoo	11,339	7	4,817	48.37
Ingham	4,005	8	3,896	18.98
Genesee	-19,579	9	3,276	25.23
Berrien	-2,497	10	2,156	30.56
Percent				
Lake	557	1	952	391.77
Oscoda	-421	2	75	94.94
Keweenaw	-110	3	12	80.00
Marquette	-1,060	4	577	75.23
Menominee	-527	5	208	74.82
Delta	-166	6	225	70.75
Kalkaska	786	7	141	65.89
Missaukee	203	8	193	63.07
Dickinson	-221	9	170	62.96
Cheboygan	-573	10	130	61.61

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171)

Figure 6. Map of the Latino Population in Michigan by County, 2020

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171)

157,626 in 1980 to 564,422 in 2020, an increase of 258%.

In the last decade (2010-2020), 66 percent of the share of the Michigan population growth is attributable to the increase of Latinos. As a relatively young population, natural increase is a vital component of Latino population growth. The other is international migration. The Latino population in Michigan is diverse but predominantly comprised of Mexican-origin Latinos (about 68.8%), followed by Puerto Ricans (9.6%), Central Americans (4.7%), South Americans (4.2%), and Cubans (3.5%). Compared to non-Latino whites, Latinos are a much younger population. In 2020, 32.5% of the Latino population was younger than 18 years of age compared to 18.4% of non-Latino whites. Relatively few Latinos were age 65 and older (6.4%) compared to non-Latino whites (21.6%). The median age for Latinos was almost 30 years as compared to 44 years for non-Latino whites.

The socioeconomic resource shares of Latinos in Michigan show that Latinos are disproportionately overrepresented in lower socioeconomic positions in Michigan, probably due to the history of economic, legal, educational, and political discrimination against Latinos. As compared to non-Latino whites, Latinos have higher poverty rates, lower median household income, lower housing ownership rates, lower educational attainment, and higher unemployment rates despite having higher labor force participation. They are also more likely to work in service; natural resources, construction, and maintenance; and production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and are less likely to work in managerial and professional occupations.

Latinos are spatially concentrated in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas, in counties such as Wayne (Detroit), Kent (Grand Rapids), Ottawa, Macomb, Ingham (Lansing), Washtenaw (Ann Arbor), Saginaw, Genesee (Flint), and Kalamazoo. They are also located in rural areas in counties such as Oceana, Van Buren, St. Joseph, Lenawee, and Allegan. They are attracted by employment opportunities in both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties in Michigan. 📍

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GAO Study Finds Hispanics Underrepresented in Media Industries

More Data Needed for Federal Enforcement

By Richard Cruz Dávila, Ph.D.



As previously reported in the Spring 2022 issue of NEXO, On October 1, 2020, members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) and the House Committee on Oversight and Reform (COR) directed a letter to the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) requesting that the GAO “issue a report on the representation of Latinos in employment and management positions in the film, television, and publishing industries, and the enforcement of federal equal opportunity requirements on those industries by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Department of Labor (DOL)” (2020, p. 1). In September of 2021, the GAO returned the report, “Workforce Diversity: Analysis of Federal Data Shows Hispanics Are Underrepresented in the Media Industry,” which concluded that in 2019 Latina/os made up only 12 percent of the media workforce, compared to 18 percent of workers in the rest of the workforce. The report drew no conclusions beyond acknowledging that Latina/os are underrepresented in media industries and did not address how the EEOC and DOL might enforce measures to diversify media industries.

In September of 2022, the GAO issued a follow-up report titled “Workforce Diversity: Hispanic Workers Are Underrepresented in the Media, and More Data Are Needed for Federal Enforcement Efforts.” The new report reiterates and expands upon the findings of the original regarding the underrepresentation of Latina/os in media industries over the past decade. In addition to analysis of the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) for 2010-2019, for this report the GAO took the additional step of interviewing agency officials and stakeholders and reviewing diversity reports issued by 15 large media companies, as well as federal agency documents and enforcement data. Based on this study, the GAO makes several recommendations in the report regarding data collection and sharing between EEOC and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). This article presents a summary of the new GAO report.

Through a review of ACS data for the years 2010 to 2019, the report indicates that Latina/os were underrepresented in media industries compared to their representation in all other industries combined. The report notes that in 2019, Latina/os made up only 12 percent of the workforce in media industries, compared to 18 percent in all industries. Further, it notes that Latina/o representation increased very little over the past decade, with an increase of only one percentage point from 2010 to 2019 (11 to 12 percent) compared to a three-percentage point increase in all other industries over the same period (15 to 18 percent). Measuring against the overall share of Latina/os in the civilian employed workforce (17 percent) further supports the finding that Latina/os are underrepresented in media industries. The report notes that Latina/o representation across all industries ranges from 9 percent in the professional,

scientific, and technical services industry to 33 percent in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry. At 12 percent, Latina/o participation in media industries is close to the bottom of the range.

Stakeholders indicated that a lack of diversity among talent agents, media executives, and other decision-makers puts Latina/os at a disadvantage as this lack of diversity may lead decision-makers to dismiss content created for Latina/o markets or to misunderstand the diversity of Latina/o communities.

Analyses of 2015-2019 5-year ACS and EEOC EEO-1 data showed that Latina/o representation varied by occupation and gender. Looking at 13 media occupations, the study estimated that 10 percent of workers were Latina/o, with Latina/o representation ranging from 7 percent of writers and authors to 16 percent of music directors and composers. It further found that Latinas were substantially underrepresented relative to Latino men in media occupations with the highest concentrations of Latina/os, including television, video, and film camera operators and editors; other media and communication equipment workers; designers; and photographers. For instance, while Latina/os made up 13 percent of other media and communication equipment workers, Latinas only accounted for 1 percent, compared to 12 percent for Latino men. The EEOC’s EEO-1 data collected from 2014 to 2018 likewise showed that Latina/o representation varied widely across job categories, ranging from 4 percent of senior and executive managers to 19 percent in service jobs. Once again, Latinas were underrepresented compared to Latino men in the two job categories with the highest concentrations of Latina/os—craft workers and technicians.

The authors of the report also extended their analysis through interviews with 15 stakeholders, including “researchers and representatives from industry groups, unions, and Hispanic media not-for-profit organizations” (p. 17). These stakeholders identified challenges that they felt could contribute to underrepresentation of Latina/os in media industries. These included financial barriers, which included the cost of education or training, financial strain when quitting a paying job to take an unpaid internship, difficulties in obtaining long-term employment in a project-based industry, and lack of financial



resources dedicated to producing content for Latina/os. Stakeholders also identified challenges in obtaining education beyond financial costs, including the competitive nature of relevant programs and lack of knowledge about educational opportunities. Eight of 15 stakeholders also identified limited access to professional networks as a challenge. Six stakeholders noted difficulties in joining unions due to work experience requirements, which puts Latina/os at a disadvantage given the importance of union membership in obtaining employment in certain media occupations. Finally, stakeholders indicated that a lack of diversity among talent agents, media executives, and other decision-makers puts Latina/os at a disadvantage as this lack of diversity may lead decision-makers to dismiss content created for Latina/o markets or to misunderstand the diversity of Latina/o communities.

The authors of the report further conducted a systematic review of reports published on the websites of 25 large media companies, selected based on market value. Fifteen of the 25 companies selected had publicly posted documents that detailed workforce diversity initiatives, which were analyzed according to previous GAO work on diversity management practices, though the authors did not verify the accuracy of the companies' self-reports or assess their effectiveness. The report offers a table in which companies' self-reports are matched to leading diversity management practices, such as top leadership commitment, measurement, accountability, succession planning, recruitment, employee involvement, and diversity training. It further identifies other steps taken to increase diversity, such as targeted development programs, education and training, partnerships, dedicated funding, and mechanisms to assess pay equity.

Finally, the report considers tools used by federal agencies to enforce EEO requirements and promote diversity in media industries. The report notes that an analysis of EEOC enforcement data for 2020 to 2021 "identified 24 discrimination charges based on Hispanic national origin involving media companies that were resolved by EEOC and state/local fair employment practices agencies (FEPA)" (p. 27). None of these resulted in findings of discrimination by the EEOC, but five were resolved by financial settlements before EEOC investigations were completed. An examination of Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs (OFCCP) enforcement data from 2010 to 2021 showed one compliance evaluation, closed in 2021, that resulted in discrimination violations against 17 Latina/o workers at a media company, resulting in total remedies of \$97,435. Analysis of FCC audits and periodic reviews of compliance with EEO rules, which can result in monetary fines or, at the most extreme, denial of license renewal, showed that from 2010 to 2021 the FCC took enforcement action against 14 media companies for noncompliance. However, the FCC "does not

track whether the violations affected particular racial or ethnic groups, such as Hispanics" (p. 30).

Despite a common goal of the EEOC and FCC to eliminate discriminatory employment policies and practices by media companies, the report indicates that the agencies lack data that could assist in their enforcement efforts. Specifically, it notes that the EEOC and FCC no longer have a data sharing agreement in place that could inform FCC licensing decisions, with the FCC relying on self-reporting from media companies of pending or received discrimination complaints. Previously, the two agencies had a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that facilitated data sharing, but the MOU was terminated in 2020. The report further notes that current EEOC data collection methods do not allow the agency to determine if all labor unions are complying with reporting requirements on demographics of union membership.

The report concludes with three recommendations for executive action to be taken by relevant federal agencies. The recommendations are as follows:

- 1) "The Chair of EEOC should work with FCC to develop a new memorandum of understanding that includes a plan for EEOC to routinely share data with FCC regarding discrimination charges filed against broadcasters and cable and satellite television operators" (p. 37).
- 2) "The Chair of FCC should work with EEOC to develop a new memorandum of understanding that includes a plan for EEOC to routinely share data with FCC regarding discrimination charges filed against broadcasters and cable and satellite television operators" (p. 37).
- 3) "The Chair of EEOC should improve EEOC's approach to routinely identify local unions required to file an EEO-3 report to help ensure that they file such reports on the demographics of union members" (p. 38).

These recommendations, which are restricted to data collection and sharing, are consistent with the GAO's remit to "enhance the economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and credibility of the federal government." However, since the authors of the report themselves observe that "The media industry is uniquely positioned to inform and educate the public, and the content it produces can influence the way people view themselves, others, and the world around them" (p. 36), and "Given the important role the media plays [sic] in American life, the representation in its workforce of historically disadvantaged racial or ethnic groups, including Hispanics, may have implications that extend beyond the workplace" (p. 36-7), the matter seems more urgent than the slow, bureaucratic approach recommended in the report would suggest. As such, other tactics may be necessary to pressure media companies to more rapidly diversify their workforces. 🗣️

New Immigration Trends in the United States

By Marcelo E. Siles, Ph.D., and Neelima Krishnagiri

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes recent immigration trends in the United States that have been dominated by Hispanics and Asians. This paper also considers why Hispanic immigrants are sometimes viewed negatively—as an employment threat to existing workers and by some as being responsible for increased social costs, including expenditures for school and health care (Rueben and Gault, Urban Institute, 2017).

In contrast to the negative view of immigrants, this paper cites a Pew Research Center report (2020) that finds that Hispanic immigrants have made significant contributions to the economic development, cultural awareness, education level, and business development of the communities where they live. Their contributions to the agricultural sector are well documented by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA – NASS 2021).

BACKGROUND

Many waves of immigrants have arrived in the United States since the early 17th century. Initially most of them were Europeans, but since the end of World War II Hispanic and Asian immigrants began arriving in large numbers to make Hispanics a large minority racial/ethnic group currently in the country (Wikipedia). Recent forecasts by the Pew Research Center based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau predict that Asians will surpass Hispanics by 2055 as the largest minority group.

What follows is a careful review of the several immigration waves from different parts of the world to the United States since the early 1960s. We put special emphasis on Hispanic immigration and the social and economic contributions of these immigrants to the country. The recent influx of Hispanic immigrants has created many negative attitudes against them. The empirical analysis is based on secondary data from the U.S. Census Bureau and the Migration Policy Institute, which show that recent waves of immigrants resulted in an increase in the Hispanic and Asian populations, which became the fastest growing racial/ethnic groups in the U.S. We conclude by showing that the increase in the Hispanic and Asian population and the decline of the white population are changing the demographic configuration of American society.

The article “Trends in Immigration to the U.S.” from the Population Reference Bureau (PRB) maintains that immigration is widely considered to be in the national interest, since it permits individuals to better themselves as it strengthens the United States. In addition, the article presents U.S. government policies that facilitate the arrival of some immigrants and restrict certain types of immigrants. The country facilitated immigration for the first 100 years, welcoming foreigners to settle a vast territory. Starting in the 1880s, an era of qualitative immigration restrictions began as certain immigrants were barred, including prostitutes, workers with contracts that tied them to a particular employer for several years, and Chinese people. In the 1920s, quantitative restrictions or quotas set a ceiling on the number of immigrants accepted each year.

Immigration law changed in 1965 when qualitative and quantitative restrictions were maintained, but national origin preferences that favored the entry of Europeans were dropped. U.S. immigration policy began to favor the entry of foreigners who had U.S. relatives and foreigners requested by U.S. employers. During the 1970s, the origins of most immigrants changed from Europe to Latin America and Asia: Between 2000 and 2009, over three-fourths of the 10 million immigrants admitted were from Latin America and Asia (Wikipedia).

The American Immigration Council (IMC) states, “The nation has long been the beneficiary of the new energy and ingenuity that immigrants bring.” It continues by stating that 14 percent of U.S. residents are foreign-born, over half of whom are naturalized U.S. citizens. One in seven U.S. residents is an immigrant, while

one in eight residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent. The report also states that one in six U.S. workers is an immigrant, making up a vital part of the country’s labor force in a range of industries.

The Immigrant Learning Center (ILC) presents statistics about immigrants in the U.S. In 2018, there were 44 million immigrants in the United States, 86.5% of whom were U.S.-born and 13.5 percent of whom were foreign-born, according to the ILC (2020). The five largest immigrant populations are from Mexico (24.8%), India (5.9%), China (4.9%), the Philippines (4.5%), and El Salvador (3.1%). Of those, 77 percent were documented immigrants and 23 percent were undocumented. More than half (50.9%) have become U.S. citizens.

Abby Budiman from the Pew Research Center (2020) states: “The United States has more immigrants than any other country in the world. The population of immigrants is also very diverse, with just about every country in the world represented among U.S. immigrants. According to the report, the U.S. foreign-born population reached a record 44.8 million in 2018. Since 1965, when U.S. immigration laws replaced a national quota system, the number of immigrants living in the U.S. has more than quadrupled. Today immigrants account for 13.7% of the U.S. population, nearly triple the share (4.8%) in 1970. However, today’s immigrant share remains below the record 14.8 percent in 1890, when 9.2 million immigrants lived in the United States.

According to Anthony Knapp and Tiangeng Lu (2022), “The U.S. Census Bureau projects that net international migration to the United States will fully rebound in 2022 from its COVID-19 slump when it experienced some of its lowest levels in decades.” Based on U.S. Census data, the authors estimated that net international migration added more than a million people to the U.S. population between July 1, 2021 and July 1, 2022, “an indication that net migration flows to the United States are on track to return to pre-pandemic levels.”

Joel Rose, an NPR national correspondent (2023), indicated, “The immigrant population in the U.S is growing again, reaching a record high of just over 46 million. The data shows big gains in the number of Latin America and Asia, and a substantial number of new arrivals had college or post-college degrees.”

Gamboa and Acevedo (2021) report that during the past decade, Latinos accounted for more than half of the nation’s population growth, which is reflected not only in the big cities, but also in small mountain towns, Southern neighborhoods, and the Midwest’s grasslands. Latino immigrants are always looking for economic opportunities across the country.

The Pew Research Center (2023) states that the vast majority of the 60 million Hispanics who live in the United States work in education, health, and social services. Their salaries on average are low, since many of them do not have a high school degree, but the new waves of immigrants and the increase of Latinos born in the U.S. improve their employment situation.

CONFLICTING ATTITUDES TOWARD HISPANIC MIGRANTS

The report from the American Immigration Council (AIC) concludes that “Immigrants contribute billions of dollars in taxes to the U.S. economy.” It states that in 2019, immigrant-led households across the U.S. contributed \$330.7 billion in federal taxes and 161.7 billion in state and local taxes. In addition, households headed by undocumented immigrants paid an estimated \$18.9 billion in federal taxes and \$11.7 billion in state and local taxes, according to the report.

Another contribution of immigrants to the U.S. economy is their spending power, which reached \$1.3 trillion in after-tax income. They also generate tens of billions of dollars in business revenue. According to the AIC, 3.2 million immigrant business owners accounted for 22 percent of all self-employed U.S. residents in 2019 and generated \$86.3 billion in business income.

Rogelio Saenz expressed the view that the Hispanic population needs to be seen as a valuable resource for the country. The bilingual skills of Hispanics also make them a valuable resource for the U.S. business community. As of 2022, around 42.5 million individuals in the U.S. speak Spanish as their first language, accounting for 13.4% of the total population. Additionally, there are 12.2 million bilingual Spanish speakers living in the U.S. Several businesses, especially banks and insurance companies, have hired bilingual staff to serve the increasing number of people who conduct their business in Spanish.

Some researchers consider immigrants as new business and jobs creators, which promotes the economic growth of the country (Peter Dizikes, 2022) and (Cimini Kate, 2020). When immigrants have different skills than U.S.-born workers, they can complement the work of these workers, resulting in higher productivity and economic growth of the country.

In contrast to the favorable views of Hispanic immigrants, consider the alternative views.

There are several articles describing the different waves of immigrants arriving in the U.S. since the early 1600s and the benefits and problems these immigrants bring to the country. Alex Nowrasteh from the Cato Institute reports 15 common myths against immigration and explains why they are wrong. Some of these myths include: “Immigrants will take American jobs, lower wages, and especially hurt the poor.” “It is easy to immigrate here legally. Why don’t illegal immigrants just get in line?” “Immigrants abuse the welfare state.” “Immigrants increase economic inequality.” “Immigrants are a major source of crime.” The author explains carefully and extensively why all these myths are false.

A study by the National Hispanic Media Coalition (NHMC, 2012) identifies negative stereotypes about the Hispanic population and immigrants living in the country. The study reached three important conclusions: 1) Mass media and entertainment have a strong influence on non-Hispanics’ perception of the Hispanic population. 2) Non-Hispanics also have in mind a combination of positive and negative aspects about Hispanics and immigrants

but base their views more on stereotypes. In addition, 3) Hispanic characterizations on TV could diminish or exacerbate the image they have about this population.

FitzGerald et.al (2019) found that Mexicans in the U.S. face legal abuses, racial discrimination, attacks from Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE), and other violations of their civil rights. According to the U.S. Constitution, all persons living in the country have the same protection of law, regardless of their nationality or legal status. But as recent stories about the negligent treatment of migrant children in government detention centers highlight, these civil rights are not always granted to immigrants.

An article by Rev. David Maldonado, “Racismo y Latinos: el muro de la separación y el miedo (2020),” observes that the border wall represents more than a national border. The wall reflects and symbolizes the fear that many white Americans have toward Hispanic immigrants, and by extension toward other Latinos who are living in the United States.

Jessica Weiss wrote a 2017 article for UNIVISION (Hispanic TV network) reporting that this news organization has received more than 200 reports of hate and prejudice against viewers and readers, who have been victims of racial insults and harassment, intimidation, vandalism, and even aggression. The author writes that in the past few months, “Hate incidents and hate crimes have targeted Latinos around the country, in small towns and big cities, coast-to-coast.”

This paper tries to demonstrate that the steady increase in the number of Hispanics currently living in the country and the decline of the white population is creating a noticeable gap between these two racial/ethnic populations. This gap has become the reason why Hispanics, and especially new Hispanic immigrants, are becoming the target of negative connotations that are the basis for the development of an anti-immigrant sentiment among racial/ethnic majority groups.

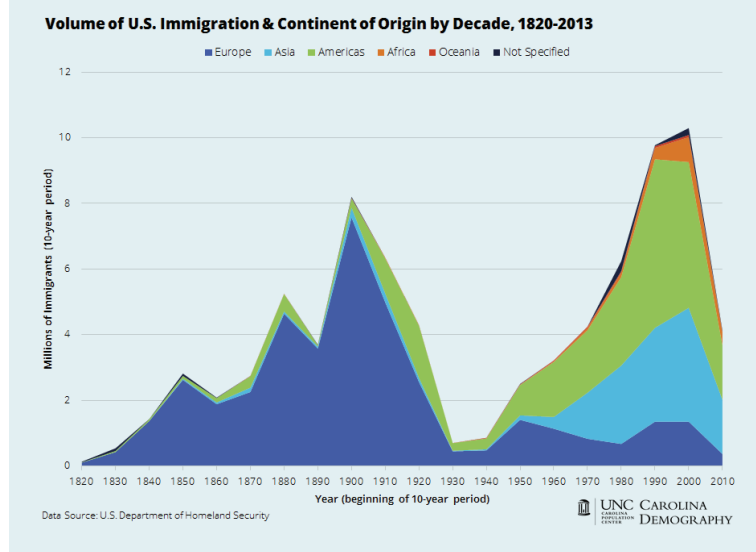
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

The United States is a country of immigrants. The first of the 13 colonies were established in Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. In 1624, Virginia became a royal colony. Later, there was an influx of European immigrants from Germany, Italy, Ireland, Austria-Hungary, the Russian empire, and Scandinavia (Wikipedia).

According to the Department of Homeland Security, approximately 79.5 million immigrants became permanent residents of the United States from 1820 to 2013. Figure 1 shows the number of immigrants to the United States by continent of origin and by decade starting in 1820. European immigrants had the largest numbers up to the end of the 19th century, reaching close to 8 million. Since the early 1900s, the total number of immigrants started to decline, reaching close to 1 million in 1930. A new wave of immigrants started to arrive in the country from 1940 to 2000, with the largest numbers of immigrants coming from the Americas and Asia. After reaching this top volume, the number of total legal immigrants declined by more than 50 percent to less than 4 million in 2010.



Figure 1. Volume of U.S. Immigration and Continent of Origin by Decade, 1820-2013



From 1820 to 1957, Germany and Italy were the top countries sending immigrants to the United States; over 14 million immigrants arrived in the United States between 1870 and 1905. In the 1870s and early 1880s, the majority of European immigrants came from Ireland, Great Britain, and Germany. By 1890, New York City alone had a German population equal to Hamburg, Germany. The demographics of immigration experienced a dramatic shift. By 1900, most who arrived in the United States emigrated from southern and eastern Europe. At that time, immigrants from Italy, Russia, and Jewish ethnic were coming in large numbers. The majority of immigrants who came to the U.S. between 1900 and 1929 came from countries in southeastern Europe such as Italy and Greece. People from Russia, Mexico, China, and Japan also immigrated.

The U.S. government issued legislation to regulate the number and origin of immigrants. The National Origins Formula of 1921 and its final form in 1924 not only restricted the number of immigrants who might enter the United States but also assigned slots according to quotas based on national origin. A complicated piece of legislation, it essentially gave preference to immigrants from Central, Northern, and Western Europe; limited the numbers from Eastern Europe and Southern Europe; and gave zero quotas to Asia (Wikipedia).

The Equal Nationality Act of 1934 allowed foreign-born children of American mothers and alien fathers who had entered the U.S. before the age of 18 and had lived in the country for five years to apply for U.S. citizenship for the first time. It also made the naturalization process quicker for the alien husbands of American wives. Until 1965, national origin quotas strictly limited immigration from the Philippines. In 1965, after revision of the immigration law, significant Filipino immigration began, totaling 1,728,000 by 2004.

At the end of World War II, “regular” immigration almost

immediately increased under the official national origins quota system, as refugees from war-torn Europe began immigrating to the U.S. From 1941 to 1950, 1,035,000 people emigrated to the U.S., including 226,000 from Germany, 139,000 from the United Kingdom, 171,000 from Canada, 60,000 from Mexico, and 57,000 from Italy. The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 finally allowed the displaced people of World War II to start immigrating. Some 200,000 Europeans and 17,000 orphans displaced by WWII were initially allowed to immigrate to the United States outside the immigration quotas. President Harry S. Truman signed the first Displaced Persons (DP) Act on June 25, 1948, allowing entry for 200,000 DPs, and he followed with the more accommodating second DP Act on June 16, 1950, which allowed entry for another 200,000. This quota, including acceptance of 55,000 Volksdeutsche, required sponsorship for all immigrants. Along with an additional quota of 200,000 granted in 1953 and others in succeeding years, a total of nearly 600,000 refugees were allowed into the country outside the quota system, second only to Israel's 650,000 (Wikipedia).

Because of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution crushed by the Soviets, 245,000 Hungarian families were admitted by 1960. From 1950 to 1960, the U.S. had 2,515,000 new immigrants, with 477,000 arriving from Germany, 185,000 from Italy, 52,000 from the Netherlands, 203,000 from the United Kingdom, 46,000 from Japan, 300,000 from Mexico, and 377,000 from Canada (Wikipedia).

The 1959 Cuban Revolution, led by Fidel Castro, drove the upper and the middle classes to exile, and 409,000 families had immigrated to the U.S. by 1970. That was facilitated by the 1966 Cuban Adjustment Act, which gave permanent resident status to Cubans who were physically present in the United States for one year if they entered after January 1, 1959 (Wikipedia).

This all changed with the passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, a by-product of the civil rights movement. The measure did not intend to stimulate immigration from Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or elsewhere in the developing world. Rather, by doing away with the race-based quota system, it expected that immigrants would come from “traditional” societies such as Italy, Greece, and Portugal, which were subject to very small quotas in the 1924 Act. The 1965 Act replaced the quotas with preferential categories based on family relationships and job skills by giving particular preference to potential immigrants with relatives in the country and with occupations deemed critical by the U.S. Department of Labor. After 1970, after an initial influx from European countries, immigrants from places like Korea, China, India, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Africa became more common (Wikipedia).

Although Hispanic and Asian immigrants had been coming to the U.S. since the 19th century, their numbers considerably increased in the past 30 years, making them the largest racial/ethnic group as a percentage of all immigrants. According to a 2000 report from the Pew Research Center, 47.6 percent of immigrants were Hispanic, while 22.5 percent came from Asian countries. In 2008, the percentage of both groups of immigrants was the same at 33.0

percent. From 2008 to 2016, the percentage of Asian immigrants was larger than the corresponding to Hispanic immigrants, representing an important shift in immigration trends. By 2016 the two immigrant groups again reached the same percentage of total immigrants at 22.5 percent. From 2016 to the present, Asians again become the largest group of immigrants to the United States.

Some reasons for European immigration included crop failures, land and job shortages, rising taxes, and famine. In contrast, for many the United States was viewed as a land of opportunity. Others were seeking personal freedom or relief from political and religious persecution.

Due to the hard economic times in the 1970s, European immigrants began to compete for the jobs traditionally reserved for the Chinese. This economic competition created dislike and even racial suspicion and hatred that resulted in anti-Chinese riots and pressure, especially in California, for the exclusion of Chinese immigrants from the United States.

Although immigrants often settled near ports of entry, a large number found their way inland. Many states, especially those with sparse populations, actively sought to attract immigrants by offering jobs or land for farming. Many immigrants wanted to move to communities established by previous settlers from their homelands (MPI, 2018).

Once they settled, immigrants were looking for work. However, there were not enough jobs, and employers often took advantage of them. Men were generally paid less than other workers, and women less than men. Social tensions were also part of the immigrant experience. They were often stereotyped and discriminated against; many immigrants suffered verbal and physical abuse because they were “different.” While large-scale immigration created many social tensions, it also produced a new vitality in the cities and states in which the immigrants settled. New immigrants helped to transform American society and culture, demonstrating that diversity and unity are the basis of national strength (MPI, 2018).

THE GROWTH OF THE HISPANIC POPULATION

While the number of European immigrants was continually decreasing, the Hispanic population in the United States experienced a noticeable increase starting in 1950 when the Bracero Program was established. Under this program, a large number of Hispanics, especially those from Puerto Rico and Mexico, arrived in the country to work in the agricultural sector. Table 1 presents the total Hispanic population living in the country at the end of each decade and is based on the official results of the U.S. decennial census. Table 1 shows the total Hispanic population living in the U.S. in each decade and the percentage increase from the previous decade. We can observe that in 1950, there were 2.3 million Hispanics; this population increased to 5.5 million in 1960, an increase of 139 percent. The Hispanic population continued to grow until 2020, when 62.1 million Hispanics were living in the United States, a net increase of 2,600 percent during a period of 70 years. If this trend

continues, according to new U.S. Census Bureau population projections, the Hispanic population is expected to reach 106 million in 2050, which would account for 29 percent of the U.S. population in 2050.

The fast growth of the Hispanic population in the United States could be explained in part by the continued flow of immigrants from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other Central and South American countries who have been arriving in the country in the last decades. Another reason is the high fertility rate of Hispanics compared to other racial/ethnic groups. In addition, the Hispanic population is much younger than the white population.

Table 1. Hispanic Population Growth from 1950 to 2020

Year	Total Hispanic Population	Percentage Increase Per Decade
1950	2.3 M	
1960	5.5 M	139.1%
1970	9.1 M	65.5%
1980	14.6 M	60.4%
1990	22.4 M	53.4%
2000	35.3 M	57.6%
2010	50.5 M	43.1%
2020	62.1 M	23.0%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – Decennial Census.

Table 2 shows the number of Hispanic legal immigrants coming to the United States in the eight decades since the 1940s and the percentage increase from the previous decade. The numbers presented are based on the U.S. decennial census. During the 1940s only 153,810 new Hispanic immigrants arrived in the U.S.; this number increased in the next decades, reaching a high of close to 4.3 million in the 1990s. From the 1940s to 1990s, the total number of Hispanic legal immigrants grew to 11,560,920, with an average increase of close to 2 million immigrants per decade. In the past two decades, 8,348,896 immigrants arrived, doubling the previous average with 4.1 million immigrants per decade.

Table 2. Total Hispanic Immigrants Change by Decade in the United States

Year	Legal Hispanic Immigrants	Percentage Increase
1941-1950	153,810	
1951-1960	559,281	263.6%
1961-1970	1,283,420	129.5%
1971-1980	1,811,801	41.2%
1981-1990	3,457,829	90.8%
1991-2000	4,294,779	24.2%
2001-2010	4,242,195	-1.2%
2011-2020	4,106,701	-3.2%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – Decennial Census.

There is no official and reliable information about the number of Hispanic illegal immigrants; some estimate that around 12 million are currently living in the country, which brings the total number of Hispanic immigrants to over 30 million. Illegal Hispanic immigrants are coming to the country crossing the southern border in relatively large numbers and creating serious problems to the border states and communities.

Among the reasons why there is a current large influx of illegal Hispanic immigrants to the country, we can cite the climate change crisis that is creating floods, droughts, and pest inflections, which makes agricultural production extremely difficult and makes it difficult for farmers to produce food for their families. According to World Vision (2022), “Poverty, violence, and food insecurity are among the top reasons families migrate north.”

ASIAN POPULATION GROWTH

In this section, we present data about the rate of growth of the Asian population in the U.S. Asians are the fastest-growing racial/ethnic group. In addition, large numbers of Asians are coming to America, surpassing the number of Hispanic immigrants.

The Asian population in the United States has steadily grown in the past 8 decades from 0.3 million in 1950 to 24 million in 2020, which represents an increase of 7,900 percent. From 2010 to 2020, the growth of the Asian population was 1.7 times higher than the growth of the Hispanic population. According to some forecasts from the U.S. Census Bureau, it is expected that by 2050 Asians will become the largest racial group in the country.

Table 3. Asian Population Growth from 1950 to 2020

Year	Total Asian Population	Percentage Increase Per Decade
1950	0.3 M	
1960	1.0 M	205.4%
1970	1.5 M	57.0%
1980	3.5 M	127.5%
1990	6.9 M	97.4%
2000	11.9 M	72.2%
2010	17.3 M	45.6%
2020	24.0 M	38.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – Decennial Census.

On the other hand, as shown in Table 4, the number of Asian immigrants has been increasing considerably in the past decades. In 1960, only 491,000 Asian immigrants arrived in the country. Their number steadily increased during the next decades, reaching 14,099,000 in 2019, resulting in close to a 2,800 percent increase over 7 decades. In the past decade, over 14 million Asians arrived in the country compared to only 4.1 million legal Hispanic immigrants, resulting in 3.4 times more Asian immigrants.

The main characteristic that differentiates Asian immigrants from other groups is that most of them come with higher educational attainment skills, which enables them to work in top positions or to create their own jobs.

Table 4. Total Asian Immigrants Change by Decade in the United States

Year	Legal Asian Immigrants	Percentage Increase
1960	491,000	
1970	825,000	68.0%
1980	2,540,000	207.9%
1990	4,979,000	96.0%
2000	8,226,000	65.2%
2010	11,284,000	37.2%
2019	14,099,000	24.9%

Source: MPI based on US Census Bureau Data, Decennial Census.

Table 5 shows the total number of “Other” immigrants, which include mainly Europeans, but also immigrants from Africa, Oceania, and other world regions and countries. As shown in Table 5, these numbers are lower compared to those presented for Hispanic and Asians. These numbers support our previous statements about the changing waves of immigrants to the U.S. from mainly Europeans, who were the first immigrants, to Hispanics and Asians, who constitute the new waves of racial/ethnic immigrants.

We can observe that these “Other” immigrants experienced a considerable increase from 1950 to 1960, with more than 900,000 new immigrants. The European refugees who left their countries due to the prevailing bad economic conditions in Europe after WWII could explain this increase. After the major influx during the 1950s, the number of these immigrants declined during the 1970s and 1980s. Between 1990 and 2010, their numbers gradually increased, decreasing after that.

Table 5. Total “Other” Immigrants in the United States

Year	Legal Other Immigrants during the decade	Percentage Increase
1950	814,925	
1960	1,743,238	113.9%
1970	1,590,971	-8.7%
1980	1,092,340	-31.3%
1990	1,141,618	4.5%
2000	2,004,926	75.6%
2010	2,637,921	31.6%
2020	2,278,208	-13.6%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – Decennial Census.

The total number of immigrants included in Table 6 shows a steady growth from 1960 to 2020. During the past 7 decades,

the total number of immigrants grew by 17.7 million, which represents a 6,467.7 percent growth of the immigrant population, although the percentage increase in the past 4 decades presents a declining trend.

Table 6. Total Immigrants in the United States: 1960 – 2020

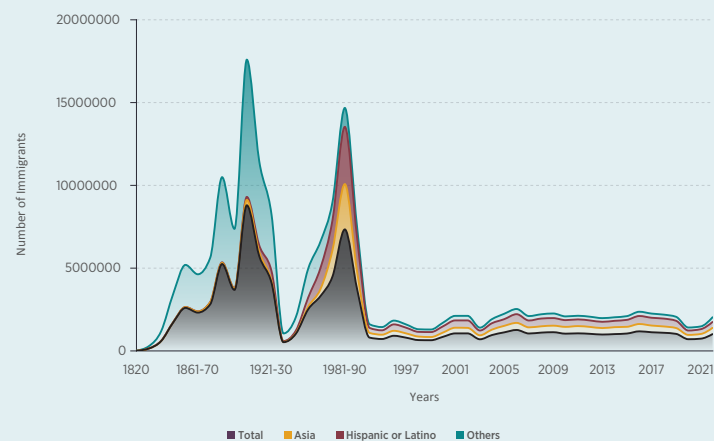
Year	Total Asian Population	Percentage Increase Per Decade
1960	2,793,519	
1970	3,699,391	32.4%
1980	5,444,141	47.2%
1990	9,578,447	75.9%
2000	14,525,705	51.6%
2010	18,164,116	25.0%
2020	20,483,909	12.8%

Source: US Bureau of the Census – Decennial Census.

Figure 2 shows immigration patterns to the United States from 1820 to 2021 for Asians, Hispanics, and Other (mainly from Europe) immigrants. This figure clearly displays how the different waves of immigrants have been changing through this period. During the initial years, “Others,” mainly Europeans, were coming in large numbers to the country up to the early 1900s. From the early 20th century until 1930, the number of immigrants declined due to restrictions imposed by the U.S. government. From 1930 to the present, Asian and Hispanic immigrants have been coming to the U.S. in large numbers.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Hispanic immigrants outnumbered Asian immigrants, but starting in 1970 to the present, Asians outnumbered other immigrants. As stated above, due to the large influx of Asian immigrants and the natural in-country growth, Asians will become the largest racial group in the United States by 2050.

Figure 2. Immigration Waves of Asian, Hispanic, and Other Immigrants



Source: Migration Policy Institute

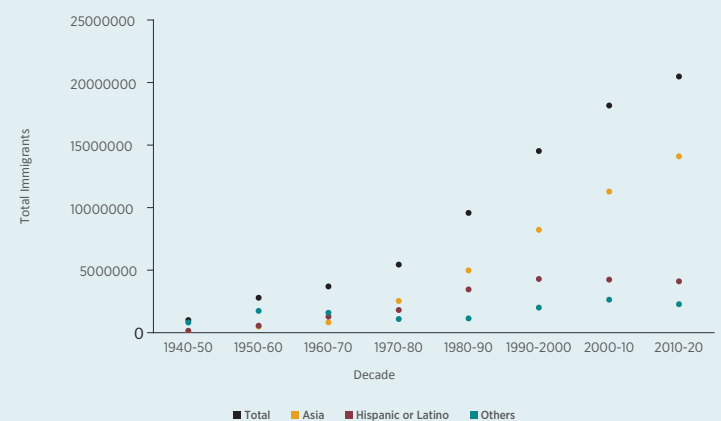
We created Figure 3 based on data used to construct Figure 2 to facilitate the analysis of the immigration trends presented in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows timelines for the numbers of Hispanic, Asian, and Other immigrants who came to the United States from 1940 to 2022, using a different scale than the one in Figure 2 to clearly display how the numbers corresponding to the different groups of immigrants were performing in the past 3 decades.

Each of these groups of immigrants has different characteristics. Asian immigrants come to the country with high levels of education. Most of them are entrepreneurs who establish new businesses and create jobs, and most of them speak and read English. According to the Population Reference Bureau (2010), “Foreign-born Latinos lag behind their respective native-born counterparts in high school graduation rates, occupational socioeconomic index, median family income, and possession of health insurance.” On the other hand, “Hispanic immigrants are significantly more likely to be entrepreneurs than the general U.S. population. More than 12 percent of all Hispanic immigrant workers worked for their own business, making them 30.6 percent more likely to have their own business than the overall U.S. population. There were more than 2.5 million Hispanic entrepreneurs in the United States in 2019” (New American Economy Research Fund, 2021).

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Asians have the highest educational level among all racial and ethnic groups, allowing them to obtain good-paying jobs and create large numbers of businesses and job opportunities, which results in one of the highest household median incomes in the nation. Hispanics, both males and females, have the highest labor participation rates, show very high work ethics, are very hard workers, and are willing to work on any type of jobs.

Asian and Hispanic immigrants have different reasons for their immigration to the United States. Asian immigration could be characterized as a “pull migration” due to their high levels of education and technical skills. On the other hand, Hispanic

Figure 3. Number of Immigrants to the United States by Decade: 1940 - 2020

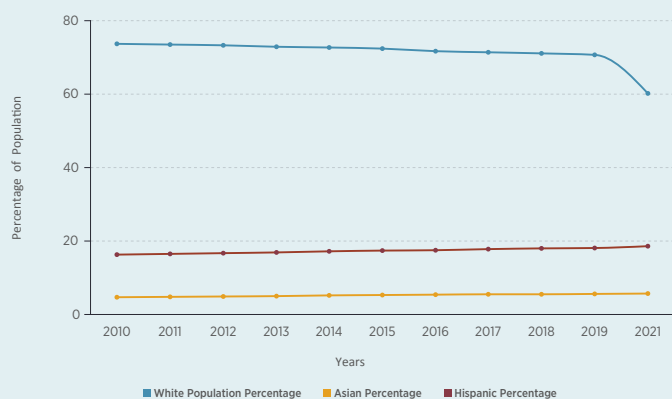


Source: U.S. Census Bureau

immigrants come to the country looking for better opportunities for their families, under a “push” migration due to the prevailing social and economic conditions in their countries.

A point in the graph represents the increase in the number of immigrants during the decade. It shows a notable increase in the number of Asians, while the number of Hispanic immigrants remains stable.

Figure 4. Population Percentages for White, Hispanic, and Asian Populations in the United States: 2010 – 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 4 displays how the percentage of the total population has been changing, increasing, or declining, for each of the three largest racial groups in the United States, during a period of 11 years from 2010 to 2021 as a percentage of the total U.S. population. The percentage of white population clearly shows a downward slope, starting in 2010 with 78 percent of the total population and reaching 60 percent in 2021, which amounts to an 18 percent decrease. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the percentage of white population in the U.S. that identifies with a single race is expected to fall below 50% by 2045. One of the main reasons for the decline in the white population is that families are having fewer children.

On the other hand, both Hispanic and Asian populations present a sustainable increase in the percentages of their populations. In 2020, the percentage of Hispanic population in the U.S. was 16 percent and it increased to 19 percent in 2021. The Hispanic population will continue increasing during the next decade and is expected to reach 21.1 percent by 2030.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 5.6 percent of all people in the United States identified as Asian in 2010. This racial group is one of the fastest growing, reaching 7% of the total U.S. population in 2021. According to a Pew Research Center analysis of the 2021 American Community Survey, 17.8 million Asian adults live in the United States. This population has roughly doubled since 2000, when 8.7 million Asian adults lived in the country.

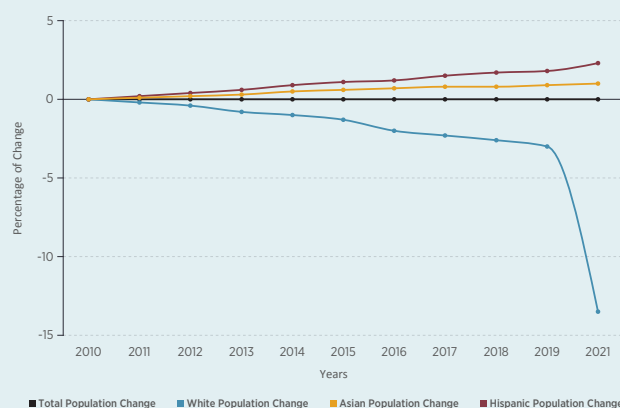
A report by William Frey from the Brookings Institution (2018) states that the nation will become “minority white” in 2045, when whites will represent 49.7 percent of the population. The percentage of Hispanics is forecast to reach 24.6, followed by Blacks (13.1 percent), Asians (7.9%), and multiracial (3.8%). Single-race, non-Hispanic Asians are projected to become the largest immigrant group in the country, surpassing Hispanics in 2055. By then, Asians are expected to make up 36% of all U.S. immigrants, while Hispanics will make up 34%, according to population projections from the Pew Research Center.

Figure 5 shows percentage change in the total population and for the three considered groups. To construct this figure, the corresponding data has been normalized with a starting point of 100% in 2010, making it easier to compare their growth relative to the initial point. We can observe an upward trend for the Hispanic population that is higher than the one for the Asian population. On the other hand, the trend corresponding to the white population is clearly negative from the beginning with a steep decline in the years since 2019.

The gap between the positive trends for the Hispanic and Asian population and the negative trend for the white population has been steadily growing. The decline of the white population described above explains why this gap is increasing. Whites will become the new minority racial group in approximately 20 years and are very concerned about the implications that their new status will have, such as loss of privileges and loss of social, economic, and political power. They also will need to reconfigure their educational and business networks and connections.

The growing gap between the declining white population and the continued growth of the Asian and Hispanic populations could explain why government officials, politicians, and some in the public are concerned. The new demographic configuration could have serious implications in the country and impact each of the racial/ethnic groups, changing their current living conditions and well-being.

Figure 5. Percentage Change in White, Hispanic, and Asian Populations in the United States: 2010 – 2021



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

“Asian immigrants are coming to the country with high levels of education and special skills, which have high demand in the government and private sectors making them very competitive in the labor market. Contrary to past beliefs, recent data shows that new legal Hispanic immigrants are arriving with higher education levels, have a high labor participation rate and work ethic.”



CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper displays the different waves of immigrants who arrived in the country since the first Europeans stepped on what is today America. We found that the initial immigration wave composed mainly of white Europeans changed in the last century after Hispanic and later Asian immigrants became the racial and ethnic groups with the largest numbers of immigrants.

The increased numbers of non-white immigrants, and the natural increase in the Asian and Hispanic population already living in the country, are causing a major shift in the demographic configuration of the country, which has started to raise concerns among those who have been part of the largest racial/ethnic group.

Asian immigrants are coming to the country with high levels of education and special skills, which have high demand in the government and private sectors, making them very competitive in the labor market. Contrary to past beliefs, recent data shows that new legal Hispanic immigrants are arriving with higher education levels, have a high labor participation rate

and work ethic. They are employed in service and professional occupations, which makes them very competitive in the labor market. The large number of immigrants from these two groups and their educational and labor skills has been generating increased antipathy from the rest of the population.

We consider that the analysis presented in this paper could become the basis for future research for the development of an empirical hypothesis that would explain why these new groups of immigrants, especially Hispanic immigrants, generate high levels of sentiments of antipathy from current majority groups.

In addition, there is a need to examine the actions that American society needs to implement in order to facilitate the integration of these immigrants into the mainstream of the United States. It is well known how close and small the current Hispanic networks are, and there is a need to expand and connect them to other prevailing networks in order to develop strong relationships that could facilitate their integration into American society and enlarge their contributions to the social and economic development of the country.

In recent years, the growth in the number of Hispanic and Asian immigrants in the United States has led to huge demographic changes in the country, resulting in considerable increases in the population of these two communities with respect to the total U.S. population. While the percentages of these populations keep increasing, the percentage of white population has been steadily declining. By 2045, whites will become a minority group, which will have huge socioeconomic implications in the country.

The social and economic contributions of Hispanic immigrants have become extremely important for the country. They play a key role in the agricultural sector as farmers and working in the agribusiness sector. The work that Hispanic farmworkers perform is extremely important for food production. Hispanic families are working hard revitalizing communities across the country, promoting education and health programs within their communities, and supporting literature and arts programs. U.S.-born Hispanics and especially recent immigrants have become national leaders in business formation and job creation. The importance and variety of the Hispanic community, and especially recent immigrants' contributions to the United States, make them an important group within the country's melting pot! 🌍

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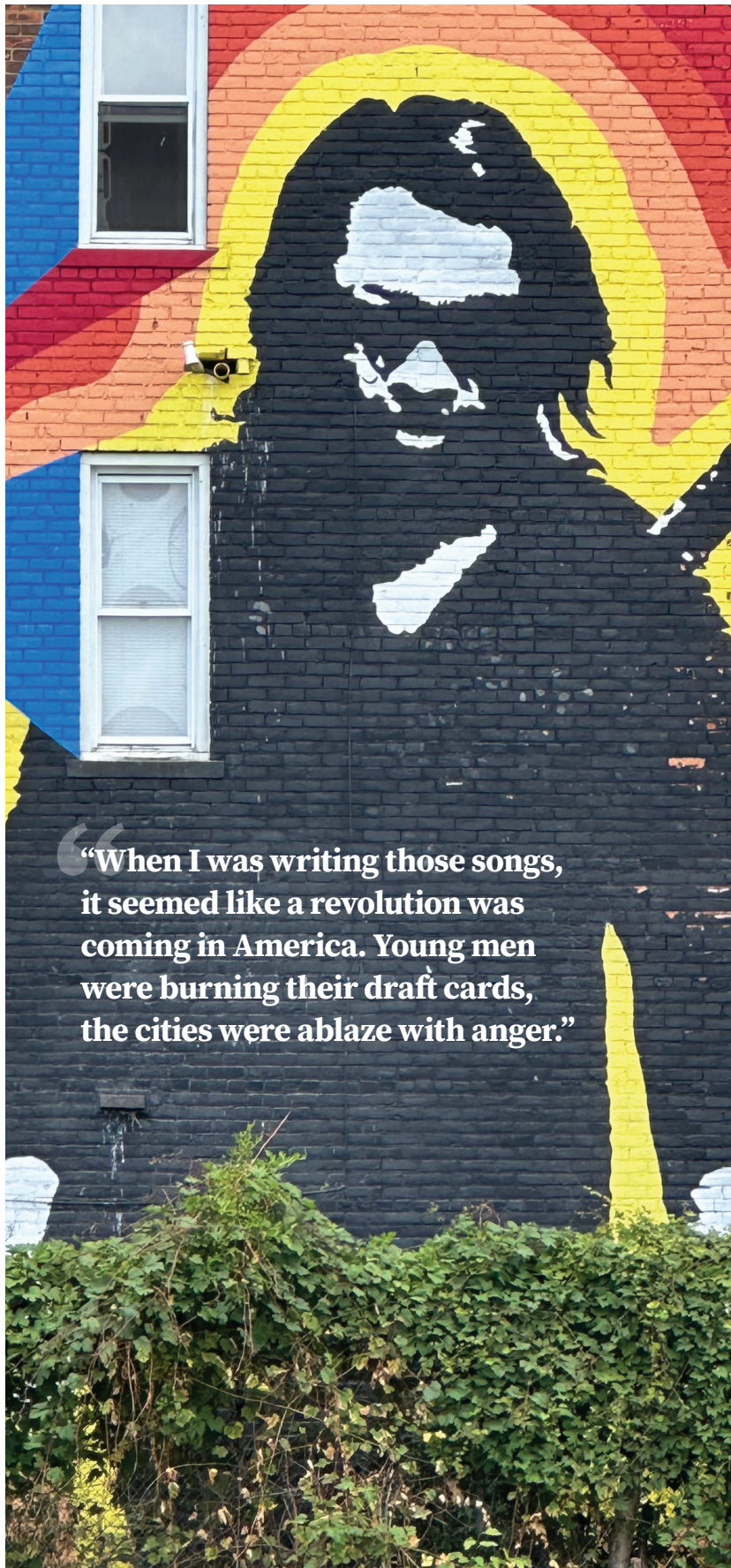
'You're Either Alive or You're Not'

A Tribute to Sixto Rodriguez (1942-2023)

By Richard Cruz Dávila, Ph.D.

In August of this year, the city of Detroit and the Mexican American community lost an icon. Born Sixto Díaz Rodríguez, the sixth child of Mexican immigrant parents who settled in Detroit in the 1920s, he is better known now simply as Rodríguez. For many years, though, he was barely known at all. Rodríguez released two albums on the Sussex label in the early 1970s, which sold poorly, leading the label to drop him before it eventually folded in 1975.





His musical career essentially over, he faded into obscurity, at least in the U.S. In Australia, on the other hand, his music found an audience that it couldn't find at home, and he toured the country twice, in 1979 and 1981. Unbeknownst to him, his albums also remained popular in South Africa, where his politically charged lyrics resonated with disaffected white youth opposed to apartheid. In 1997, his daughter Eva stumbled across a South African fan site that quickly led to a tour of the country, followed by additional tours in 2001 and 2005. U.S. reissues of his albums in 2008 and 2009 on the label Light in the Attic revived interest in his music at home. His legacy was cemented by the 2012 release of the documentary film *Searching for Sugar Man*, which recounted the yearslong search by South African fans to track down the artist rumored to have died on stage years prior. Rodriguez's lyrics, which have drawn him comparisons to Bob Dylan, among others, were undoubtedly born from the radicalism and turmoil of the 1960s, particularly in his native Detroit. As he told a reporter for *Time* magazine in 2012, "When I was writing those songs, it seemed like a revolution was coming in America. Young men were burning their draft cards, the cities were ablaze with anger." In a review of *Searching for Sugar Man* for socialist journal *Against the Current*, Bryan Palmer writes, "In Detroit this 1960s conjures up images of rebellion in the streets . . . wildcat strikes . . . and the formation of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers." This political bent is apparent in song titles like "Inner City Blues," "Rich Folks Hoax," and "This is Not a Song, It's an Outburst: Or, the Establishment Blues." The same commitments that inspired his songs later also compelled him to run, unsuccessfully, for mayor of Detroit and seats on the Detroit City Council and the Michigan House of Representatives.

His lyrics were rarely specific to the Mexican American community into which he was born, which perhaps helps to explain his music's appeal across diverse audiences. Yet, he was surely shaped by the experience of being born into a poor Mexican family and raised in an orphanage after the passing of his mother when he was only 3. At the same time, some writers speculate that his Mexican background contributed to a lack of support from the music industry in the U.S. As Tony Karon writes for *Time* magazine, "Rodriguez had taken in his stride the disappointments of his treatment at the hands of a music industry which, back in the '70s, had little enthusiasm for a politically strident working-class Latino musician whose music sounded more like Bob Dylan's 'Desolation Row' than like Santana or Tito Puente." Whether or not the racial/ethnic constraints of the music industry have actually changed much since the 1970s, thankfully Rodriguez was able to receive during his lifetime the accolades—and, through his reissues on Light in the Attic, the royalties—which he so greatly deserved. Much of the renewed attention can be attributed to the strangeness of his story, but equally important is the timelessness of his songs, which, he told Karon in 2012, "are as urgent today as when I first wrote [them]." 📖

Helping People Help the Land

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

By Brian Buehler, State Public Affairs Specialist, USDA

WHAT IS NRCS?

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is a technical agency within the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The agency was established in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service to carry out continuing programs of soil and water conservation.

In partnership with local conservation districts, NRCS is charged with promoting and supporting conservation on private lands. Working with NRCS is always a voluntary decision on the part of a landowner. The ultimate goal of NRCS is to ensure that our natural resources will be preserved for future generations.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

To get started working with NRCS, visit your local NRCS field office or conservation district. NRCS is listed in your phone book's federal government section under the Department of Agriculture. You can also find a list of NRCS Michigan field offices online at mi.nrcs.usda.gov.

A conservationist will work with you to develop a conservation plan for your operation. The conservation plan will address your conservation goals and environmental risks on your farm.

After developing a conservation plan, you and the conservationist will determine how to meet your goals. In many cases, NRCS can provide financial assistance to help you implement new conservation measures.

WHAT KIND OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DOES NRCS PROVIDE?

NRCS provides a portion of the cost of installing or implementing conservation measures through program payments. The producer receives payment after the practice has been installed or implemented. In some cases the producer may be able to receive a portion of the payment in advance.

WHAT KIND OF CONSERVATION MEASURES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE?

NRCS assists with conservation measures for all types of agricultural operations, including row crops (including high tunnel systems), livestock and dairy production, forest products and Christmas trees,

organic production, and specialty crops. Conservation measures eligible for financial assistance include animal-waste storage facilities, pest management, no-till and conservation tillage practices, windbreak planting and livestock stream crossings, to name a few.

IS EVERY LANDOWNER ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM NRCS?

To participate in any USDA financial assistance program, including commodity price supports and insurance programs, farmers must meet basic USDA eligibility requirements. These include having wetland and highly erodible land (HEL) determinations on file with USDA and meeting income eligibility requirements. If you do not have HEL and wetland determinations, NRCS can assist you with this process.


WHAT OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE DOES NRCS PROVIDE?

Soils Information - In addition to providing conservation technical and financial assistance, NRCS has extensive soils information. Soil survey maps are available for every Michigan county. You can obtain soils information from your local NRCS field office or by visiting the online Web Soil Survey at websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app.

Easement Programs - NRCS easement programs help keep agricultural land in production and protect valuable wildlife and fish habitats.

The Agricultural Land Easement Program purchases permanent or long-term development rights from landowners to keep their property in agricultural use. The easements are purchased by local land conservation organizations with match funds from NRCS.

The Wetlands Reserve Easement Program purchases long-term or permanent easements on land that was formerly wetlands. These acres are restored to wetlands to protect water quality and preserve valuable wildlife habitat.

NRCS has many other programs to develop and implement better conservation practices and to conserve and protect natural resources on a landowner, watershed, and regional scale. 

THE USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER, EMPLOYER AND LENDER.



Breaking Barriers:

Unraveling the Disparity of Fitness App Adoption Among Hispanic Adults

By Maria D. Molina, Ph.D. Assistant Professor
Department of Advertising + PR, College of Communication Arts & Sciences, MSU

Hispanics in the United States are 23% more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be obese and are at higher risk of developing hypertension and diabetes (CDC, 2015; Thomas & Allison, 2019). Additionally, according to the CDC, only 14.4% of Hispanics meet aerobic activity and muscle-strengthening guidelines (2019). Common barriers to physical activity cited by the Hispanic population include a lack of knowledge, motivation, and social support, as well as time and economic constraints. One way to help people meet the recommended aerobic and muscle-strengthening guidelines is the use of fitness applications (smartphone programs designed to help users achieve their fitness goals), which have been proven to reduce such barriers and improve general wellness.

The rapid increase in smartphone ownership around the globe, and among Hispanics in particular, makes fitness applications a great option for reducing sedentary lifestyles because these technologies can increase the delivery of health interventions on a massive scale and are more affordable. For example, while several fitness applications are free, gym memberships start at \$9.99 and can cost over \$330 a month (Sherman & SI Showcase + Pillar4, 2023). Furthermore, attending a gym often makes people nervous and can even be intimidating given lack of skill and fear of being judged by others who attend the gym on a more regular basis.



PHOTO BY LUKE CHESSER / UNSPLASH.COM

Despite the conceivable benefits of using fitness applications, engagement with fitness applications is often short-lived. Once the novelty wears off, users tend to stop using these applications. This means that fitness applications are not motivating users long-term. This trend is even more pronounced among Hispanics. While Hispanics are higher adopters of smartphones compared to the general United States population (98% vs 93%), they engage with apps including fitness applications at a much lower rate than the national average (36% vs 58%) (Arora et al., 2016). This represents a major barrier against ensuing health equity for Hispanic communities. In my research, my team and I are exploring why this trend is happening. In other words, why are Hispanics in the United States less likely to use fitness applications than the general population? And how can we build fitness applications to cater to the needs of Hispanic communities toward improved health outcomes?

As a first step, we conducted a content analysis of publicly available user profiles in a popular fitness application with the aid of computational methods of data collection. Here the goal was to assess trends in how the *general population* uses fitness applications and if the use of specific features of the technology motivates people to increase their physical activity. In this research, we found that people who engaged with other members of the community by following each other not only tracked more workouts in the application but also increased the amount of weight they lifted over time. Additionally, we found that users who followed customized programs recommended by the application based on criteria predetermined by the user (i.e., age, gender, goal) also increased the weight they lifted over time. This means that among the *general population*, regardless of their ethnicity, following customized workout programs and interacting with other members of the community motivates physical activity. However, it is important to note that most users of these fitness applications are not from minority communities. We wanted to know if these trends hold true for Hispanic adults as well.

So, this time we conducted a survey study to assess if the current state of fitness applications motivates *Hispanic adults* to engage in physical activity. We wanted to find out if the trends we found in our content analysis when looking at the general population also hold true for Hispanic adults. We found that features that allow users to interact with each other, such as sending messages, checking the activity of others, or following and being followed by other users, are a double-edged sword. While these features made Hispanic users feel a sense of relatedness and community, the same features made users feel a lack of control and competence. Additionally, unlike in our content analysis, in this survey we found that customization options centered on selecting workout activities filtered based on personal information such as gender, age, and goals, were not relevant to Hispanic users' needs and motivations. In other words, current customized programs do not motivate Hispanic adults to engage in physical activity.

Two main conclusions can be drawn from these findings. First, current user-user interactivity features of fitness applications focus on what is known as “the quantifiable self.” The quantifiable self is the ability for users to self-track measurements and achievements, which can then be shared among members of the community. While the “quantifiable self” allows users to visualize their improvement and overall health outcomes, it is also conducive to competition and social comparative tendencies that may be detrimental to one’s health. Studies have indeed found that tracking technologies can lead to negative health outcomes such as bad eating behavior, especially among members of the population who are already predisposed to such disorders. It seems that while these interactivity features increase the sense of community of Hispanic adult users, these features also make them feel in competition with others, and thus lead to disengagement and attrition. Secondly, it was interesting to find that the customization of workout routines is highly motivational when assessing the general population, but not when assessing Hispanic users specifically. It is likely that this occurs because current customization options of fitness applications do not reflect the needs of Hispanic adults. To note, most fitness applications are built and tested with the majority population in mind. A one-size-fits-all approach may lead to the needs of specific communities not being reflected and met. Thus, customization available in current fitness applications may not align with values and needs that are important for Hispanic and other minority communities. For example, current fitness applications allow users to select workouts based on criteria such as gender and age, which may not be important criteria for certain members of the population. For example, for users who lack the skill and self-competence to start a fitness program, which is a known barrier among some Hispanic adults, a better customization option may be skill level and familiarity with equipment. Likewise, fitness applications typically recommend workout plans to be completed as an individual, but certain populations (for example, families with children) may prefer workout activities that can be completed as a family. To put it simply, what we realize through this survey is that for people to want to engage with fitness applications long term and follow recommended programs, these programs should be tailored for each individual user, considering their lifestyle, culture, needs, and motivations. Otherwise, fitness applications are only targeting some members of the community, but leaving those who may benefit the most from them out of the equation.

This survey research was very insightful. We learned that current fitness applications do not align with the needs of the Hispanic population, and thus do not help motivate them to increase their physical activity. However, what are Hispanics looking for in a fitness application? We are currently conducting interviews with Hispanic adults across the United States to find this out. While we are still in the process of conducting these interviews, a few trends have already emerged. First, to prepare for these interviews, we decided to create a video where we would walk participants through a fitness application currently



on the market. Some participants were already users of fitness applications, and some were not. The goal of this video was to provide an overview of the most common features of fitness applications so that we could then ask participants what features they found useful and which ones they did not. Because we expected some participants to prefer watching the video and being interviewed in Spanish, we created two videos, one in English and one in Spanish. The process of creating the video in Spanish was insightful on its own. It turns out that some features available in the English version of the application were not available in the Spanish version! Even before conducting the interviews, and in the planning stages, we realized there were some severe equity issues in fitness applications. If your first language is not that of the majority, then you cannot benefit from all that the fitness application can offer.

Now let's talk about the interviews themselves. It is still early in the process of data collection for us to discuss specific findings, but there are already a few emerging trends. First, our participants express liking features that allow them to track their fitness, sleeping habits, and general health. However, they prefer to keep those trends to themselves rather than sharing them with other members of the community. This is because they feel communities tend to be too competitive, which does not motivate them. One participant explained her company created a closed online group for employees to engage with each other through a fitness application, however, she decided to exit the group given its competitive nature. This finding is consistent with our survey research. The focus on competition creates a negative environment that disengages users and can lead them to quit fitness applications altogether. Participants prefer to simply track their workouts through their device or fitness application but not engage with others. When asked about closed communities (where users can create groups with friends and family of their choice), participants explained that their friends and families would not be interested in joining a community or that they already connected with friends and family about fitness through face-to-face communication, thus did not feel the need for such an online community.

Secondly, in terms of customization of workout programs and recommendations, participants each have a unique need that they would like fitness applications to tackle. One participant expressed that as a mother, she would like recommended activities to be activities that she could do with her son. Another participant stated that she would like to receive notifications regarding yoga, as this is a workout that she likes and practices regularly. Yet other participants stated that due to their disability, they would prefer fitness applications had more activities that they could actually participate in. Note that when participants were asked if they would like recommendations about their community and demographics, participants rarely mentioned their identity as Hispanic, but rather as parents, people with disabilities, and residents of geographical communities. When asked specifically if they would like recommendations based on their ethnicity, participants explained they did not

necessarily see their identity as Hispanic as an important factor when considering their health and fitness. This was partially surprising, but as a Hispanic myself, it was not. Traditionally, health interventions targeted at Hispanics tend to focus on cultural aspects, often treating Hispanics as a monolith. The reality is that the Hispanic community is very diverse, as such some customization approaches often miss the mark. One of our participants stated that she often gets frustrated when systems customize her profile as a Hispanic because they often reflect stereotypical ideas of what it means to be Hispanic. Instead, she suggests customizing based on each individual's needs. This suggestion is important because while it is imperative to build health and fitness applications that meet the needs of minority communities, such as Hispanic, it is also important to remember that a) Hispanics are not a monolith, diverse opinions and values exist among members of the community, and each individual perceives their own culture differently; and b) there is much more to the identities of Hispanics than their ethnicity. Intersectionality is an important concept to define and consider. Intersectionality refers to how social categorizations like race, ethnicity, and gender are all interconnected. We as human beings have several elements that make up our identity. Certain elements and categorizations may be salient for us in some contexts, but not in other contexts.

So, the difficulty that we are facing is the following: Current customization options of fitness applications typically focus on customizing workout activities and recommendations based on age, gender, and goals. These customization options do not meet the needs of Hispanic adults. Hispanics do not find them useful or motivational. However, customizing based on culture can be perceived as stereotypical and even rude if people's relation and perception of their culture is not considered—barriers, needs, and values may be different among members of the population. And this is the problem that we are trying to solve with our research: How do we customize recommendations to motivate fitness among Hispanic adults while also considering each person's relation with their cultural identity? One proposition is cultural customization at the individual level where, instead of developing a single intervention aimed at Hispanics (i.e., users who identify as Hispanic receive the same message because of their identity as Hispanic), we can customize based on each individuals' relation to their identity. To do this type of cultural customization we need to understand 1) how each user perceives their own culture and the extent to which they identify with it; 2) specific cultural values that are and are not important to each user; and 3) other parts of their identity and lifestyle that may also be relevant to that individual (e.g., age, having children, living in a city vs. rural community, previous injuries and disabilities, type of physical activity and workouts preferred).

Cultural customization at an individual level is difficult to achieve, however, with technological advancement in machine learning, data-sensing technology, and artificial intelligence (AI), it could be feasible. In our work, we propose utilizing a chatbot that serves as a fitness coach to provide

customized recommendations to users. We propose that these recommendations should align with users' unique characteristics, as well as environmental and contextual situations. Leveraging data-sensing technology, we could utilize context-specific information such as location, weather, and calendar availability from each user to recommend activities, events, and other health-related recommendations. For example, given the location of the user, we could determine if an outside workout activity or inside activity is recommended given the weather. Additionally, the system could ask users questions during sign-up that are more in-depth than the traditional demographic questions. These questions could ask people about their lifestyle, disabilities, and preferences when it comes to physical activity. That way the system can recommend activities that are meaningful for each participant. A parent with a child could receive age-appropriate activities to engage with their children, but a single female who likes running could receive recommendations about running groups in the area. More importantly, the system could ask people about their values and motivations to further customize the user experience. Surveys asking the extent to which people identify with cultural values and worldviews already exist and can be leveraged to create a more comprehensive user profile. For example, a common misconception that exists is that because Hispanics/Latinos are a collectivist society—where social behavior is guided by the goals of the community compared to those of the individual—then community is always a primary focus among those who identify as Hispanic. Nonetheless, many variables influence the degree of collectivism of an individual, including acculturation and other personal experiences and personality traits. Furthermore, being collectivist does not mean the person never prioritizes his/her personal goals and values. Indeed, the need for uniqueness is shared by all human beings. Furthermore, community also comes with certain drawbacks, for example, social comparison and stigma. Thus, in some contexts like physical activity people may prefer to remain private. All of this is to say that the degree to which a person identifies with a worldview such as collectivism may differ, with some people identifying more strongly with it than others. Thus, we propose a system where we could assess the extent to which a person identifies with a set of important cultural values and personalize the experience accordingly, combined with data-sensing technology. For example, in our interviews one of our participants said that nutrition advice was not relevant to her given that she does not cook frequently in her household, however, receiving recommendations for activities to remain active related to her age group and status as a mother was important to her. On the other hand, another participant said he is very interested in nutrition and healthy eating, so recommendations on this topic would be especially meaningful for him. He also stated that he would appreciate it if some food recommendations included Puerto Rican food, although not all the time. While both participants identify as Hispanic, they each have different lifestyles and their identity as Hispanic has different levels of salience in relation to their physical activity and health.

While this project is still in nascent stages, we plan on applying for funding through the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, with the goal of motivating physical activity among Hispanic adults through the use of context-specific and culturally tailored fitness applications. Ultimately, our efforts are focused on health equity and reducing the barriers to physical activity among Hispanic adults. Nonetheless, as a Hispanic researcher I have two additional important goals: 1) Through my research I aim to provide new guidelines for cultural tailoring. Oftentimes current health interventions focused on Hispanics miss the mark, and, while well-meaning, treat Hispanics as a monolith and assume that one single intervention targeted to Hispanics fits every person who identifies as Hispanic equally. Through my research I want to share the richness and diversity that exists among those of us with Hispanic and Latino heritage. The beauty of being Hispanic is that while we share many values and worldviews, we are also unique. 2) Through my research I also want to inspire others of Hispanic heritage to join the academic community. We have important perspectives to share and unique ideas to test, but there are only a handful of Hispanic researchers in the intersection of communication and human-computer interaction research. Recruiting a graduate student to assist in my project was a challenge on its own. It was important for me to recruit a Hispanic student for this project, and that this student was fluent in Spanish. I was unable to find an interested student within my college and had to expand my search. I eventually met my current graduate assistant who has been a tremendous help, but it took time to find a student with the necessary skills. As the Hispanic population keeps growing in the United States, it is important that our academic community also sees more presence of Hispanic researchers. Only then can our ideas, unique perspectives, and voices be heard, and only then can we strive to really benefit our community through our research. 🌱

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Family Support, Pressure, Disengagement, and Marginalization:

Facilitating or Hindering STEM Interest and Career Participation among Diverse Women

By Elizabeth Dorrance Hall, Ph.D. Associate Professor
Department of Communication, College of Communication Arts & Sciences, MSU

The five-year project will include three mixed-methods studies including in-depth interviews and surveys designed to identify effective parental messages that facilitate STEM interest and support underrepresented women in STEM throughout their careers. Interviews with Black, Hispanic, and white STEM and non-STEM majors and a survey of parents will identify types and predictors of family STEM-communication. Black, Hispanic, and white women who work in and outside STEM will be interviewed and surveyed to identify and assess memorable messages from parents about STEM learning and understand how family STEM communication influences women's career trajectories over time. The empirical findings and educational activities of this CAREER project will illustrate and disseminate the ways in which family dynamics influence the career trajectories of Black, Hispanic, and white women at multiple life stages. Understanding the ways parents communicate about STEM besides providing support is vital to transform awareness of family environments that facilitate rather than deter STEM persistence. A strong understanding of this communication process will provide a foundation for future research to address ethnic/racial disparities in STEM education and career persistence and contribute to establishing a diverse and globally competitive workforce by facilitating the full participation of underrepresented people in STEM careers. Full participation ensures that society's most challenging issues are being addressed by an array of perspectives and skills. The education and outreach portion of the project will engage parents and K-12 students in a conversation-based card game that raises awareness of the variety of STEM career options through family discussion and educate parents about communication, support, and career trajectories in a parent workshop. ■

Dr. Elizabeth Dorrance Hall from the Department of Communication was awarded a National Science Foundation CAREER Award. Dr. Dorrance Hall is partnering with the Julian Samora Research Institute to conduct this research and share the findings. If you are interested in learning more about the project or would like to volunteer to participate in these studies, contact Dr. Dorrance Hall at edh@msu.edu.





¿Qué está pasando en el instituto?

NEW FACES



Cailyn Brookens is a junior studying human capital and society in the MSU School of Human Resources and Labor Relations (HRLR). She is also pursuing a minor in organizational leadership and hoping to continue her studies in the HRLR dual graduate program. During her time at MSU, Cailyn has been involved in the Big Sister Little Sister program and the Black Student Union. “I believe in change

management and bringing people together for a common goal,” she said. “My passion comes from community service and giving back to others.”

Currently, Cailyn is vice president of the College Advisory Board for a nonprofit organization that provides leadership to students attending 50+ colleges around the nation. Its mission is to create opportunities to intersect between college life, lived experiences, and civic engagement. We build community through the combination of sharing knowledge, developing skill sets, and networking.

JSRI SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



Vivian Morales is a first-generation Mexican American student at Michigan State University, completing her junior year. She is from the suburbs of Chicago. Vivian has always sought to participate in initiatives that help the Latino community. As an urban planning student with a particular interest in public policy, she is interested in the intersection of politics and its influence

on quality of life. Vivian not only wants to study policy’s effects on marginalized communities, but she aspires to implement change by becoming a leading academic in her field.



Erika Lee Vallejo is a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science at Michigan State University. She is also a student in the Chicano/Latino and Women’s & Gender Studies certificate programs. She obtained her B.A. in political science and philosophy (with honors) from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Vallejo studies American politics, specifically state and local

candidates and politicians, with an intersectional approach that examines race/ethnicity, gender, and class.



Teresa Rivera is a dual-major Ph.D. student in the Chicano/Latino Studies Program and Department of Sociology. Originally from Texas, she combines her previous experiences growing up in a border town with her B.A. in sociology (Texas A&M University) and M.S.W. (Ferris State University) to her work at MSU.

Teresa believes research can be used to strengthen individuals, bridge communities, advocate for others, and aid in systemic change. Her research interests include understanding the lived experiences of Latino immigrants, collective conceptualizations of trauma, the duality of resilience, and how U.S. mental health interventions can holistically support the Latino immigrant community.

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