

The Features and Roles of Rural Latinos: Cross-National Perspectives

Refugio I. Rochín

Occasional Paper No. 26

July 1997

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to show that Latinos live in rural areas and that not all Latinos fall under the typical stereotypes of being undocumented, migrant, foreign-born and seasonal workers. Rochín develops the concept of a “rural Latino” because of the lack of knowledge on rural Latinos when compared to urban Latinos. He defines a rural Latino as Latinos that not only live in small cities (under 50,000 population), small towns, open country, but also live in agricultural areas. In order to support his concept of a “rural Latino,” Rochín uses Census data to describe various facets of rural Latinos, such as where they reside, their socio-economic, self-employment patterns, and their wages from farm work. This descriptive data analysis reveals the various issues rural Latinos face in America. Some of the problems for rural Latinos are in relation to poverty, lack of work stability, non-union work environments, cheap labor, and White fear and animosity toward Latinos. This author calls for more research on rural Latinos in the Midwest, and concludes by urging future collaborations between the Julian Samora Research Institute and researchers to improve the living conditions of rural Latinos.