STATE OF THE ART

ARE MEXICANS IN THE UNITED STATES A THREAT TO THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE?

A Response to Huntington

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Abstract
The Latino population has grown significantly over the last few decades in the United States and population projections suggest that the number of Latinos will increase disproportionately, relative to other immigrant groups, in the coming decades. These trends have resulted in great concern among some who fear that Latinos, especially Mexicans, are not acculturating and assimilating into mainstream, White America. Fears of the "browning of America" and of Latinos' presumed threat to the American way of life have led some to call for measures to ensure the preservation of America's national identity. Samuel Huntington is the latest public figure to make such claims. This paper provides an overview of Huntington's claims as well as the responses that his work has drawn from supporters and critics. Using data from the 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample, we assess the validity of Huntington's claims by examining the extent to which Mexicans, the largest Latino subgroup, have integrated into the United States, basing our assessment on a variety of selected demographic, social, and economic indicators. The results suggest that Mexicans have integrated in various dimensions, with the level of integration increasing with length of residence in the United States. We conclude with a discussion of the historical and contemporary context in which Mexicans have been racialized in the United States.

Keywords: Latinos, Mexican-origin Population, Immigrants, Nativism, Racism, Demography.

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Over two decades the number of Latinos in the United States more than doubled, from 14.6 million in 1980 to 35.3 million in 2000 (Saenz 2004), in contrast to a much slower growth in the national (24%), White (8%), and African American (30%) populations during the same period. From 1980 to 2000, Latinos accounted for 20.7 million people (roughly the population size of Texas in 2000) of the 54.9 million people added to the national population. Whereas Latinos had made up only about one out of every sixteen members of the U.S. population in 1980, they comprised two of every five people *added* to the country's population between 1980 and 2000. In 2003, the U.S. Census Bureau designated Latinos as the nation's largest minority group.

The rapid growth of the Latino population has been due to various factors. First, the Latino population, especially in the case of Mexicans, is relatively young, with a substantial portion at or approaching childbearing age. For example, about 30% of Latinos are younger than fifteen years of age, as compared to only 19% of non-Latino Whites (Saenz 2004). Second, Latinas, especially Mexicans, have a higher fertility rate relative to other racial and ethnic groups. For instance, Latinas had a total fertility rate of 2.7 in 2001, compared to a rate of 1.8 among non-Latina Whites (Hamilton et al., 2003). Finally, Latinos—again, especially Mexicans—represent the largest segment of those immigrants who have entered the United States through legal means. Close to 11 million persons entered the United States as legal immigrants since 1960, 5 million of whom were Mexican (Saenz 2004). Many others have arrived as undocumented immigrants. Since 1960, about 45% of all legal entrants to the United States have been Latin Americans. Given ongoing demographic trends, all indications are that Latinos will continue to transform the demography of the United States. Population projections suggest that the Latino population could increase its share of the overall U.S. population from approximately one-eighth in 2000, to one-fifth in 2035, to one-fourth in 2055, and to one-third in 2100 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000).

These contemporary and projected population trends have helped to fuel antagonism against Latinos, especially Mexicans. Indeed, over the last several decades we have witnessed amendments calling for English to be explicitly named the official language of numerous states. In addition, over the last decade, California launched several propositions to restrict affirmative action, bilingual education, and the social services to which immigrants have access. Over the last few decades, observers such as Linda Chavez (1991) and Samuel Huntington (2004) have sounded the alarm, cautioning the general public about the extent to which Latinos, especially Mexicans, have failed to integrate into the United States. Huntington represents the latest figure to raise the specter of Latinos as a threat to the survival of American culture and U.S. institutions. We use data from the 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to assess the extent to which Mexicans, the largest Latino group, have integrated into the United States according to a variety of selected demographic, social, and economic indicators.

MEXICANS AND LATINOS: A THREAT TO THE UNITED STATES?

Throughout the history of the United States, particular racial and ethnic groups have been portrayed as *Other*. At different points in time, this treatment has been leveled against a variety of groups, including African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Irish, and Southern and Eastern Europeans. Today, Latinos have increasingly been targeted as a threat to American culture, values, and social life. Samuel Huntington (2004) has identified Latinos, especially Mexicans, as a primary threat. He sees the United States as a country developed on Anglo-Protestant, Puritan values and ideals.

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Huntington views Anglo-Protestants, who immigrated to the United States in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not as immigrants but as settlers, who "profoundly and lastingly shaped American culture, institutions, historical development, and identity" (Huntington 2004, p. 39). Huntington asserts that Latinos—whom he considers an immigrant group rather than a settler group in the United States—have failed to learn English and integrate into the United States. He suggests that it is unlikely that Latinos will change their way of life, and, given the disproportionate growth of the Latino population, Huntington fears that Latinos will impinge upon and negatively transform the Anglo-Protestant, Puritan culture, values, and way of life of the United States. Huntington even romanticizes about what life in the United States would be like if we were to completely ban immigration from Mexico:

> The centrality of Mexico for immigration and assimilation in America becomes clearly visible if one assumes that other immigration continues as it has but that somehow Mexican immigration abruptly stopped. The flow of legal immigrants would be reduced by about 160,000, and hence be closer to the levels recommended by the Jordan Commission. Illegal entries would diminish dramatically and the total number of illegal immigrants in the United States would gradually decline. Agriculture and other businesses in the southwest would be disrupted, but the wages of low-income Americans would improve. Debates over the use of Spanish and whether English should be made the official language of state and national governments would fade away. Bilingual education and the controversies it spawns would decline. So also would controversies over welfare and other benefits for immigrants. The debate over whether immigrants were an economic burden on state and federal governments would be decisively resolved in the negative. The average education and skills of the immigrants coming to America and those continuing to come would rise to levels unprecedented in American history. The inflow of immigrants would again become highly diverse, which would increase incentives for all immigrants to learn English and absorb American culture. The possibility of a de facto split between a predominantly Spanish-speaking America and English-speaking America would disappear, and with it a major threat to the culture and possible integrity of the United States (Huntington 2004, p. 243).

Huntington's claims and fears are reminiscent of the alarmist notions that have emerged periodically at different points in the history of the United States. For instance, as immigration to the United States shifted from northern and western Europe to southern and eastern Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century, nativists and racists expressed great fear over the potential weakening of American society caused by the increasing presence of groups that were regarded as morally, intellectually, and biologically inferior to the mainstream northern and western European population. For example, Madison Grant (1916) expressed fear over the weakening of the White race brought about by the potential intermingling of this population with the southern and eastern European newcomers. It was exactly such nativist and racist ideas that infused the Dillingham Commission's final report issued in 1911, which served as the basis for the implementation of quotas that drastically reduced immigration from southern and eastern Europe and essentially banned immigration from Asia.

Huntington claims that his work "deals with changes occurring in the salience and substance of American national identity," including "other-national," "subnational," and "transnational" identities (Huntington 2004, pp. xv, 5). In this context, *salience* refers to "the importance that Americans attribute to their national

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identity," and *substance* refers to "what Americans think they have in common and distinguishes them from other people" (Huntington 2004, p. xv). According to Huntington, "in the United States this fragmentation of identity manifested itself in the rise of multiculturalism and race, ethnic, and gender consciousness," and it is precisely this fragmentation of identity that Americans can halt and reverse (Huntington 2004, pp. 13, xvii). Huntington claims that this is possible if we as a society recommit

> to the Anglo-Protestant culture, traditions, and values that for three and a half centuries have been embraced by Americans of all races, ethnicities, and religions and that have been the source of their liberty, unity, power, prosperity, and moral leadership as a force for good in the world (Huntington 2004, p. xvii).

In making his claims, Huntington delineates four possible identities for the future of the United States, one of which is a country bifurcated by becoming a bilingual (English and Spanish), bicultural (Anglo and Hispanic) society. He makes reference to a successful America that would eliminate "the racial and ethnic components that historically were central to its identity and has become a multiethnic, multiracial society in which individuals are to be judged on their merits" (Huntington 2004, p. xvii). Huntington asserts that this has happened

> because of the commitment successive generations of Americans have had to the Anglo-Protestant culture and the Creed of the founding settlers. . . . That is the America I know and love. It is also, as the evidence in these pages demonstrates, the America most Americans love and want (Huntington 2004, p. xvii).

It is interesting that in the opening lines of the chapter "Components of American Identity" Huntington himself should write:

> Partial truths or half-truths are often more insidious than total falsehoods. The latter can be easily exposed for what they are by citing exceptions to their claims; hence they are less likely to be accepted as the total truth. A partial truth, on the other hand, is plausible because some evidence does support it, and it is, consequently easy to assume that it is the total truth (Huntington 2004, p. 37).

On this point, critics and supporters of Huntington's proposals concur: Both claim that the other side focuses on partial truths to substantiate their claims.

Defenders of Huntington

The *American Conservative* is a publication that defends Huntington's claims. An article by John O'Sullivan (2004) accuses *Foreign Policy* of inciting controversy by highlighting only those chapters focusing on Latinos. In response to the critiques raised against Huntington, O'Sullivan explains three ways in which they are flawed. First, "Almost all the replies simply ignored the vast wealth of social science, census, and polling data that the author laid in support of his thesis" (O'Sullivan 2004, p. 2). According to O'Sullivan, what most readers find problematic is that Huntington does not simply rely upon "the stereotype of the lazy Mexican." Echoing Huntington, O'Sullivan notes that it is "Mexicans' propensity for hard work" that has resulted in "displacement and reduced incomes of low paid native-born American workers" (O' Sullivan 2004, p. 2).

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The second way in which Huntington's critics are mistaken, according to O'Sullivan, is that they get their information wrong. Here O'Sullivan assesses arguments regarding whether immigrants identify themselves as American or adopt some other identity. In the end, he concludes that Huntington simply makes the stronger case. O'Sullivan further claims that Huntington's critics are flawed because they denounce Huntington's arguments as "poisonous" or "unabashed racism." O'Sullivan considers these critiques to be attacks against Huntington and, more broadly, against the United States:

> Above all, perhaps, by attracting the kind of denunciations that reveal a deep animus towards the United States in the attackers, Huntington's book has revealed that there is a substantial anti-American intelligentsia (and lumpen-intelligentsia) within the American nation committed to a sort of "counter-tribalism." These are the patriots of an America that does not exist—the America of multiculturalism, bilingualism, and diversity that, in President Clinton's words, "can live without a dominant European culture." They therefore hate the America that does exist as an obstacle to their dreams. And they tend to sympathize with attacks upon it—and to react against anyone who defends it.
>
> In acting as a sort of lure to draw the various tribes of "counter-tribalists" from their academic and corporate lairs into the open, Huntington has performed an important intellectual service. After *The Clash of Civilizations* and *Who Are We?* perhaps his next book should be *The Anatomy of Counter-Tribalism* (O'Sullivan 2004, p. 8).

Yet Huntington has found even stronger defenders of his position in the conservative online community. Several websites have links to various online versions of articles, excerpts, and reviews of Huntington's work.[1] One needs only to read several postings from these discussion groups to understand that a statement as subtle as "The motives of patriotism and of scholarship, however, may conflict" rarely factors into the discussion generated. Huntington's own warning—"My selection and presentation of that evidence may well be influenced by my patriotic desire to find meaning and virtue in America's past and its possible future" (Huntington 2004, p. xvii)—does not enter into these online discussion forums, where only excerpts are used as discussion points. At least one website, for the New York Young Republican Club (⟨http://www.nyyrc.com/⟩), claims that Huntington's work is *recommended* reading. This particular political organization's website was established in order to educate its readers about the Republican agenda. This website, like others, provides a forum for public discussions and networking possibilities that are structured under the guise of legitimate authority. Readers frequenting this and other websites provide gross interpretations of immigration given that people who frequent such websites tend to take part in discussions without having read the full text.[2] This can lead, for example, to a gross misunderstanding of immigration. In one forum, for instance, a post asserts that 70% of "illegals are Mexican."[3]

Huntington's Critics

Huntington's latest work generated a flurry of letters to editors (Yzaguirre 2004), commentaries (Cisneros 2004), and book reviews disputing his claims. In a book review appearing in the *New Republic*, Starr writes:

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> As an analysis of the problems of national identity and contemporary social and political trends, *Who Are We?* is always interesting and often insightful. . . . But it is also distorted in its judgments, exaggerated in its fears, and disingenuous about its intentions (Starr 2004, p. 25).

Moreover, Lowenthal (2004) says of Huntington's claims—including the prediction that Mexican-dominant areas will become "an autonomous culturally and linguistically distinct and economically self-reliant bloc within the United States . . . contemptuous of American culture"—that "the evidence Huntington offers to support these assertions is dubious at best" (Lowenthal 2004, p. 65). In another letter, Massey states:

> This is not a work of objective social science written by a dispassionate scholar. . . . It is an emotional polemic whose author, in order to make his arguments more plausible, magnifies the Anglo-Protestant roots of American culture; caricatures the relationship between culture and society; sentimentalizes and trivializes past immigrant assimilation; grants the deconstructionist movement unwarranted influence; and exaggerates several challenges to assimilation in the twenty-first century while minimizing the many positive indications of ongoing incorporation of new immigrants into American society (Massey 2004, p. 543).

In a comment appearing in *The Nation*, Shorris asserts that "in the past it was not difficult to discern the difference between xenophobia and racism. But a Harvard professor, Samuel Huntington, has muddied the waters" (Shorris 2004, p. 21). Montejano similarly chides Huntington for his "careless reasoning":

> One would think that the presentation of such a provocative argument—the identification of a potential enemy in our midst—would require some fairly strong documentation and reasoned analysis. But Huntington is content to play loosely with the facts (Montejano 2004, p. 13).

"Getting Me Wrong"

The controversy has prompted Huntington to publish several rebuttals, including one that appeared in *Foreign Affairs*. In this rebuttal, Huntington claims that his book is not primarily about immigration nor a growing Latino presence, for there are only two chapters that refer specifically to these topics. There are, however, other venues, including articles and keynote addresses where Huntington treats these issues specifically (Huntington 2000).

It is important to critically examine Huntington's arguments, for they permeate the academic and public sphere; through an exchange of ideas we come to an understanding of the complexities affecting our society. In an interview appearing in the *New York Times*, Deborah Solomon (2004) asks Huntington about the fact that 10% of the U.S. soldiers (a percentage that is lower than in the general population) serving in Iraq are Hispanic, and his reply is: "Again you are talking about people." When Solomon asks what there is besides people, he answers: "There is what people believe, what their assumptions are. I am concerned about the degree to which people—whatever their color—believe in the American creed and accept American values." Yet he also claims, "Fighting in America's wars has bolstered the claims of excluded native groups to full citizenship." Huntington argues that immigrants fighting in war "may also be torn by conflicting loyalties" (Huntington 2004, p. 197).

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Looking at Huntington's own words, one wonders whether his own conflict as a scholar and as a patriot may not have tainted his later work. In what follows, we analyze just one way in which Huntington's work leaves much to be desired.

Generalizing Widely without Empirical Data

Huntington's assertions regarding the social and economic standing of the Latino population are based largely on overgeneralizations, and he offers no substantive data in support of his claims. We agree with Montejano's assessment of Huntington's work, that Huntington exhibits "careless reasoning" and "plays loosely with the facts" (Montejano 2004, p. 13). Indeed, while Huntington occasionally acknowledges generational differences in assessing the degree to which Latinos have integrated into the United States, he consistently fails to take into account age differences across generational status groups, and he neglects to disaggregate the foreign-born on the basis of their length of time in the United States. Furthermore, in supporting his assertions on the contemporary and future conditions of Latinos, Huntington relies exclusively on data reported in the literature, rather than subjecting data to empirical analyses himself. To obtain a more accurate assessment of the extent to which Latinos have integrated into the United States, we use data from the 2000 decennial census to examine internal variations on selected demographic, social, and economic indicators among a subgroup of the Mexican-origin population, the group that accounts for approximately three-fifths of Latinos and which is Huntington's primary target.

METHODS

We use data from the 2000 5% Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) to analyze the Mexican-origin population, which consists of individuals who indicated in their census response that they were *Spanish/Hispanic/Latino* and, more specifically, *Mexican/ Mexican American/Chicano*. In order to minimize the effect of age differences across subgroups (based on nativity status and period of immigration to the United States, see below) of Mexicans, we limit the analysis to persons of from twenty-five to forty-four years of age. Using these restrictions, our sample consists of 324,833 Mexicans of from twenty-five to forty-four years of age, 175,564 of whom are male and 149,269 female. We used population weights provided in the PUMS to derive population estimates from the sample. The statistics presented below are based on these population estimates.

Comparative Categories

In order to assess internal differences within the Mexican-origin population on the selected indicators presented below, we classify Mexicans into five groups based on their nativity status and, for the foreign-born, period of U.S. entry: (1) native-born; (2) foreign-born, immigrated before 1970; (3) foreign-born, immigrated during the period from 1970 to 1979; (4) foreign-born, immigrated during the period from 1980 to 1989; and (5) foreign-born, immigrated from the period from 1990 to 2000. Unfortunately, the PUMS data do not allow us to disaggregate the native-born group into more refined generational categories. Consequently, the native-born population includes not only persons who are third and higher generation, but also the direct offspring of the foreign-born. Note also that those from the foreign-born group who immigrated before 1970 are all a part of the 1.5-generation (Rumbaut

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1997), as they came to the United States at a young age (from zero to thirteen years). However, younger members of the other three foreign-born categories (those entering the United States since 1970) are also likely to be members of the 1.5 generation. Finally, a word of caution is in order. Because the PUMS data are cross-sectional data, we are not able to determine the characteristics of Mexican immigrants who arrived during an earlier period but were no longer in this country in 2000. To the extent that emigrants are negatively selected (i.e., they have lower socioeconomic status [SES] compared to those living in the United States in 2000), the trends associated with the earlier arrivals based on the 2000 Census may be artificially positive.

We are interested in the degree to which these groups vary with respect to selected indicators broken down into eight broad demographic, social, and economic dimensions. To account for gender differences, we develop sex-specific indicators.

Geography

We use three indicators to assess the geographic distribution patterns of Mexicans. First, an index of dissimilarity (ID), based on the distribution of Mexicans and non-Latino Whites across the fifty states and the District of Columbia, is calculated by the following formula: $ID = (\Sigma|p_{mij} - p_{wj}|)/2$, where p_{mij} refers to the percentage of Mexicans (m) in subgroup i (based on the five native/period of immigration groups) and state j, while p_{wj} denotes the percentage of non-Latino Whites (w) in state j. The ID ranges from 0 to 100 and can be interpreted as the percentage of members of one ethnic group (Mexican or White) who would have to move to other states in order for the two groups to have the same relative distribution across the fifty states and the District of Columbia.

Second, we classify people into five regions based on their residence in 2000. While the U.S. Census Bureau uses four regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West), we modify these categories to account for the disproportionate concentration of Mexicans in five southwestern states. Thus, the five regions include the Southwest (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas), the Northeast, the Midwest, the South (excluding Texas), and Other West (excluding Arizona, California, Colorado, and New Mexico).

Third, in order to assess the extent to which Mexicans are clustered with coethnics, we obtain the average relative size of the Mexican population across different PUMAs (Public Use Microdata Areas) that represent a portion of a county, an entire county, or various counties containing at least 100,000 inhabitants. To illustrate, for a given subgroup of Mexicans (say, the native-born), a mean value of 30% on this variable indicates that the typical native-born Mexican lives in a PUMA where 30% of the population is Mexican.

Naturalization

We use a single indicator of naturalization based on the foreign-born population: the percentage of foreign-born Mexicans from a given group who are U.S. naturalized citizens.

Language

We classify people into three categories on the basis of the language that they speak at home and, for those who speak a language other than English at home (presumably

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Spanish), their ability to speak English: (1) monolingual English (persons who speak English at home); (2) bilingual (persons who speak Spanish at home, but who speak English "well" or "very well"); and (3) monolingual Spanish (persons who speak Spanish at home, but who speak English "not well" or "not at all"). Note that the first two categories can be aggregated to represent English fluency.

Racial Identification

We classify people into the two most common racial categories for Mexicans: (1) White, and (2) Other or Multiracial. Note that these categories are not exhaustive, as the residual consists of the racial classifications that Mexicans use less often.

Endogamy

We merge the individual-level PUMS data for husbands and wives so as to obtain couple-level data. From the couple-level data, we are able to determine the race and ethnicity of each spouse. Based on this determination, we classify Mexican husbands and wives of from twenty-five to forty-four years of age as being in either (1) endogamous marriages (both spouses are Mexican), or (2) exogamous marriages (one spouse is Mexican and the other is not). In the analysis, we focus on the percentage of persons who are married endogamously. Because the foreign-born who immigrated to the United States as adults are likely to have married abroad, it is likely that the endogamy rates of the foreign-born, especially those who immigrated more recently, are artificially high (Hwang and Saenz, 1990).

Education

We use two indicators of the educational attainment of Mexicans: (1) the percentage of persons who are high school graduates, and (2) the percentage who are college graduates.

Work

We use three indicators related to work. First, we obtain the labor force participation rate, or the percentage of persons who are in the labor force (i.e., currently employed, or else unemployed but actively seeking employment). Second, we compute the unemployment rate, i.e., the percentage of persons in the civilian labor force who are not currently employed. Finally, we classify workers into six occupational categories: (1) management, professional, and related; (2) service; (3) sales and office; (4) farming, fishing, and forestry; (5) construction, extraction, and maintenance; and (6) production, transportation, and material moving.

Economic

We use two indicators of economic status. First, we compute the average hourly wage of workers who were employed for at least 1040 hours in 1999, i.e., equivalent to at least one-half year of full-time employment or else a complete year of half-time employment. Second, we compute the poverty rate, i.e., the percentage of persons whose income fell below the poverty threshold.

The five groups (based on nativity status and period of immigration) are compared on the basis of the demographic, social, and economic indicators outlined above. The analysis is conducted separately for males and females.

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RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results of our descriptive sex-specific analysis comparing the five groups of interest (based on nativity and period of immigration) with respect to the selected indicators. As can be seen at the end of the table, the majority of Mexicans of from twenty-five to forty-four years of age are foreign-born (65% of males and 59% of females), with the greatest portion (52% of male and 47% of females) having immigrated to the United States since 1980. Note also that there are significant differences in the sex composition of the five nativity groups of interest. We compute sex ratios (number of males per one hundred females) to illustrate these variations. The native-born and the foreign-born who immigrated before 1970 (when they were in the 0–13 year age range) have fairly balanced sex distributions with ratios of 102 and 100, respectively. In contrast, males outnumber females in foreign-born groups who immigrated to the United States after 1970: the sex ratio for 1970–1979 is 128; for 1980–1989, it is 147; and for 1990–2000, it is 122.

We now turn our attention to how the different groups of interest fare on the selected demographic, social, and economic indicators. The index of dissimilarity comparing the state distributions of each Mexican group and the non-Latino White (referred to as "White") population shows significant differences. Approximately two-thirds of the foreign-born who immigrated before 1980 would have to move to other states in order to achieve the same state distribution of Whites. In contrast, however, the most recent immigrants (those who entered the country since 1990) have the lowest levels of differentiation from Whites with respect to state of residence, with an index of dissimilarity of forty-six for males and fifty-two for females. It is also clear that this group is the least likely to live in the five southwestern states where Mexicans have traditionally been concentrated, and this group is also the most likely to be living in the other four regions. Table 1 further shows that the most recent immigrants are the most likely to be living in areas with lower concentrations of Mexicans: the Mexican-origin population accounts for less than 28% of the population in the places where the most recent immigrants reside. Note that the foreign-born who immigrated to the United States before 1980 are consistently the most clustered with coethnics.

Aside from the geographic distribution dimension, however, there is an overall tendency toward a linear relation between the length of residence in the United States and the standing on social and economic indicators. For example, among the foreign-born, those who entered the United States earlier have higher rates of naturalization, with females being somewhat more likely than males to naturalize among the two earliest immigrant groups (those entering before 1980). Females who entered the country before 1970 are the most likely to have naturalized (70%), while persons (regardless of gender) who arrived since 1990 are the least likely to have become naturalized citizens (7%). Still, despite this observed association between period of arrival and naturalization rates, background analyses indicate that Mexicans continue to have relatively low levels of naturalization, as compared to other groups.

There is also a substantial relation between presence in the United States and language patterns. The majority of the U.S.-born and foreign-born males arriving before 1990 and foreign-born females arriving before 1980, are bilingual speakers (i.e., they speak Spanish at home, but speak English "well" or "very well"). On the other hand, the majority of immigrants who arrived since 1990 and female immigrants who arrived since 1980 are monolingual Spanish speakers (i.e., they speak Spanish at home and English "not well" or "not at all"). Approximately two-fifths of

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U.S.-born Mexicans are monolingual English speakers (i.e., they speak English at home). We can also assess the English fluency of Mexicans by aggregating the bilingual and monolingual English categories. Figure 1 clearly shows the association between presence in the United States and English fluency. Approximately 97% of the U.S.-born, 90% of the foreign-born who entered before 1970, and roughly 72% of those who arrived during the 1970s are fluent in English. These data impugn Huntington's assertion that Mexicans are not learning English.

The patterns are not as clear, however, in the case of racial identification, for a significant portion, ranging from 40% to 56%, chose the *Other* racial category. While this choice may reflect racial consciousness associated with a rejection of the *White* racial category, it may also reflect other factors such as a misunderstanding of the racial question, the complexities associated with racial identification, and the like (Rodríguez 2000). Nonetheless, a slight majority of the U.S.-born are the most likely to identify with the *White* racial category, while the foreign-born who immigrated during the 1970s are the most likely to select the *Other* racial category. Background analyses indicate that only a relatively small proportion of Mexicans (less than 5%) classified themselves as "Multiracial."

The choice of marital spouse tends to be associated with presence in the United States. Overall, the majority of married people of Mexican origin are endogamous (i.e., married to a person who is also of Mexican origin). However, the (U.S.) native-born people of Mexican origin are the least endogamous, with roughly 44% of females and 36% of males married to a person who is not of Mexican origin. Foreign-born males who arrived in the United States before 1970 represent the least endogamous group of immigrants, with 22% having a wife who is not Mexican. Despite the relatively high levels of endogamy among the foreign-born, especially among those entering the country since 1970, there is a clear relation between presence in the United States and endogamy rates, with those arriving earlier having lower rates of endogamy, as compared to the more recent arrivals. Note also that, among the U.S.-born, males are more likely to be married endogamously; however, among the foreign-born, females are more likely to have a Mexican-origin spouse, possibly reflecting the greater surplus of foreign-born males relative to foreign-born females.

There are also significant differences in levels of educational attainment across the groups of interest. The majority of the native-born and the foreign-born who immigrated to the United States before 1970 hold high school diplomas, with the foreign-born who arrived since 1980 being the least likely to have graduated from high school. Similar trends exist with respect to college graduation. Yet, it is clear that persons of Mexican origin continue to have much lower rates of educational attainment than other groups (Saenz 2004). One interesting trend is that, consistently across the groups of interest, females have higher levels of educational attainment than do males.

There is a clear relation between presence in the United States and both labor force participation and unemployment rate, but only among females. Among women, 71% of the native-born are in the labor force, as are two-thirds of the foreign-born who immigrated before 1970 and three-fifths of those who arrived during the 1970s. In contrast, only 43% of foreign-born women who arrived since 1990 are in the labor force. Moreover, the most recent arrivals have the highest unemployment rates, while their counterparts who entered the United States earlier have the lowest levels of unemployment. Among men, the patterns are less clear: the foreign-born who arrived in the earliest periods have the highest rate of labor force participation and the lowest rate of unemployment; those who entered the country during the 1980s have the lowest rate of labor force participation, and the native-born have a slightly higher unemployment rate.

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Table 1. Selected Social and Economic Characteristics for Mexicans 25–44 Years of Age by Nativity, Period of Entry, and Gender, 2000

Selected Characteristics by Gender	Males					Females				
		Foreign-born by Period of U.S. Entry					Foreign-born by Period of U.S. Entry			
	Native-Born	<1970	1970–79	1980–89	1990–2000	Native-Born	<1970	1970–79	1980–89	1990–2000
% by Region of Residence:										
Southwest	78.6	82.8	78.3	71.1	57.9	79.1	84.6	82.5	77.6	66.1
Northeast	1.7	1.2	1.3	3.3	5.2	1.7	1.6	0.9	2.9	4.2
Midwest	9.6	8.4	10.9	10.9	13.1	9.9	8.4	9.8	9.1	12.2
South	5.3	4.3	4.7	8.2	17.0	4.8	2.7	3.2	5.1	10.9
Other West	4.8	3.4	4.9	6.5	6.8	4.5	2.7	3.7	5.3	6.6
Index of Dissimilarity for State Distribution vs. Whites	61.0	66.8	65.1	57.3	46.0	61.3	69.5	69.1	63.4	52.3
Avg. % of Population of PUMA Mexican	29.0	34.4	34.0	30.0	24.2	29.2	35.8	36.9	33.6	27.9
% U.S. Citizens	100.0	59.8	42.4	25.5	6.8	100.0	69.9	51.7	25.3	6.6
% by Language Use:										
Monolingual English	40.2	9.1	5.0	4.5	5.1	39.9	7.4	5.1	5.5	6.0
Bilingual	56.3	79.5	68.6	51.0	30.6	57.1	83.7	65.0	40.3	23.4
Monolingual Spanish	3.5	11.5	26.4	44.5	64.3	3.0	8.9	29.9	54.2	70.6
% by Selected Racial Identification:										
White	51.5	44.6	39.5	42.0	44.3	51.6	44.2	39.0	43.3	47.6
Other	40.8	50.1	55.2	52.4	50.2	39.9	50.7	55.8	51.6	47.5
Multiracial	4.8	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.9	5.4	3.6	4.1	4.0	3.6

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% of Married Persons with a Mexican Spouse	63.6	77.8	87.0	89.9	89.9	55.6	86.7	93.7	93.1	94.4
% by Educational Attainment:										
High School Graduates	73.0	61.1	35.7	29.7	30.9	77.9	66.8	42.6	31.0	31.8
College Graduates	12.2	9.6	4.0	3.5	4.7	14.5	10.1	5.4	3.8	5.7
% in Labor Force	79.4	80.9	78.0	75.5	78.3	71.1	67.2	60.4	49.3	42.6
% Unemployed	6.8	5.9	6.5	6.6	6.0	6.5	5.4	9.4	12.7	15.3
% of Workers by Occupation:										
Management, Professional, and Related	20.3	17.3	9.8	6.0	5.3	29.7	26.3	16.7	9.4	7.6
Service	13.9	12.7	15.1	19.6	23.3	18.6	18.4	25.4	32.6	38.0
Sales and Office	17.2	13.6	10.7	7.9	6.1	41.0	37.7	27.7	18.7	16.1
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	1.7	3.0	5.8	6.9	7.4	0.9	2.3	4.0	6.8	7.5
Construction, Extraction, and Maintenance	22.5	25.2	25.9	27.3	29.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.3	1.3
Production, Transport., and Material Moving	24.5	28.2	32.8	32.4	28.0	8.9	14.5	25.3	31.3	29.7
Median Hourly Wage (1,040+ Hours in 1999)	$13.00	$14.12	$11.85	$10.00	$8.13	$11.31	$11.54	$9.23	$7.62	$6.73
% in Poverty	11.5	12.1	16.0	20.6	26.3	15.7	14.1	19.0	27.7	33.2
Total	1,311,085	57,884	422,379	993,607	961,457	1,286,164	57,823	330,415	677,814	789,392
% Distribution	35.0	1.6	11.3	26.5	25.7	40.9	1.8	10.5	21.6	25.1

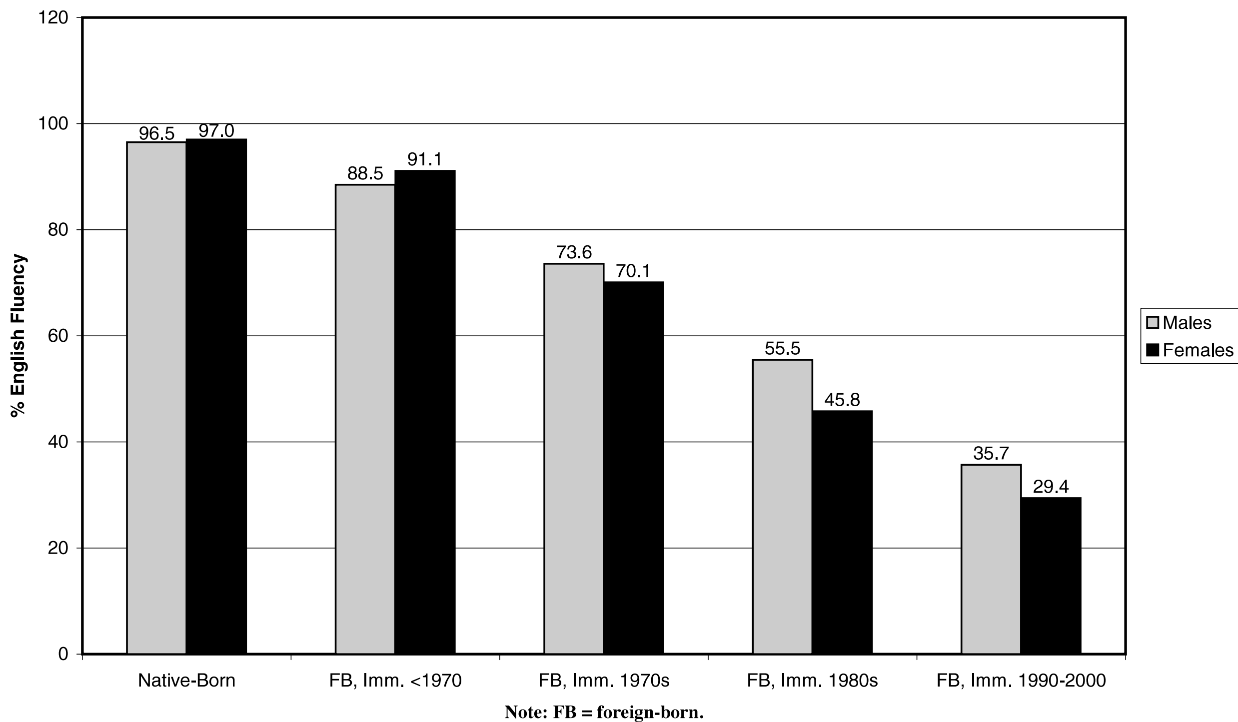

Fig. 1. Percentage of Mexicans 25–44 Years of Age Who are Fluent in English by Group Membership and Gender, 2000

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There is also a relation between presence in the United States and the type of jobs that Mexican-origin workers hold. With greater presence in the United States, Mexican-origin workers tend to be increasingly likely to hold two types of occupations (management, professional, and related; and sales and office) and progressively less likely to work in service occupations and, in the case of males, less likely to work in construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations. The patterns are less clear for the remaining two occupations (farming, fishing, and forestry; and production, transportation, and material moving).

Finally, there is a clear relation between presence of time in the United States and economic standing (average hourly wage and poverty rate). Among the foreign-born, those who immigrated to the United States earlier have higher wages and lower poverty rates than do those who arrived more recently. Note that immigrants who arrived in this country before 1970 have somewhat more favorable economic outcomes than their native-born counterparts.

Table 2 provides a summary of the results based on Table 1. Overall, there is an association between the length of time in the United States and the selected demographic, social, and economic indicators. In general, the longer people of Mexican origin have been in this country, the more favorable their social and economic standing becomes. However, some indicators—geographic distribution, racial identification, and, in the case of males, labor force participation and unemployment

Table 2. Summary of the Results of the Analysis Indicating Support for the Association between Presence in the United States and Levels on Selected Indicators

Dimensions and Indicators	Males	Females
Geographic:		
Index of Dissimilarity for State Distribution vs. Whites		
Region of Residence		
Average % of Population of PUMA Mexican		
Citizenship:		
% U.S. Naturalized Citizenship	X	X
Language:		
% Fluent in English	X	X
Racial Identification:		
% Other		
Endogamy:		
% of Married Persons with a Mexican Spouse	X	X
Educational Attainment:		
% High-School Graduates	X	X
% College Graduates	X	X
Work:		
% in Labor Force		X
% Unemployed		X
Occupational Distribution	X	X
Economic:		
Median Hourly Wage	X	X
% in Poverty	X	X

Note: Based on the results presented in Table 1.

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rates—do not follow this pattern. Still, our results cast doubt on Huntington's allegations that Mexicans fail to integrate into the United States. Our findings suggest that, in general, the native-born and foreign-born individuals who have been in the United States for a longer period of time have more favorable social and economic standing than do the foreign-born who arrived most recently. This suggests that, with the passage of time, the most recent arrivals will also improve their social and economic standing. Nevertheless, some caution must be used in interpreting the results, given the cross-sectional nature of the data and the period effects associated with the prevailing social and economic environments at the time when the foreign-born entered the country.

CONCLUSION

The changing demographics of the United States have resulted in an increasing focus on the Latino population. These demographic changes—driven disproportionately by the Mexican-origin population—have occurred as a result of a number of factors, including the group's young age structure, high fertility rates, and the high volume of immigration. The rapid growth of the Mexican-origin population has incited and fueled antagonistic attitudes and actions among those with racist and nativist views. With state-sanctioned propositions and policies targeting Latinos, specifically Mexicans, and warnings about the group's alleged failure to integrate into the White dominant social structure of the United States, heightened fear against the disintegration of the country's national identity has been incited (Brimelow 1996; Chavez 1991; Huntington 2004).

Throughout U.S. history, racial and ethnic groups have been characterized as "Other" by the dominant White population of the United States. African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, and specific groups of Europeans have been racialized and subordinated by White America. Most recently, a xenophobic gaze has focused on Latinos, specifically Mexicans, generating alarmist views of threats against America's national identity, the implication being that Latinos are unwilling to integrate into the dominant White social structure of the United States. In particular, the cautionary claims of Samuel Huntington (2004)—in the guise of scholarship but without direct empirical evidence—have been used to rationalize racist and nativist views against Latinos, especially the Mexican-origin population. The claimed threat against the dominant creed of Anglo-Protestant values and culture reveals the dominance of White systemic racist actions and sentiments against racial and ethnic groups in the United States (Feagin 2005). Huntington—supposedly legitimated by his status as a political scientist at an Ivy League institution—delineates an unsubstantiated crisis. Although he claims that the main focus of *Who We Are?* is neither Latinos nor the topic of immigration, in the United States—a country of immigrants—racist and nativist views are rationalized by appeal to Huntington's writings. Huntington thus represents White (European American) and status (Harvard professor) privilege supporting the racist machine. It is doubtful that polar opposite assertions without direct empirical evidence—whether by scholars of color or those from less prestigious institutions—would ever be published by Huntington's illustrious press.

Although typically treated as a homogeneous group, the Latino population of the United States is diverse and rooted in distinct histories and modes of incorporation. The domestic "colonization" of Mexicans by White Americans (Acuña 2000; Blauner 2001; Murguía 1975) that has placed members of the Mexican-origin population at the bottom rungs of the social, economic, and political hierarchy of the United States is

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omitted from racist and nativist dialogue concerning the maintenance of an Anglo-Protestant, Puritan culture and value system rooted in White supremacy. Huntington's widely discussed views have necessitated a number of critiques and led us to examine the nation's largest Latino subgroup, Mexicans, by analyzing selected demographic, social, and economic indicators from the 2000 decennial census.

Our findings show (with some caveats as a result of data limitations) that Huntington's claims about the unwillingness of Mexicans to integrate into the United States are dubious. Our analysis of the available data shows that, with the passage of time, Mexicans have adapted to the dominant White mainstream culture of the United States through English-language acquisition. Our findings also suggest that, over time, both native-born and foreign-born Mexican-origin individuals achieve more favorable social and economic standings in the United States. Consequently, these patterns suggest that, over time, the most recent arrivals to the country will also improve their social and economic standing in the United States. As was the case with Huntington's ancestors—though without the advantage of their White skin—Mexican immigrants today are bettering their lot with greater years of residence in the United States.

Latinos, and particularly Mexicans, have long roots in the United States. Yet they have been racialized by White America and regarded as foreigners, despite their long history in the United States. Huntington himself appears to have completely neglected (or forgotten) history: that it was Whites from the United States who invaded Mexico demographically (the settlement of Texas through land grants given to Sam Houston) and militarily (through the invasion of Mexico leading to warfare), with the result that Mexico ceded more than half of its land to the United States. Contemporary national fears of the "browning of America" have focused public debate upon the topic of undocumented migration (Santa Ana 2002). In 1986, the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) provided amnesty to undocumented migrants while also militarizing the Mexico-U.S. border (Massey et al., 2002). More recently, debates over undocumented migration to the United States have revived interest in immigration policies, along with public protests and anti-immigrant sentiment, with the focus, once again, on the Mexico-U.S. border. Moreover, controversy over the possible availability of permits for temporary workers to the United States has produced xenophobic outcry against what has been labeled by some as *amnesty legislation*. To date, the U.S. government has failed to pass comprehensive immigration legislation. False claims about Latinos, and in particular the Mexican-origin population, have impelled us to question racist and nativist arguments such as those proposed by Samuel Huntington, and they require that we revisit historical and contemporary views about immigrants of color. Ultimately, the failed enactment of comprehensive immigration legislation, and the hostility encountered by immigrants of color, is a reflection of the White racist structure of the United States and the true agenda of those who rationalize racist and nativist views under the guise of preserving the country's national identity.

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NOTES

1. ⟨http://www.nshp.org/node/view/341⟩ (accessed May 7, 2007), ⟨http://www.mediatransparency.org/personprofile.php?personID=114⟩ (accessed May 7, 2007), ⟨http://www.danieldrezner.com/archives/001120.html⟩ (accessed May 7, 2007), and ⟨http://www.beatrice.com/archives/cat_samuel_huntington.html⟩ (accessed May 7, 2007).

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2. ⟨http://www.nyyrc.com/Record/reading.html⟩
3. ⟨http://www.hispanicbusiness.com/forum/topic.asp?TOPIC_ID=1394⟩ (accessed May 7, 2007).

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