

Latinos in the Southern United States:  
Trends and Patterns\*

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The U.S. census divides the 50 U.S. states and District of Columbia into four geographic regions: the Northeast, the Midwest, the West, and the South. Latinos are present in every state and in every region and are a growing part of the ever-changing American mosaic. Their share of the population varies by region, of course and in 2015 the South accounted for 37.0% of all Latinos present in the United States, second only to the West at 40.2% and followed by 14.0% in the Northeast, and 9.2% in Midwest. The South is composed of seventeen states plus the District of Columbia, the largest number of states in any of the four regions. In addition to Washington, DC, these states include Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Latinos or Hispanics are a diverse group, identified in the census by their country or region of origin or identification. A question on Hispanic origin was first included on a 5% sample of the 1970 census, and since then it has been included on the 100% census form that goes to all U.S. households. The question has become a standard feature of the federal data statistical system, appearing on the Current Population Survey since 1971 and on the American Community Survey since 2001. Although the current version of the Latino origin question enables detailed identification by specific origin categories, here we focus on seven major groups: Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Central Americans, South Americans, and a residual Other Latino category.

The distribution of Latinos across these categories varies from region to region, state to state, and city to city. Mexicans constitute the large majority of Latinos in all regions except the Northeast, where Caribbean-origin Latinos predominate, making up slightly more than half of the total and Puerto Ricans alone comprising around 35%. In the South, Mexicans represent 60.1% of

all Latinos, followed in order by Central Americans at 9.4%, Puerto Ricans and Cubans at 8.4% each, South Americans at 7.3%, and Dominicans at 1.5%.

The diverse Other Latino category makes up the rest of the Latino population with 4.9% of the total. Among Central Americans, 83.7% come from El Salvador (21.7%), Guatemala (21.3%), or Honduras (40.7%), with another 9.7% coming from Nicaragua. Thus, more than 92% of all Central Americans in the Southern region of the United States hail from one of the frontline nations involved in the U.S. political and military intervention of the 1980s to topple the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. Among South Americans, the large majority (64%) originate in the Andean region, with 38.1% coming from Ecuador, 9.0% from Colombia, and 17.0% from Peru.

In this report we describe the demographic evolution of the South's Latino population from 1970 through 2015, drawing primarily on data from the Decennial Census and the American Community Survey, but also from the Current Population Survey. After describing trends in the number and characteristics of Latinos in the South and their distribution across the region's states and the District of Columbia, we assess trends and patterns with respect to citizenship and political participation, socioeconomic status, and residential segregation. Before turning to these data, however, we undertake a short historical digression. A distinguishing feature of the South compared to the Northeast and Midwest is that its states were once part of the Spanish colonial empire and thus contained people now considered to be Latinos long before they became part of the United States.

## **THE LATINO HERITAGE OF THE SOUTH**

Unlike Britain, which colonized lands in the Americas for the purpose of settlement, Spain engaged in conquest and colonization more for the extraction of natural resources and commodities. The bulk of Spaniards coming to the New World were soldiers, crown officials, administrators, and

priests, along with a cadre of royally chartered entrepreneurs seeking to mine precious metals or cultivate high-value products such as sugar. These agents were accompanied by a smaller coterie of artisans, craftsmen, and laborers. The sex ratio among the colonizers was skewed in favor of men with relatively few Spanish women or children (Malvido 2006).

Along with the Europeans came lethal microbes that wiped out up to 90% of indigenous peoples within a few short years after initial contact (Diamond 2005). Whereas Amerindians in more remote areas were able to survive and maintain their indigenous traditions and languages, survivors living in Spanish towns and cities intermingled socially and biologically with the colonizers (McCaa 1997). During three centuries of Spanish rule, colonial society was defined by a rigid socioeconomic and racial hierarchy, with a small number of Spaniards known as *peninsulares* at the top and just below them a somewhat larger contingent of Europeans born in the colony known as *criollos* or creoles, with indigenous peoples at the bottom of the pyramid and a slowly but steadily expanding population of racially mixed *mestizos* in-between. The descendants of people in these three groups presently living in the United States are today's Latinos.

The process of colonization in territories that are now part of the United States began in 1513, when the explorer Juan Ponce de Leon arrived in Florida to claim that peninsula for the Spanish Empire (Clark 2014). Although northern portions of Florida came under British control from 1763 to 1783, after the American Revolution Spain regained control of these lands and continued to reign there until 1821, at least in name. Spanish control in the north grew increasingly tenuous during this time, as Anglo-American settlers arrived to supplement the English-speaking communities that had formed during the decades of British rule.

Spain's hold on the region weakened in 1810, when Anglo-Americans in Florida's panhandle declared their independence as the Republic of West Florida. The new nation lasted for

all of 90 days before President James Madison annexed the erstwhile “republic” as part of the Louisiana Purchase. Although Anglo-Americans on the Atlantic Coast revolted in 1812 to proclaim the Republic of East Florida, the rebellion was quashed in 1813. Nonetheless, Spanish authority in the region continued to be undermined by U.S. military incursions in pursuit of runaway slaves. During 1817 and 1818, General Andrew Jackson led U.S. Army troops on a series of incursions into Florida to subdue escaped slaves who were seen as a threat to southern plantation owners. In 1819, Spain finally gave up and signed a treaty that ceded Florida to the United States beginning in 1821, and in 1822 Florida was organized as a territory of the United States. Florida was admitted to the union as a slave state in 1845, bringing into the growing nation some 48,000 new inhabitants, around 2% of whom would were Latino.

Louisiana was initially explored by Spanish sailors who entered the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1528, but they did not make any claims of sovereignty and in the end it was the French who ultimately claimed the vast lands of the river’s watershed, in 1628 naming the territory in honor of King Louis XIV. Despite this territorial claim, the first permanent French settlement was not established in Louisiana until 1699 (Cummins et al. 2014). Although France originally claimed riverine lands on both sides of the Mississippi, its eastern claims were never recognized by the British and in the wake of the French and Indian Wars (the Seven Years War in Europe), the French were compelled in 1763 to cede lands east of the Mississippi to the British, along with the Canadian province of Quebec.

In the same settlement, France was obliged to hand over lands west of the river to Spain and a Spanish interregnum began in Louisiana, with Spanish authorities occupying New Orleans. Although Napoleon regained control of the territory for France in 1800, he quickly sold it to the Americans in the 1803 Louisiana Purchase. Although some Spaniards had arrived and a few Cajun

French residents left during the four decades of Spanish rule, the culture and society of Louisiana remained French. Nonetheless, for a short time the inhabitants of the vast territory were Spanish subjects and when Louisiana was admitted into the union as a slave state in 1812, an unknown but likely small number of people were Latinos. Other territories acquired through the Louisiana Purchase also entered the union in quick succession, with Mississippi joining in 1817, Alabama in 1819, Missouri in 1821, and Arkansas in 1836, all entering as slave states but likely with few people of Spanish origin.

When Louisiana became a state, its western border ambiguously intersected with the province of Texas in the colony of New Spain, present day Mexico. The Spanish presence in Mexico dates to 1519, when Hernan Cortez arrived in the present State of Veracruz on the Gulf Coast (Fehrenbach 1973). From there he and his small army of soldiers made their way inland, along the way forming alliances with indigenous peoples who were subordinate to the ruling Aztecs. The Aztec capital was the city of Tenochtitlan in Mexico's central valley, from which the Aztec emperor exacted onerous tributes from subject peoples. With the help of these subordinate groups, Cortez finally succeeded in vanquishing the Aztecs in 1521, claiming their empire for Spain and constructing a new capital on the ruins of the pre-Hispanic city—today known as Mexico City.

Over the ensuing decades, Spain progressively extended its dominion outward from the new capital to reach further south into Central America and northward into what is now the United States. The first Spanish explorers reached Texas in the 1520s and moved on to explore California, Arizona, and New Mexico in the 1540s. Although these early explorers claimed the territories they surveyed for the Spanish Crown, little settlement ensued and the northern reaches of New Spain remained mostly unpopulated by Europeans during the colonial era. The exception was New Mexico, where the first Spanish settlement was established in 1598, followed by the city of Santa

Fe in 1610. Although the Spanish population of New Mexico totaled only around 800 people in 1620, that number expanded to 4,353 in 1749, 19,276 in 1800, and 28,436 in 1820, on the eve of Mexican independence (Fowler 2000).

The first Catholic mission was founded in California in 1697, with the first Spanish mission in Arizona following in 1701. Outside of these ecclesiastical outposts, the Spanish presence in these states remained tiny for many decades. They only began to be populated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Franciscan Order established 21 missions up and down the California coast, moving northward from San Diego in 1769 and ending in Sonoma in 1823 (Weber 2005). Over the same period, the colonial government in California established a series of *presidios*, or forts in San Diego (1769), San Francisco (1776), Santa Barbara (1782), and Sonoma (1834), while also chartering a series of *pueblos*, or towns, first in San Diego (1769) and then in San Francisco (1776), San Jose (1777), Los Angeles (1781), Santa Barbara (1786), and Santa Cruz (1797). Notwithstanding these settlements, the Spanish population never exceeded 10,000 during the colonial era, and Arizona's population was even smaller. Indeed, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated Arizona's white population (Anglo-American and Mexican) to be just 9,658 as of 1870, shortly after its organization as a U.S. territory.

Spanish colonial rule in the American Southwest ended in 1821 with Spain's recognition of Mexican independence. Little changed in the demography in Mexico's northern provinces during the early decades of independence. Texas had experienced little European settlement during the colonial era, and at the time of Mexican independence in 1821 the province's population numbered only around 7,000 souls, concentrated in and around the mission village of San Antonio (Texas State Historical Association 2019). In 1824, however, the government in Mexico City enacted a General Colonization Law that allowed any household head, including those from abroad, to claim

land in Texas, continuing a practice that Spanish authorities had begun to encourage European settlement (Fehrenbach 2000).

In 1822 Stephen Austin, a Virginia-born slaveholder, led a group of around 300 claimants into Texas to occupy land originally claimed by his father under a grant from Spanish colonial authorities. In 1826 a census of Austin's colony counted 1,800 persons, 443 of whom were slaves. By 1831 the population of Texas reached an estimated 20,000 persons, mostly free Anglo Americans but also including numerous African slaves. The government of Mexico, however, outlawed slavery in 1829 and in the following year ordered that all slaves be freed, an edict the Texans attempted to skirt by declaring their slaves simply to be "servants indentured for life." In response, Mexico banned further land grants to Anglo-American settlers and established presidios to monitor immigration and collect customs and tolls.

With their property in slaves threatened, in 1836 the Anglo-American settlers declared independence and went on to defeat the Mexican Army at the Battle of San Jacinto fought on April 21 of that year. At the time of its independence, the population of Texas is estimated to have been around 53,000 persons, roughly 57% Anglo Americans, 27% Indians, 7% Mexicans, and 10% slaves (Barr 1996). Despite the defeat of its army, Mexico refused to recognize the independence of the new Anglo-American republic and continued to consider it a renegade province of the Mexican Republic. An uneasy peace prevailed until 1845 when Texas petitioned for entry into the American union and was admitted as a slave state.

The annexation of land it still considered to be Mexican territory proved to be too much for authorities in Mexico City, who declared war on the United States in response. In the ensuing hostilities, the United States invaded and occupied Mexico City, compelling the Mexican government to sign the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which in 1848 permanently ceded to the



United States the current states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, plus portions of Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and Oklahoma (Haverluk 1997). The U.S. Census of 1850 reveals that as a result of the entry of Texas into the union somewhere around 7,000 former Mexicans suddenly became U.S. citizens and thus newly minted Latinos in an Anglo American nation. Nonetheless, at that point some 86% of the nation's new Latinos lived in New Mexico, which remained the only dense concentration of Latinos in U.S. territory for many years.

In California and Texas, Anglo Americans had already come to dominate demographically by 1850. According to the U.S. Census of that year, around two-thirds of California's residents were American migrants from other U.S. States, 26% were immigrants from Europe, and only 11% were Latinos. In Texas, 45% of all residents were migrants from other states, 6% were immigrants from Europe, and 27% were slaves, with just 4% being Latinos. Among Anglo-American migrants in Texas, 89% came from slave-holding states and white superiority remained the dominant racial ideology until the civil rights years of the 1960s.

Although the Latino population of Texas grew steadily in subsequent years, the border itself was little more a line a map (Massey 2016). Except for a few signposts here and there, most of the 2,000-mile border was unmarked and people along the border moved back and forth freely (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). Although census data indicate that the number of foreign-born Latinos in Texas increased by 5.7% per year between 1850 and 1900, averaging 1,373 persons per year, legal Mexican immigration recorded for the *entire* United States averaged only 274 persons per year, suggesting that most of this "immigration" was irregular. Census-based estimates suggest that about 43% of Latino population growth in Texas from 1850 to 1900 stemmed from net immigration rather than an excess of births over deaths.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, however, documented immigration from Mexico increased substantially, especially after 1907 when the United States negotiated the Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan, which curtailed the entry of Japanese workers and created labor shortages in Texas and other states of the Southwest. Legally recorded immigration from Mexico to the United States rose to an average of 23,100 persons per year from 1900 to 1930 and the net increase in the number foreign born Latinos in Texas climbed to an annual average of 6,211 per year, accounting for a third of total Latino population growth over the period. With the onset of the Great Depression in late 1929, however, Mexican workers were no longer welcome in Texas, and state and federal authorities joined together to launch a massive deportation campaign to remove them (Hoffman 1974; Balderama and Rodriguez 2006). The degree to which Mexicans were demonized as a racialized other is indicated by the fact that in 1930 the U.S. Census Bureau, for the first and only time, include "Mexican" as an option for the census question on race. In Texas, particularly, race relations were governed by the Jim Crow regime of legal segregation through the 1960s, a system in which Mexicans fell on the wrong side of the color line and were subject to systematic racial violence, up to and including lynching (Carrigan 2013; Villanueva 2017)

Census data indicate that during the 1930s Latino population growth in Texas turned negative, falling by an average of around 8,300 persons per year, with the number of foreign born Latino residents dropping by almost 11,000 per year to overwhelm any natural increase in the population. As a result, the Latino population of Texas experienced an absolute decline during the years of the Great Depression. Once the U.S. entered the Second World War, however, labor shortages north of the border prompted a return to labor recruitment under the auspices of the federally-sponsored Bracero Program (Calavita 1992).

Beginning with 4,200 workers in 1942, Bracero recruitment rose to 62,000 in 1944. Although U.S. officials sought to curtail the program after the war, at the behest of agricultural growers in Texas and California it was extended and expanded to peak at around 450,000 workers per year in the late 1950s (Massey and Pren 2012a). U.S. authorities nonetheless began to phase out the program in 1960, terminating it entirely at the end of 1964, and from 1965 through 1985 Mexican labor migration continued under undocumented auspices (Massey, Durand, and Pren 2016). From 1940 to 1970, Latino population growth in Texas averaged 3.4% or around 39,000 persons per year, though only around 8% of this expansion stemmed from net immigration given that labor migration from Mexico, both legal and undocumented, was overwhelmingly circular (Massey and Singer 1995).

From an estimated population of around 7,000 in 1850 the Latino population of Texas had risen to 1.8 million in 1970, the point at which our analysis begins. At this time, Latinos made up 18% of all Texas residents and constituted by far the largest Latino population in the South. As of 1970, Latinos in Texas comprised almost three quarters of all those present in the region; and in keeping with its history, 97 percent the Latinos in Texas were of Mexican origin. Although Castro's Revolution triggered a surge in emigration from Cuba after 1959, most of these migrants ended up in Florida where they accounted for 71% of all Latinos, compared only to 0.1% in Texas. The influx of Cubans nonetheless did provide Florida with the second largest Latino population in the South, comprising around 16% of the regional population in 1970. Outside of Texas and Florida, however, Latino residents were few and far between at that time, constituting just 8% of all Latinos in the South. Reflecting the dominance of Texas and Florida among Latinos in the South, in 1970 around 76% of all Latinos in the South were Mexican and 13% were Cuban.

## DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

Figure 1 offers a chronological overview of the Latino population of the South, which climbed from just under 2.5 million in 1970 to just under 21 million in 2015, 8.5 times its 1970 level. From 1970 to 1990 the population grew steadily at a rate of around 5% per year, increasing by around two million persons per decade during the 1970s and 1980s. Thereafter growth accelerated slightly to 5.1% per year, growing by around five million persons between 1990 and 2000 and by nearly seven million between 2000 and 2010. Figure 2 displays the increase in Latinos as a share of the region's total population. Latinos grew from 4.5% of all southerners in 1970 to 7.9% in 1990 before accelerating and rising to 11.6% in 2000 and 15.9% in 2010. The share then edged up to 17.2% in 2015, close to the nationwide Latino percentage of 17.6% in that year.

FIGURE 1 AND 2 ABOUT HERE

As already noted, the distribution of Latinos across states of the South is highly uneven. As Figure 3 clearly indicates the current distribution is dominated by Texas with a population of 10.7 million Latinos and Florida with almost 2.0 million. Falling in the range of 500,000 to 1,000,000 are Georgia at 950,000, North Carolina at 912,000, Virginia at 753,000 and Maryland at 396,000. These states are exemplars of the “New South,” experiencing growth based in metropolitan areas with post-industrial, service-based, and information-aged economies rather than relying on rural agriculture or small town manufacturing. Economically dynamic metropolitan areas in these states include Atlanta, the Research Triangle area of Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill, and the DC suburbs of Virginia and Maryland, places housing what Richard Florida (2014) has labeled the “creative economy.”

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Among states that contain between 100,000 and 500,000 Latinos, we find Oklahoma (396,000), Arkansas (208,000), South Carolina (263,000), Louisiana (229,000), Alabama (193,000), and Kentucky (146,100), states that are generally smaller and poorer than those just described, with more traditional economic structures that nonetheless have come to house significant service economies grounded in education, health, and tourism. The remaining Southern states contain fewer than 100,000 Latinos, with 86,000 in Mississippi, 85,000 in Delaware, 33,000 in Tennessee, and just 27,000 in West Virginia. Despite the rather large number of Latinos in the Washington, DC suburbs, in 2015 the District of Columbia itself contained only 71,000 Latinos.

As shown in Figure 4, Texas and Florida not only dominate the South's Latino population in absolute terms, but also lead with respect to the relative share of Latinos. As of 2015, Texas was 39.4% with Florida not far behind at 25.6%. Latinos constitute around 10% of the state populations of the District of Columbia (11.1%), Oklahoma (10.6%), and Maryland (10.1%), Delaware (9.4%), North Carolina (9.4%), and Virginia (9.3%). At the other end of the continuum with Latino shares below five percent are Alabama (4.1%), Kentucky (3.5%), Mississippi (2.9%), and finally West Virginia (1.3%), which comes in at last place whether one considers either the absolute or relative number of Latinos in the state. Just above the five percent threshold are (Arkansas (7.4%), South Carolina (5.7%), Tennessee (5.3%), and Louisiana (5.2%).

#### FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE

Although we will explore nativity and citizenship in some detail below, here we simply note that a large share of the growth in Latino populations of the south since 1970 has accrued through undocumented migration. Although data limitations preclude a detailed examination of trends in undocumented status by group and region over time, we can draw on state-level estimates of the size of the undocumented population prepared by the Pew Research Center (2019) to evaluate the

relative presence of unauthorized migrants among Latinos across the South. Figure 5 presents a bar graph showing the estimated undocumented population in Southern states divided by the total Latino population in those states as of 2016.

#### FIGURE 5 ABOUT HERE

Not all undocumented migrants are Latinos, of course, so the percentages shown in this figure are clearly overestimates of the true percentage of undocumented migrants among Latinos in the South. Across the nation, some 81% of all undocumented migrants were estimated to come from Latin America (Passel and Cohn 2018), and on average the share is probably higher in the South, though the share no doubt varies from state to state. The numbers reported in Figure 5 should be considered the *maximum possible percentage* of undocumented migrants among Latinos in different states (if all undocumented migrants were Latinos). They are presented here to offer a rough indication of the degree to which different Southern states house unauthorized Latino populations. The estimates vary from lows of 12.1%, 14.7%, and 15.0% in West Virginia, Texas, and Florida to highs of 37.5%, 41.0%, and 46.4% in Tennessee, Georgia and Maryland, respectively, with the percentage varying between 30% and 36% in Delaware, the District of Columbia, North Carolina, and Virginia, and between 20% and 30% in Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Oklahoma.

Bearing in mind that significant share of Latinos are undocumented, Figure 6 explores the relative growth of Latino populations in the South from 1970 to 2015, focusing on the growth trajectories of Texas and Florida compared with that observed for all the remaining Southern states combined. All three trend lines display a similar pattern over time, with slow growth during the period from 1970 to 1990 and more rapid growth thereafter. In Texas, for example, the Latino population grew from 1.822 million in 1970 to 4.274 million in 1990 (an increase of nearly 2.5

million persons over two decades) and then rose from 4.744 million to 9.533 million over the next two decades (an increase of nearly 4.8 million).

#### FIGURE 6 ABOUT HERE

Similarly, in Florida the Latino population grew from 387,500 in 1970 to 1.555 million in 1990 (an increase of around 1.2 million persons) but then increased from 1.555 million to 4.253 million over the next two decades (for an increase of close to 2.7 million). In the rest of the South the acceleration in Latino population growth after 1990 was even more dramatic. During the 20 years before 1990 the total Latino population outside of Texas and Florida grew by just 580,000 (rising from 195,000 to 775,000 persons), but over the next two decades it grew 3.8 million (going from 775,000 to 4.529 million persons) and in the aggregate came to surpass the Latino population of Florida. Over the entire 45-year period from 1970 to 2015, the rate of Latino population growth was 4.0% per year for Latinos in Texas, 5.8% for Latinos in Florida, and 7.4% for the rest of the South.

The rapid aggregate growth of Latinos in Southern states outside of Florida and Texas obscures sharp differentials in growth trajectories across the 15 states that make up the aggregate, which are plotted in Figure 7. In 1970 none of these states evinced a significant Latino presence, with the total varying from just 2,700 in West Virginia to 46,700 in Louisiana. In five states, growth began to accelerate between 1970 and 1990 and then rose rapidly thereafter, with the fastest growth occurring in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, and Oklahoma. The first two states, especially, stand out for their explosive post-1990 rates of Latino population growth. In Georgia the number of Latinos grew nearly 11 times between 1990 and 2015, climbing from 89,000 to 950,000 over 25 years to yield a growth rate of 9.5% per year, which ultimately brought 862,000 more Latinos into the state. In North Carolina the post-1990 growth rate was even greater at 10.4% per

year, yielding 844,000 new Latino residents as they rose from 68,000 to 913,000 persons between 1990 and 2015.

Demographically speaking, these growth rates would be impossible to achieve through natural increase alone and only came about through mass immigration. The same is true for Virginia, Maryland, and Oklahoma, where in each case the Latino population grew by a factor of nearly five and displayed post-1990 annual growth rates in excess of 6%. In Virginia the Latino population climbed from 33,000 to 754,000 persons between 1990 and 2015 whereas in Maryland the increase was from 43,000 to 573,000 and in Oklahoma from 14,600 to 396,000, yielding respective increments of 600,000, 453,000, and 312,000 Latinos to the South's population, a total of around 1.4 million persons.

In the other states, we observe little evidence of Latino population growth before 1990 with the exception of Louisiana. In that state, we observe a notable rise in the number of Latinos between 1970 and 1980 (from 47,000 to 100,000) but then a decline between 1980 and 1990 (dropping from 100,000 to 84,000), and only modest growth thereafter. The post-1990 growth rate for Latinos in Louisiana was around 4% per year, producing a total Latino population of 227,000 persons by 2015, just below the figure observed for South Carolina (262,000). In contrast to Louisiana's stop and start growth before 1990, South Carolina and also Tennessee exhibited little Latino population growth at all before 1990 and much more rapid growth thereafter, with post-1990 growth rates of 8.5% and 10.1% per year, respectively. Between 1990 and 2014 South Carolina's Latino population increased from 32,000 to 262,000 and Tennessee's climbed from 26,000 to 334,000, yielding 230,000 and 308,000 new Latino residents, respectively.

FIGURE 7 ABOUT HERE



Although post-1990 growth rates were also high in Arkansas, Alabama, and Kentucky, they applied to smaller base populations and produced smaller increments in the number of Latinos over time, and smaller Latino populations as of 2015. Among these states, Arkansas exhibited the highest post-1990 rate of Latino population growth at 9.1% per year, with the number of Latinos rising from 21,000 in 1990 to 208,000 in 2015 for a total increase of 186,000. Next was Kentucky, where the Latino population grew from 18,000 to 145,000 at an annual rate of 8.4%, followed by Alabama where the Latinos went from 24,000 to 192,000 persons, yielding an annual growth rate of 8.2%. In these states, the net increases to the South's Latino population after 1990 were 127,000 and 167,000, respectively.

Across the South, we observe the least growth in the Latino populations of Delaware, the District of Columbia, Mississippi, and West Virginia, all of which displayed small Latino population increases before 1990 in absolute terms and only modest rates of growth thereafter, in each case producing a 2015 Latino population well below 100,000 persons (with populations of just 86,000 in Mississippi, 85,000 in Delaware, 71,000 in the District of Columbia, and 27,000 in West Virginia). Compared to its small base population of Latinos in 1990, Delaware grew most rapidly at 11.6% thereafter, followed by Mississippi at 7.5%, West Virginia at 5.3% and 3.5% in the District of Columbia. Although Washington, DC displayed the lowest growth rate, it began with the highest base populations (11,400 in 1970 and 29,000 in 1990). Moreover, although the Latino population of the District itself did not grow rapidly, the surrounding metropolitan area did, as indicated by the rapid growth rates observed in Maryland and Virginia.

As already noted, the explosive growth of Latino populations in Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, as well as the rapid expansion of Latinos in South Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, Alabama, and Kentucky came about because of the entry of foreign born Latinos, either

directly from abroad or after initial arrival in some other state. With the exception of Texas, Florida, and to a lesser extent Louisiana, states in the south historically received few immigrants before 1970 and at that point in time housed tiny Latino populations. Since Latino immigrants concentrate in the labor force ages from 18 to 30, they also concentrate in the core years of childbearing, which can lead to a period-specific surge in births. Nonetheless, the lifetime fertility of among Latina women in the South is insufficient to explain the rapid growth of Latino populations from 1990 to the present (Parrado 2011).

Instead, the growth and geographic expansion of Latinos throughout the south is part of a broader shift in the spatial distribution of Latin American immigrants away from destinations in traditional receiving states such as California, Texas, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey, and into new destinations located throughout the South and Midwest (Massey and Capoferro 2008). This shift partly reflects intensification of immigration enforcement efforts along the border with California, which diverted Mexicans and Central Americans away from that state into the Sonoran Desert and through Arizona toward new destinations throughout the nation (Massey 2008; Massey, Durand, and Pren 2016). However, the new geography of immigration also reflects shifts in the U.S. economy, and particularly the construction boom in southern states during the 1990s and 2000s and the shift of food processing out of unionized cities into large assembly-line facilities located in small cities, towns, and rural areas (Kandel and Parrado 2005; Parrado and Kandel 2008, 2011).

Figure 8 confirms the relatively low fertility levels displayed by Latinas in the South by plotting the number of children born to Latinas aged 15-49 from 1970 to 2015. As can be seen, the number fell from 2.94 children per woman in the 1970 to 1.40 in 2010 before rebounding a bit to 1.51 in 2015. Although the growth of Latino populations in the South during the 1990s stemmed

from a shift in immigration patterns away from traditional destination states, the net out-migration undocumented Mexicans since 2008, along with the revival of legal temporary labor migration and the slowing of legal permanent immigration from that country (see Passel and Cohn 2018) means that moving forward, immigration will not be the driving force it once was, and the future of Latinos in the South and elsewhere will increasingly be determined by trends in fertility and the excess of births over deaths.

#### FIGURE 8 ABOUT HERE

Consistent with the foregoing decline in fertility rates, the mean age of the Latino population increased from 25.7 to 32.9 from 1970 to 2015 and the percentage of currently married dropped from a peak of 40% in 1980 to 36.1% in 2015 (see Figure 8). This downward trend was associated less with a decline in the share never-married than with a steady increase in the share separated, widowed, or divorced, which rose from 6.3% to 12.3%. From 1970 to 2000, the share of women in the South's Latino population dropped from 55.0% to 48.9%, reflecting the gender bias in labor migration from Mexico; but since then the share of women has risen to rough parity at 50.4% in 2015, again indicating the slowing of immigration from Latin America, especially undocumented immigration.

As noted already, Latinos are a heterogeneous group composed of people with origins in the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America, regions that were colonized by Spain in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. The colonial era also witnessed the arrival of African slaves to work in the plantation economies of the Caribbean. Around 18% of the 12 million people who were forcibly removed from Africa during the slave trade went to the Spanish Empire (Curtin 1972). After independence was achieved in the early 1820s, many countries encouraged European immigration as part of nation-building projects and a desire to “whiten” their populations, notably Argentina,

Brazil, and Chile but also Mexico (Telles 2004, 2018). With the end of slavery and the slave trade other countries, such as Brazil and Peru, recruited Asians as indentured workers.

This complex demographic history produced Latin American societies in which skin color varied widely and race is perceived as a continuum rather than a binary, as was more common in the United States. Given this conceptualization of race, when asked to define their racial identity on censuses and surveys, many Latinos choose identifiers indicating a racially mixed ancestry (Massey and Denton 1992). These responses were recoded as white in the 1970 U.S. Census, but in 1980 the Census Bureau changed its coding practices so that Latinos could identify themselves as being of racially diverse origins using write-in descriptors (Denton and Massey 1989). In 1990 the Census Bureau went further and reworded the race question explicitly to allow the selection of multiple races, without the need for write-in responses.

The effect of this shift in census procedures is evident in the data shown in Figure 9, which shows trends in racial self-identification among Latinos in the United States. In keeping with prevailing coding practices, we see that prior to 1990 the race of Latinos was defined primarily in dichotomous terms by the Census Bureau. In 1970, for example, 98.2% of Latinos were classified identified as white, 1.2% were categorized as black, and 0.6% were classified as being of some other race, with trivial shares being listed as Asians. This pattern of bifurcation largely continued in 1980, but in response to the addition of a multiracial reporting option the share of those reporting a mixed identity surged to 34.8% in 1990 and the share selecting a pure white identity dropped to 62.8%. Between 1990 and 2000, the share of whites dropped further to 49% and the share who listed multiple racial origins rose to 38.8%.

FIGURE 9 ABOUT HERE

Thereafter, however, the share of Latinos self-identifying as multiracial dropped, falling to 23.5% in 2010 and 20.2% in 2015, as the share claiming a white identity climbed back up to 74.0% and then 77.4%. These shifts are not the result of changes in coding procedures and are unlikely to stem from shifts in the regional origins of the Latinos. Instead, they represent real changes in self-identification within the population. The reasons for this shift toward whiteness are not entirely clear, but could possibly represent a group response to the rising tide of xenophobia, nativism, racism, and explicit anti-Latino sentiment in the nation's media and public discourse that has accelerated since the 1970s decades and come to a peak in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century (see Chavez 2001, 2008; Massey and Pren 2012b; Massey 2013, 2014).

The specific content of racially mixed identities also varies depending on the specific origin of Latino group members. For those originating in the Caribbean region (Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Puerto Rico), race tends to be perceived on a continuum from white to black (i.e. European to African) with lesser contributions from Asians and Indigenous persons. In contrast, among those tracing their origins to Mexico, Central America, and South America, race is more commonly seen as a continuum from white to brown (i.e. European to Indigenous) with small contributions from Africa and Asia (except for communities along the Caribbean coast).

Figure 10, shows trends in the origins of Latinos from 1970 to 2015. Very clearly most Latinos in the South are not from the Caribbean region. Throughout the period from 1970 to 2015, the large majority of Southern Latinos self-identified as Mexican. Nonetheless, the share of Mexicans has declined over time, falling from 65.7% in 1970 to 60.1% 2015. In contrast, the share of Caribbean Latinos did not change much over the 45 years, with the combined total of Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and Dominicans standing at 17.0% in 1970 and 18.4% in 2015. The national origins of Caribbean Latinos have shifted over time, however. From 1970 to 2015, Puerto Ricans

expanded from 3.7% to 8.4% of all Latinos while Dominicans increased from 0.2% to 1.5%. Over the same period, however, Cubans dropped from 13.0% to 8.4%. The shrinkage of the Mexican share over time thus stemmed mainly from the arrival of Central Americans and South Americans, with the former rising from 2.1% to 9.4% over the 45-year period and the latter climbing from 2.8% to 7.3%.

#### FIGURE 10 ABOUT HERE

The key role played by immigration in these shifts is evident in Figure 11, which presents trends in the percentage of immigrants who arrived in the five years prior to the census or survey (Puerto Ricans are not shown because they are native-born U.S. citizens). The surge of immigration from the Dominican Republic, Central America, and South America during this period is indicated by the large increase in recent arrivals between 1970 and 1980 and the maintenance of relatively high levels of new arrivals through 1990 and 2000. The share of Central Americans arriving in the prior five years jumped from 9.8% in 1970 to 41.7% in 1980, while the share of newly arrived South Americans increased from 13.0% to 39.1% as that for Dominicans rose from 11.7% to 26.3%. In contrast, the figure for Cubans dropped from 15.9% to 5.8% while among Mexicans it rose slightly from 1.2% to 5.5% while that for Other Latinos stayed constant at 4.7%.

#### FIGURE 11 ABOUT HERE

From 1980 to 1990 the share of recent arrivals remained high for Central Americans, dropping only from 41.7% to 38.7% while the share among South Americans fell more sharply from 39.1% to 24.0% as that for Dominicans dropped from 26.3% to 19.6%. During this time, the share of recent arrivals in other origin groups remained fairly constant at or slightly above 5%. Moving from 1990 to 2000, the percentage remained relatively high for Central and South Americans in 22.5% and 26.2%, respectively, while the share fell to 11% among Dominicans as the

percentage of new arrivals increased for Cubans and Mexicans, going from 6.1% in 1990 to 12.6% in 2000 for the former and from 5.4% to 12.7% for the latter. Since 2000 the frequency of new immigrant arrivals has moderated for all groups. As of 2015, the share of immigrants arriving in the previous five years ranged from just 2.9% among Mexicans and Other Latinos to around 11% among Central and South Americans, once again underscoring the declining importance of immigration to Latino population dynamics.

In sum, the dominance of Mexicans among Latinos in the South was mitigated after 1970 by the arrival of Central and South Americans and to a lesser extent Dominicans during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Further evidence for this interpretation is provided in Figure 12, which shows the percentage foreign born within each origin group from 1970 through 2015. Mexicans were overwhelmingly native born in both 1970 and 1980 (with respective foreign-born percentages of 13.7% and 16.5%). In contrast, the relative share of foreigners among Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans, already rather high in 1970, approached 100% in 1980. Between these two dates, the percentage foreign born rose from 49.2% to 95.5% among Central Americans, from 55.0% to 99.4% among Dominicans, and from 61.2% to 97.0% among South Americans.

#### FIGURE 12 ABOUT HERE

Thereafter, the relative share of Latinos born abroad moved downward for all three groups as births steadily increased the share comprised by native born Latinos. Nonetheless, a majority in each group remained foreign born as of 2015: 66.4% for South Americans, 61.2% for Central Americans, and 51.1% for Dominicans. For their part, Cubans began with a high foreign born percentage of 78.1% in 1970, with the share declining slowly but steadily over the next 45 years to arrive at 62.4% in 2015. In contrast, Mexicans and Other Latinos remained predominantly native

born throughout the period, with the share born abroad in 2015 being 30.0% for the former and 17.0% for the latter.

With the loss of the census question on parental birthplace after 1970, it became impossible to separate second generation immigrants from those in the third or higher generations using census data, a circumstance that was only partially mitigated by the addition of this question to the U.S. Current Population Survey in 1996. Figure 13 thus shows the generational composition of Latinos in 1970, 2000, 2010, and 2015 from census data in 1970 and CPS data in later years. The first generation includes all persons born abroad; the second generation includes those born in the United States to two foreign born parents; the 2.5 generation includes those born in the U.S. to one native-born and one-foreign born parent, and the third generation and over includes those born in the U.S. to two native-born parents.

#### FIGURE 13 ABOUT HERE

This figure confirms the story told in the prior two figures, which is that an overwhelmingly native born Latino population in the South has been steadily transformed by the arrival of new immigrants after 1970. Whereas in 1970 three-quarters of Southern Latinos were born in the United States (45.9% in the third generation, 14.1% in the 2.5 generation, and 11.5% in the second generation) by 2000 the share of native born had fallen to 60% where it has roughly remained ever since. In 2015, 39.5% of Latinos in the South were first generation immigrants, 20.3% were in the second generation, 8.1% were in the 2.5 generation, and only 23.7% were in the third or greater generation. Although the relative balance between native and foreign born Latinos changed little between 2000 and 2015, the composition of the native born has shifted away from the third generation toward the second and 2.5 generations. Thus, between 1970 and 2015 the share of Southern Latinos who were in their third or greater generation of U.S. residence dropped from



45.9% to 23.7%, underscoring again the importance of immigration to Latino population dynamics in the South.

Consistent with these trends, between 1970 and 1980 the share of Latinos speaking Spanish at home increased sharply for all groups except Other Latinos and has remained quite high over subsequent years. As shown in Figure 14, the share speaking Spanish at home ranged from 27% to 45.7% in 1970 and from 72.1% to 95.1% in 1980, except for Other Latinos where the share speaking Spanish stood only at 44.0% in 1980. As of 2015, the use of Spanish in the household remained quite common among all groups except Other Latinos, where the share using Spanish at home was just 46.8%. In contrast, among Puerto Ricans 57.4% reported speaking Spanish at home compared with 67.2% of Mexicans, 74.0% of Dominicans, and nearly 80% of Cubans, Central Americans, and South Americans. The high percentage speaking Spanish in the household is consistent with the fact that in 2015, two thirds of all Latinos in the South were first or second generation immigrants (as shown in Figure 12).

FIGURE 14 ABOUT HERE

## **TRENDS IN CITIZENSHIP AND ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION**

As one might expect given the foregoing trends, the share of U.S. citizens fell for Central Americans, South Americans, and Dominicans between 1970 and 1980 as relatively large cohorts of new immigrants arrived. In Figure 15 we see that between 1970 and 1980 the share of citizens fell from 57.8% to 29.4% among Central Americans, from 55.9% to 32.6% among Dominicans, and from 45.6% to 26.0% among South Americans. Thereafter, however, rates of citizenship rose steadily in all three cases. By 2015 the citizenship rate had risen to 81.7% among Dominicans, 70.6% among South Americans, and 58.6% among Central Americans. The share of citizens did not drop between 1970 and 1980 for Cubans but instead rose from 30.6% to 54.7% and continued to

rise steadily thereafter, reaching 78.2% in 2015. In contrast, Mexicans and Other Latinos displayed relatively high rates of citizenship throughout the period. Mexicans began with a high rate of 89.2% in 1970 before dropping to a nadir of 71.1% in 2000 before rising back to 78.2% in 2015. Other Latinos began at 66.0% in 1970 and then rose to 90.5% in 1980 and subsequently dipped slightly to 84% in 2000 before rising back to 91.5% in 2015.

#### FIGURE 15 ABOUT HERE

Whatever the trend over time, however, by 2015 a majority of Latinos across all groups were American citizens, entitling them to vote in federal and state elections. Voting, of course, requires registration, and this information is available from the November supplement to the Current Population Survey fielded by the Census Bureau in presidential election years from 1996 through 2012. As Figure 16 shows, the rate of voter registration varies widely between origin groups without out much change over time. Cubans stand out for their high rate of voter registration rates at all points in time, beginning at 51.3% in 1996, rising to 55.7% in 2000 then dropping to 51.9% in 2004 before rising to a peak of 64.2% in 2008 and ending at 58.3% in 2012. In contrast, registration rates for other groups never exceed 43.1%.

#### FIGURE 16 ABOUT HERE

In both 1996 and 2000 registration rates for these non-Cuban groups varied narrowly between 33% and 38%. Thereafter the range widened, with the spread going from ten points in 2004 and 2008 (30% to 40%) to 14 points in 2012 (29% to 43%). As of 2015, Mexicans displayed the lowest rate of voter registration at 29.1%, which is remarkable considering that in that year 78% were citizens, the same as the share among Cubans. Although Central and South Americans, Dominicans, and Puerto Ricans also had high citizenship rates their registration rates were similarly quite low, though not as low as among Mexicans. In 2015, 43.1% of Puerto Ricans were registered

to vote, followed by 39.6% among Dominicans, and 34.5% among Central and South Americans combined. Very clearly, we see considerable untapped political influence among Latinos in the South.

Once registered to vote, the next step in achieving political influence is voting, and here we see much higher rates, but again with distinct differences between origin groups that parallel those observed with respect to registration. As depicted in Figure 17, Mexicans generally evinced the lowest voting rates, which rose from 68.5% in 1996 to peak at 74.7% in 2008 before dropping back to 71.7% in 2012. As with registration rates, Cubans generally evinced the highest voting rates, though rates for Central and South Americans were also quite high and from 2004 onward were similar to those observed for Cubans.

#### FIGURE 17 ABOUT HERE

In 1996, 83.8% of Cubans who were registered also voted, compared with 78.7% of Central and South Americans; but by 2004 the gap had closed, with the latter voting at the rate of 91.7% compared with 90.7% for Cubans. From that point onward, their rates have been identical—95.1% in 2008 and 88.0% in 2012. Although Dominicans and Puerto Ricans generally fell between these two extremes their paths over time were quite different, although they ended up at the same point in 2012. Whereas the share voting among Dominicans fell from 88.7% in 1996 to 67.9% in 2004 and thereafter rose back up to 80.5%, among Puerto Ricans the share voting rose from 67.8% in 1996 to 90.7% in 2004 and then fell back to 80.5% in 2012.

### **SOCIOECONOMIC TRENDS**

As in other regions of the country, Latinos in the South made great strides in educational attainment after 1970. Turning to Figure 18, we see between 1970 and 2015 the share of Latinos aged 25 and older who lacked a high school degree dropped from 70.0% to 31.9% as the shares

completing high school, some college, and four years of college steadily rose. Although in 1970 the share completing high school was just 16.6%, the share with some college was only 7.2%, and the share of college graduates stood at 6.1%, by 2015 these figures had risen to 26.2%, 23.4% and 18.6%, respectively, meaning that more than two-thirds of all Latinos in the South had at least completed high school and 42% had completed at least some college, though only around 19% had earned a college degree.

#### FIGURE 18 ABOUT HERE

Figure 19 presents the percentage of college graduates for the different Latino origin groups from 1970 through 2015 to reveal stark differences between them. At every point in time, South Americans display the highest percentage of college degree holders. Although the percentage fell slightly from 24.3% to 22.3% between 1970 and 1980 as new immigrants entered the country in large numbers, thereafter the share steadily rose at an accelerating rate, reaching 24.8% in 1990, 30.2% in 2000, 37.8% in 2010, and 40.6% in 2015, some 13.5 points higher than the next closest group. This trajectory suggests both a high degree of positive educational selectivity among immigrants from South America as well as a high degree of educational attainment among those born in the United States.

#### FIGURE 19 ABOUT HERE

At the other end of the spectrum are Mexicans, who display the lowest percentage of college graduates at each date, beginning with just 3% in 1970. Although the relative number of college graduates rose steadily thereafter, by 2015 the percentage of Mexicans holding a college degree only stood at 12.8%, 28 points below the percentage among South Americans. Joining Mexicans at the bottom of the educational attainment hierarchy in 2015 were Central Americans, only 13.7% of whom had completed college; and rather than moving upward over time, their completion rate

generally trended downward after 1970. Between 1970 and 2000 the share of Central American college graduates fell from 17.2% to 11.6%, implying that unlike South American immigrants those from Central America are not so positively selected with respect to education. After 2000, the share of Central American college graduates did rise back up to 13.7%, but still well below where it stood in 1970 and far below that of the next highest group, Other Latinos.

With a college attainment rate of 24.1% in 2015, Other Latinos cluster tightly in a pack at that date with Puerto Ricans (26.2%), Cubans (26.2%), and Dominicans (27.1%), and unlike Central Americans their rates have generally trended upward, though with some ups and downs along the way. Thus the share of college graduates among Dominicans dropped from 20.3% to 10.3% between 1970 and 1980 before rebounding and climbing to 27.1% at the end of the period of observation. Among Other Latinos the prevalence of college graduates rose from 10.0% to 16.6% between 1970 and 1990 before declining to 11.4% in 2000 and then recovering to end at 24.1% in 2015. The trajectories were more consistently upward for Cubans and Puerto Ricans. Between 1970 and 2015, the share of college graduates among Cubans rose from 11.9% to 26.2% while among Puerto Ricans it rose from 11.6% to 26.2%.

Figure 20 continues the analysis of socioeconomic status by examining the labor force participation rates of Latino males in the South. Overall, male employment rates fell from 1970 to 2000, going from 88.4% to 73.3%, with a notable downturn between 1990 and 2000. Thereafter, the employment rate went back up to 80.7% by 2015, but still remained some 7 points below the employment rate observed in 1970. The dip in employment between 1990 and 2000 stemmed mainly from a sharp increase between the two dates in the share of males not participating in the labor force, which rose from 11.8% to 22.5%. The partial recovery in employment between 2000 and 2010 stemmed from a drop in the rate of non-labor force participation back to 14.1%. As of

2015 the unemployment rate stood at just 3.4%, though the share outside the labor force was up slightly to 15.9%.

#### FIGURE 20 ABOUT HERE

Turning to the labor force patterns of females, Figure 21 displays a very different pattern for them compared with males. Over the decades the female employment rate has steadily risen as the share outside the labor force declined (except for a small pause in the 1990s. In contrast, the female unemployment rate displayed no clear trend over time, shifting back and forth narrowly between a low of 2.4% and a high of 6.8%. Whereas the female employment rate was only 38.4% in 1970 and 59.2% were not in the labor force, by 2015 the positions had reversed: 62.3% of all Latinas were employed and just 33.4% were outside the labor force.

#### FIGURE 21 ABOUT HERE

Thus the main labor force trend for Latinos in the South has been a shift toward higher female employment rates and lower male employment rates over time. Against these larger structural trends in the labor market, economic cycles have functioned to raise and lower the employment rate through their influence on unemployment. Figure 22 reveals the influence of the economic cycle more clearly and at the same time underscores intergroup differences in vulnerability to joblessness by focusing on trends in the male unemployment rate by national origin. The effects of the early 1990s recession and the Great Recession of the late 2000s are immediately apparent, as evidenced by the sharp upturns around 1990 and 2010.

#### FIGURE 22 ABOUT HERE

Across all groups, unemployment rates were very low in 1970, ranging from 0.0% to 2.0%, (though the zero rate should be interpreted with caution owing to the small sample size among Dominicans). Unemployment increased somewhat in 1980, but rates generally remained quite low

(ranging from 2.6% to 4.2% except among Dominicans whose rate was 5.7%—but again this volatility likely reflects small sample sizes). Between 1980 and 1990, unemployment for all groups rose, with the Mexican rate climbing from 4.2% to 7.3%, Other Latinos rising from 3.8% to 6.5%, Central Americans from 3.6% to 5.5%, Puerto Ricans from 3.9% to 5.2%, Cubans from 3.4% to 4.6%, and South Americans from 2.6% to 4.2%. Ironically, after displaying the greatest increase from 1970 to 1980 Dominicans evinced the least change between 1980 and 1990 (rising marginally from 5.7% to 5.8%), though once again the small sample size undermines the reliability of the estimates).

During the economic boom of the 1990s, male unemployment rates fell and by 2000 ranged from 3.1% to 4.7%. After a slight downturn just after the turn of the millennium, economic growth resumed only to give way to the Great Recession in late 2007 and 2008, leading to a spike in unemployment not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. However, whereas Mexicans and Other Latinos displayed the greatest upturn in unemployment in the early 1990s recession, they experienced the least during the Great Recession of the late 2000s. The increase was just 4.4% in 2000 to 6.4% in 2010 for Mexicans and from 4.7 to 6.4% for Other Latinos. The greatest increase in joblessness was among Dominicans, whose male unemployment rate rocketed from 3.2% to 10.7% (though the usual caveat about sample size applies), and among Cubans the shift was from 3.7% to 10.1%. Rates for Puerto Ricans, Central Americans, and South Americans fell in between the marks set by Mexicans and Other Latinos at the bottom and Cubans and Dominicans at the top, with respective 2015 unemployment rates of 8.5%, 8.1% and 7.3%. By 2015, unemployment rates had fallen back to levels customarily associated with a full employment economy, ranging from 2.7% (Central Americans) to 4.3% (Puerto Ricans).

Figure 23 repeats the unemployment analysis for females in the Latino population. Although we observe the same pattern over time, the oscillations between low and high unemployment rates are less extreme, with the possible exception of Dominican women, who display higher unemployment rates at every date compared to women in the other origin groups. Their unemployment rate jumped from 6.1% to 9.4% between 1980 and 1990 and from 6.2% to 10.2% between 2000 and 2010. At no point, however, did the unemployment rate for Dominican women fall below 6.2%, a level reached by other groups only at one moment in 2010. Though small sample size could explain the volatility in the Dominican rates, the fact remains that unemployment rates were uniformly higher for Dominican women than for women in any other group.

#### FIGURE 23 ABOUT HERE

As with the male Latinos, the amplitude of the swing in unemployment rates was much greater during the Great Recession than during recession of the early 1990s. Apart from Dominicans, during the latter downturn unemployment rates ranged from 6.0% to 9.3% whereas in the former downturn the spread was only from 4.9% to 5.9%. As with their male counterparts, however, Mexican and Other Latino women were less affected by the Great Recession than Dominican and Cuban women.

Being employed is a strong sign of an individual's wellbeing and productivity, but the welfare of workers and their families depend greatly on the kinds of jobs that Latinos occupy, and to assess these dimensions we begin by examining the socioeconomic status of the occupations held by members of each origin group using Hauser-Warren SEI scores (Hauser and Warren 1997). These scores are constructed from the schooling and earnings associated with different occupational categories. Professional, managerial, and skilled technical occupations generally yield SEI scores in the 60s and 70s, whereas crafts occupations and skilled manual job categories typically score in the



40s and 50s and sales and clerical occupations fall in the 30s. The bottom of the occupational status hierarchy is composed of unskilled service and manual laborers with scores typically in the 10s and 20s.

Figure 24 reveals that Latinos in the South generally held occupations with status scores in the range of 26 to 37 throughout the period, a range associated with sales, clerical, and unskilled service work. In 1970 Mexicans clearly ranked at the bottom of the Latino occupational hierarchy with an average status score of 26.3 while South Americans were at the top with an average score of 35.8. Over the course of the next 46 years, however, Mexican occupation status steadily increased and accelerated notably after 2000 to reach 30.7 in 2015, raising them above the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. The status of the occupations held by South Americans generally fell from 1970 to 1990, going from 35.8 to 33.6 as new immigrants arrived from abroad to leave them just below Cubans in the status scale. In keeping with their superior educational attainments, however, this downward trend reversed itself and by 2015 their status score had risen back to 37.1, surpassing their 1970 score and again placing them at the top of the distribution.

#### FIGURE 24 ABOUT HERE

Just below South Americans in the 1970 status hierarchy were Central Americans, with an SEI score of 33.6. Like their South American counterparts, occupational status declined as new cohorts of immigrants arrived but their average score was depressed to a much greater degree, with the average bottoming out at 27.7 in 1990. Moreover, unlike South American workers, those from Central America did not work their way back up the status hierarchy thereafter, remaining stuck with a score around 28 through 2010 and only rising to 28.7 in 2015, putting them at the bottom compared to other groups. Dominicans also experienced a loss of occupational status after 1970, but it proved to be of shorter duration and was followed by a complete recovery. Although the average

status score for Dominicans fell from 33.1 to 28.1 between 1970 and 1980, thereafter it steadily rose to reach a value of 34.3 in 2015. Other Latinos began in the middle of the distribution in 1970 with an occupational status score of 32.5, where it essentially remained through 1990 before dropping to 30.7 in 2000 and then rising to 35.2 in 2010 and remaining at much the same level through 2015, moving them from the middle closer to the top of the Latino occupational status distribution.

Finally, like Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans move steadily upwards over the period, though from different starting points. The occupational status of Cubans rose from an average of 28.9 in 1970 to 36.0 in 2015, just below that of South Americans, while over the same period the average status of Puerto Ricans increased from 31.6 to 35.6. As of 2015, therefore, South Americans, Cubans and Dominicans clustered at the top of occupational the ladder with scores of around 37 while Mexicans and Central Americans fell toward the bottom with scores of 29 to 31. Obviously, though no group experienced rapid upward mobility and on average at least, all remained outside of the elite skilled, professional, and managerial occupations.

In addition to conferring prestige, occupations also generate income, which has a more direct and concrete effect on class standing. Figure 25 therefore shows trends in median and mean household income for Latinos between 1970 and 2015 in constant \$2015 dollars. Although both data series display an increase over time, mean incomes rose more fully and rapidly, especially after 1990, and the gap between the two indicators widened substantially. Over the 45-year period median income rose from \$38,790 to \$47,100 (an increase of \$8,310 in real terms) while mean income rose from \$47,005 to \$65,131 (for a real increase of \$18,126) and the gap between mean and median income rose from \$8,215 in 1970 to \$18,031, indicating a rise in income inequality among Latinos in the South.

#### FIGURE 25 ABOUT HERE

Figure 26 breaks down trends in median household income by origin group to show an income hierarchy consonant with the occupational hierarchy just described. South Americans are at the top, with Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans in the middle, and Mexicans and Central Americans at the bottom. All groups except Mexicans display falling incomes between from 1970 to 1980 as immigrants arrived to take more poorly paid jobs. In 1970 Mexican incomes lagged far below those of other groups, with a median value of \$35,125, but over the next 45 years they steadily rose in real terms (with a slight dip between 1980 and 1990) to end up at \$45,000 in 2015, surpassing Central Americans but still lying toward the bottom of the income range.

#### FIGURE 26 ABOUT HERE

The decline in median income was marginal for Cubans between 1970 and 1980 (slipping from \$54,062 to \$53,271) and then income rose slightly to a median value of \$55,725 before moving downward to close at a value of \$50,500 in 2105, 6.6% below where it began 45 years earlier. In contrast, the initial decline in median income was sharper for the other origin groups. The biggest decline was for Dominicans, whose income fell from \$60,671 in 1970 to \$44,124 in 1980 (a drop of \$12,123 in ten years). The Dominican drop in income was followed in magnitude by that of Other Latinos (which went from \$60,171 to \$47,864 for a loss of \$12,307) and then Central Americans (\$55,284 to \$43,161 for a loss of \$12,123), Puerto Ricans (from \$51,618 to \$40,155 for a loss of \$11,464), and South Americans (from \$61,392 to \$52,365 for a loss of \$9,027). These income declines (ranging from 15% to 27% in just ten years) reflected the fact that aside from Mexicans and Cubans, the populations of all other groups were small in 1970 and were overwhelmed by the arrival of new immigrants during the subsequent decade, whose lower earnings came to predominate by 1980.

While the drop in median income between 1970 and 1980 was common to most groups, the trend thereafter was quite variable depending on the persistence and size of the immigrant influx and the selectivity of the new arrivals with respect to education. Although the initial income decline was sharp for South Americans, it quickly reversed itself and rose steadily from 1980 onward eventually to reach a value of \$62,000, slightly above the median income observed in 1970. Dominican income likewise recovered after the initial decline, rising from a median of \$47,864 in 1980 to peak at \$50,927 in 2000 and then falling back to \$48,000 in 2015, for a net loss of \$12,781 over the entire period. Central Americans also fared badly after 1980. Their median income continued to drop through 1990, and although it recovered a bit in 2000 after the boom of the 1990s thereafter it slid downward to \$43,000 in 2015, the lowest median income among all groups, representing a real loss of \$12,284 since 1970. Despite the sharp initial drop in median income, Puerto Ricans fared better in the end and by 2015 their income had recovered to \$50,000, losing only \$1,618 in real value over the 45 years.

One potential consequence of rising average income is the potential elevation of households out of poverty. Figure 27 shows poverty rates for the various origin groups between 1970 and 2015 to reveal that the modest but steady increase in Mexican median incomes over the years appears to have had precisely this effect. The Mexican poverty rate dropped substantially from 38.2% of all Mexican households in 1970 to 27.7% in 1980; and although the rate rose back to 33.5% in 1990 thereafter the decline resumed and by 2015 the Mexican poverty rate stood at 22.7%, a 41% decline in poverty over the 45 years. Nonetheless, this poverty rate is still the highest among Latinos in the South, though only marginally above that of Central Americans in 2015.

FIGURE 27 ABOUT HERE

In a mirror image of the pattern observed for median income, the poverty rate in 2015 was greatest for Mexicans and Central Americans and least for South Americans, with the other groups clustering tightly together in-between. All groups save Mexicans experienced an increase in poverty from 1970 to 1980 but only South Americans were able to recover quickly to experience steadily declining poverty and finish in 2015 with a much lower poverty rate in 2015 than they experienced in 1970 (11.9% versus 13.4%). The other groups experienced some recovery after 1980 but not enough to offset the initial increase in poverty and ended up in 2015 with poverty rates between 16% and 18%, below those of Mexicans and Central Americans, but well above the low rate enjoyed by South Americans.

The last aspect of socioeconomic status we consider is wealth, here proxied by rates of home ownership and home values, which provide imperfect but nonetheless informative indicators of potential wealth. Figure 28 shows the percentage of homeowners by origin group from 1970 to 2015. As in earlier figures, those groups that were small in 1970 and experienced rapid immigration in the ensuing decades experienced an early decline in ownership rates. The decline was small for South Americans during the 1970s, a relatively advantaged population, with the rate dropping from 49.7% in 1970 to 48.8% in 1980. Thereafter the trend turned upward and home ownership rates rose steadily through 2010 when they peaked at 64.6% before dropping back slightly to 61.5% in 2015.

#### FIGURE 28 ABOUT HERE

The 1970s-era decline was sharpest for Dominicans whose home ownership rate dropped from 58.6% to 41.7%; but as with South Americans the downward trend is quickly reversed and the rate rose to peak at 56.8% in 2010 before declining to 50.8% in 2015, about eight points below the 1970 level. The initial decline in home ownership was less marked for Central Americans but more

sustained. Between 1970 and 1980 their ownership rate dropped from 46.4% to 39.4% but instead of recovering, the downward trend continued and the rate declined further to 31.1% in 1990, the lowest point observed for any group over the 45-year period. From 1990 to 2010, however, the rate steadily rose to peak at 52.1%. As with the other groups, the rate of home ownership then fell back to 46.2%, about where it was in 1970. The Puerto Rican decline in home ownership during the 1970s was relatively modest, with the rate falling from 50.6% to 45.9% over the decade. It then followed the familiar pattern of moving upward to peak at 57.9% in 2010 before falling back to 51.9% in 2015, only slightly above where it was in 1970.

Both Mexicans and Other Latinos experienced a slow but sustained decline in home ownership that lasted three decades. Whereas the Mexican ownership rate fell from 61.4% in 1970 to 56.1% in 2000, the rate for Other Latinos dropped only marginally from 61.8% to 60.1%. In both cases ownership rates moved upward during the housing boom of the early 2000s but fell back in the wake of the housing bust. Thus from 2000 to 2010, Mexican home ownership jumped from 56.1% to 62.0% and then fell back to 59.9% in 2015 while the ownership rate for Other Latinos increased from 60.1% to 66.9% before settling at 59.9% in 2015. Unlike the other groups, Cubans did not experience an early decline in home ownership. Instead they enjoyed a sustained increase from 46.4% to 66.9% between 1970 and 2010 before falling back to 61.5% in 2015.

The foregoing trends generally reflect the influence of immigration during the early decades and the housing boom and bust in the later decades; but in 2015 South Americans were once again situated at the top of the distribution while Central Americans fell at the bottom, with Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in-between. However, rather than accompanying Central Americans at the bottom of the distribution (as they did with respect to income in Figure 26) Mexicans are near South

Americans at the top. Once again, Cubans are positioned near the top of the distribution, just after South Americans.

Although the acquisition of wealth through home ownership depends fundamentally on the acquisition of a home, it also depends crucially on the value of the property itself. Figure 29 shows trends in mean and median home values for Latinos in the South in constant 2015 dollars. Both plots show the same thing: a sharp increase in home values followed by a leveling off between 1980 and 2000 and then another sharp increase to 2010 and a moderation thereafter. As with the income trajectories, mean and median home values begin to depart in 1980 and the gap between the two indicators widens further after 2000 and especially after 2010, indicating rising inequality in Latino home values over time and less of an effect of the housing bust on expensive versus cheaper homes.

#### FIGURE 29 ABOUT HERE

The median home value rose from \$53,451 in 1970 to \$93,484 in 1980 and then dipped to \$86,139 in 1990 before rising slightly to \$89,466 in 2000. It then climbed rapidly to \$128,261 in 2010 but dropped back to \$125,000 in the wake of the housing bust and foreclosure crisis. Mean home values rise in parallel with median values between 1970 and 1980, going from \$70,145 to \$109,818; but instead of declining marginally from 1980 to 2000 like median values, mean home values continued to rise, increasing from \$100,818 to \$120,457. Mean values thereafter increased at a faster pace than median values, rising from \$120,457 to \$173,484 between 2000 and 2010. Then instead of declining mean home values continue to rise thereafter, peaking at \$186,108 in 2015.

As with the other socioeconomic indicators, in Figure 30 we observe widespread differences between origin groups with respect to median home values, though all origins generally display the basic pattern of increasing values from 1970 to 1980 followed by a pause or decline in values after

1980 and a resumption of growth after 2000. Although we observed earlier that Mexicans enjoyed a high rate of home ownership akin to that of South Americans in 2015, we see here that the homes they owned were far less valuable and gained less value over time than those owned by their South American counterparts. Throughout the 45-year period Mexican home values remain the lowest of all groups. Beginning with a relatively low figure of \$53,451 in 1970 the median value rose to \$68,315 in 1980 where it roughly remained through 1990 before increasing to \$75,702 in 1990 and \$97,826 in 2010 with little change thereafter.

#### FIGURE 30 ABOUT HERE

In contrast to the anemic rise of home values observed for Mexicans from 1970 to 1980 (an increase of around \$15,000), the value of South American homes inflated rapidly over the period, rising from \$137,445 to \$194,158 (gaining roughly \$57,000 in value). Although South American home values declined during the 1980s while Mexican values did not, the rapid increase resumed after 1990 and proceeded without pause through 2015, when the median value reached \$250,000. Cuban home values followed a similar trajectory, though without a decline during the 1980s and with a notable slowing of growth after 2010, with the median rising from around \$115,000 in 1970 to \$225,000 in 2015. Dominicans, Central Americans, and Other Latinos began at about the same value of \$115,000 in 1970 but ended up in the middle of the distribution of home values in 2015, with respective medians of \$180,000, \$160,000, and \$150,000. Although Puerto Ricans ended up at roughly the same place in 2015 with a median home value of \$175,000, they began in 1970 with a lower value of \$99,266.

Although we cannot know the equity different groups held in their homes because we lack information on mortgage debt, a rough indicator of wealth is potential home wealth, which is computed by multiplying the ownership rate by the proportion of homeowners (see Massey and



Tannen 2016). It represents the median home equity that would accrue to group members if the mortgages on the homes they owned were completely paid off, a quantity presented in Figure 31. According to this indicator, the greatest access to wealth is enjoyed by South Americans (\$152,775), followed in descending order by Cubans (\$138,420), Other Latinos (\$93,300), Dominicans (\$91,476), Puerto Ricans (\$90,755), Central Americans (\$73,856), and Mexicans (\$58,074). Judging by this and the other indicators reviewed in this section, we conclude that South Americans and Cubans tend to be the most socioeconomically privileged among Latino origin groups in the South while Mexicans and Central Americans are the least privileged, with the other groups arrayed in-between in varying orders depending on the measure.

FIGURE 31 ABOUT HERE

## **TRENDS IN LATINO SEGREGATION AND ISOLATION**

To this point we have examined trends in the demographic, political, and socioeconomic status of Latinos in the Southern region as a whole; but in reality, Latinos live in specific places, not an entire region. Of the South's roughly 21 million Latinos in 2015, some 96 percent lived in a metropolitan area, and Figure 32 shows the size of the ten largest metropolitan Latino communities in the South during that year. Very obviously, in the South Latinos are dominated by four large metropolitan areas where their number exceeds one million persons, with Miami on top at 2.617 million Latinos, followed by Houston at 2.407 million, Dallas-Fort Worth at 1.998 million, and San Antonio at 1.294 million. Washington, DC lies just below the million-person threshold, with around 927,000 Latino Residents. The other five metropolitan areas contain Latino populations ranging between 600,000 and 800,000 persons. In 2015, metropolitan Orlando's Latino population stood at 683,000 while Latinos in Atlanta totaled around 603,000. The remaining three metropolitan areas,

all in Texas, included the border metropolises of McAllen (768,000) and El Paso (680,000), interior metropolitan region of Austin (651,000), the Texas state capital.

#### FIGURE 32 ABOUT HERE

A distinctive feature of Latinos in metropolitan areas of the South is that often they constitute not just large pluralities of the population, but in several cases they make up an absolute majority of all metropolitan residents, often by a large margin especially in areas situated along the Mexico-US border. As Figure 33 shows, in the border metropolises of McAllen and El Paso Latinos constitute 91.3% and 81.4% of the metropolitan population, respectively. Not shown in the figure are two other large border metropolitan areas, Brownsville and Laredo, where Latinos also constitute the vast majority of metropolitan residents. As of 2015, Brownsville housed a Latino population of 375,000 whose members made up 88.9% of the metropolitan population, and in Laredo the Latino population stood at 257,000, comprising 95.2% of the total population.

#### FIGURE 33 ABOUT HERE

Although San Antonio is not a border city, Latinos nonetheless make up a majority, 56.0%, of its metropolitan population. In no other metropolitan area of the ten shown do Latinos constitute an absolute majority of residents. The Miami metropolitan area, for example, is only 43.8% Latino (though the City of Miami itself is 73% Latino) whereas in Orlando Latinos constitute 29.2% of the metropolitan population. We observe the two smallest Latino percentages in the Washington and Atlanta metropolitan areas, with respective Latino shares of 15.5% and 10.6%. In the remaining areas, Latino's make up around a third of the metropolitan population, led by Houston at 36.6%, Austin at 31.9%, and Dallas-Fort Worth at 28.6

As one might expect, across the ten metropolitan areas the origin composition of the various Latino populations differ markedly, as indicated in Figure 34. Unsurprisingly, in metropolitan areas

along the Mexico-US border Mexicans constitute the overwhelming majority of Latino residents, with the share being 96.4% in McAllen and 94.5% in El Paso (in Brownsville and Laredo the respective figures are 96.1% and 96.2%). Much the same pattern holds in Texan metropolitan areas located away from the border. The Latino population of San Antonio, for example, is 87.4% Mexican, whereas in Austin and Dallas the respective shares are 83.8% and 83.5%. In Houston, however, the Mexican share drops to 77.5% owing to the presence of a sizeable Central American population (12.5% of all Latinos). In Austin and Dallas, Central Americans also constitute the principal origin group besides Mexicans (comprising 5.4% and 6.8% of Latinos, respectively).

#### FIGURE 34 ABOUT HERE

In the Miami metropolitan area, of course, Cubans are the largest origin group; but at 43.2% they are not in the majority. In fact, the Latino population of Miami is among the most diverse in the South, with 22.2% being South American, 12.3% Central American, 9.5% Puerto Rican, 5.4% Mexican, 4.0% Dominican, and 3.4% other Latinos. However, the combined total of Latinos originating in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic give the area a distinctly Caribbean character. Although Orlando is also quite diverse, in that metropolitan area Puerto Ricans stand out as the dominant group, constituting nearly half (49.1%) of its Latino residents, followed by South Americans at 15.6%, Mexicans at 11.4%, Cubans at 9.2%, Dominicans at 6.5%, Central Americans at 5.1%, and Other Latinos at 3.1%. In this case, almost two thirds of all Latinos are Cuban, Dominican, or Puerto Rican, again giving the local culture a Caribbean sensibility.

The Atlanta and Washington metropolitan Latino populations are also quite diverse, except that Atlanta is dominated by Mexicans (51.9% of all Latinos) whereas Washington is dominated by Central Americans (42.3% of all Latinos). In Atlanta, after Mexicans come Central Americans (15.8%), South Americans (11.3%), Puerto Ricans (10.4%), Cubans (3.8%), Other Latinos (3.7%),

and Dominicans (3.2%). In Washington, the next largest group after Central Americans is South Americans (21.1%), followed by Mexicans (15.9%), Puerto Ricans (8.4%), Other Latinos (7.7%), Cubans (2.8%), and Dominicans (1.8%). Thus the overall picture across metropolitan areas in the South is one of considerable homogeneity among Latinos in Texas, where Mexicans always constitute an overwhelming majority of Latinos, but considerable diversity among Latinos in Atlanta, Miami, Orlando, and Washington. Nonetheless, in Miami and Orlando the Latinos are predominantly Caribbean while in Atlanta they are principally Mesoamerican (from Mexico or Central America).

Figure 35 examines the growth over time in the four largest metropolitan Latino communities over the course of the past century. Back in 1910, when the Latino populations of metropolitan Miami, Houston, and Dallas were at or close to zero, San Antonio's Latino population had already surpassed 34,000. San Antonio's Latino population continued to dominate the others over the next six decades. As late as 1970, at 345,800 its Latino population continued to exceed those in other Southern metropolitan areas. At that date, Latinos numbered only 312,000 in Miami, 176,800 in Houston, and 133,800 in Dallas. By 1980, however, Miami's Latino population (613,080) had overtaken San Antonio's (483,100) and by 1990 Houston's Latino population (720,927) had done the same.

#### FIGURE 35 ABOUT HERE

After 2000, the Latino populations of Miami, Houston, and Dallas increasingly pulled away from San Antonio's, owing largely to differentials in the volume of immigration. Although San Antonio has long housed a large Latino population, unlike other areas in the region it was not a major destination for immigrants during the post-1970 period. As of 2015, the Latino population of Miami stood at 2.617 million, followed by Houston at 2.407 million and Dallas at just under 2.0

million, compared with around 1.112 million in San Antonio. Although the Latino populations of Miami, Houston, and Atlanta may have surpassed San Antonio's after 1970, in relative terms Latinos continued to constitute a larger share of its population than the others. As shown in Figure 36, whereas Latinos comprised around 56.0% of San Antonio's metropolitan population in 2015, the respective figures in Miami, Houston, and Dallas were 43.8%, 36.6%, and 28.6%.

#### FIGURE 36 ABOUT HERE

Residential segregation plays a critical role in determining the neighborhood environment experienced by Latinos, which in turn strongly conditions individual life chances. In an effort to understand the spatial situation of Latinos in the South, Figure 37 shows trends in Latino-white segregation in ten metropolitan areas from 1970 to 2010. Neighborhoods are defined by census tracts and segregation is measured using the index of dissimilarity, which varies from 0 to 100 and represents the relative percentage of Latino and non-Hispanic white residents who would have to exchange neighborhoods to achieve an even or desegregated residential distribution. Values above 60 are customarily considered to be "high," whereas those between 30 and 60 are considered "moderate" and those below 30 are "low."

#### FIGURE 37 ABOUT HERE

By these criteria, Latino-white segregation in the South has generally varied in the moderate range, with index values in 1970 ranging from a low of 31.0 in Orlando to a high of 53.8 in San Antonio. Although the dispersion of scores increased slightly by 1980 as San Antonio edged upward to a value of 57.5 and Orlando declined to 28.6, thereafter the range of values narrowed. In general, more segregated metropolitan areas become less segregated over time, while less segregated areas became more segregated. Orlando's dissimilarity index, for example, rose to a value 37.0 in 2010 while San Antonio's index declined to 46.1, a position no longer at the top of the

distribution. As of 2010, the most segregated metropolitan areas for Latinos were Houston (with an index of 52.5), Dallas (51.9), Atlanta (48.2), and Washington (48.2). The least segregated areas were El Paso (43.3), Austin (43.2), Orlando (40.2), and McAllen (39.2). Miami's segregation score was tied with San Antonio's at 46.1. In general, the older Mexican-dominated settlements in Texas grew less segregated between 1970 and 2010 while the newer, more diverse areas of immigrant settlement grew more segregated.

In addition to the relative evenness or unevenness of a group's residential distribution, another important dimension of segregation is the degree to which a group is isolated in neighborhoods composed primarily of other members of the same group (Massey and Denton 1988). We measure this dimension of segregation using the P\* isolation index, which varies from a minimum value equal to the proportion of Latinos in the metropolitan area to a maximum of 100. It represents the proportion of Latinos living in the neighborhood (census tract) of the average Latino resident in each metropolitan area. Unlike the dissimilarity index, which does not depend on the relative number of Latinos inhabiting a metropolitan area, the P\* isolation index depends strongly on the percentage of Latinos metropolitan-wide.

This property is demonstrated in Figure 38, which shows trends in the spatial isolation index for the ten metropolitan areas under study. As can be seen, in those metropolitan areas where Latinos constitute a majority of all metropolitan residents, Latinos experience a high degree of spatial isolation within neighborhoods. Thus in McAllen the isolation index rose from 84.4 in 1970 to 91.4% in 2010 while in El Paso it rose from 71.3 to 85.4. These metropolitan areas are 91% and 81% Latino, so that it is virtually impossible *not* to live in neighborhoods with a high percentage of Latinos. Over the same period, the spatial isolation index for Latinos in San Antonio held fairly

steady, declining slightly from 67.1 in 1970 to 65.2 in 2010 as the share of Latinos rose but as shown in the prior table, the level of Latino-white segregation fell.

#### FIGURE 38 ABOUT HERE

In the remaining metropolitan areas, Latino isolation generally increased as the arrival of immigrants increased the percentage of the Latinos in the population and levels of Latino-white dissimilarity trended upward. The increase was notable in Miami, where the  $P^*$  index rose from 46.4 in 1970 to 75.9 in 2010. Large increases over the period also occurred in Houston (from 26.3 to 50.4), Dallas (17.4 to 46.6), Orlando (3.0 to 36.7), Washington (4.1 to 25.9), and Atlanta (2.2 to 24.3). Despite these rapid increases, however, levels of isolation remained modest in Orlando, Washington, and Atlanta.

One of the most important consequences of residential segregation is its effect on the geographic concentration of poverty and disadvantage. Whenever a particular group displays a poverty rate in excess of other groups in a metropolitan area, the segregation of that group will perforce concentrate poverty spatially within the neighborhoods it inhabits; and segregation between affluent Latinos and the poor will also concentrate poverty (Massey and Fischer 2000; Quillian 2012). Recent studies have shown disadvantaged neighborhood environments constitute a critical nexus in the production and reproduction of socioeconomic disadvantage (Sampson 2012; Sharkey 2013; Massey and Brodmann 2014). Figure 39 therefore considers trends in the spatial concentration of poverty from 1970 through 2010.

#### FIGURE 39 ABOUT HERE

Poverty is defined by having a family income below the federal poverty threshold for a family of four, and its spatial concentration is measured by the  $P^*$  isolation index for poverty (Massey and Eggers 1990), which states the percentage poor in the neighborhood of the average

poor Latino. Poverty concentration indices below 20 are customarily considered to be “low;” those between 20 and 40 are considered to be “high;” and those above 40 are seen as “extreme.” In 1970, Latinos in McAllen experienced truly an extreme concentration of poverty, with an index of 49.7, meaning that the average Latino resident inhabited a census tract where nearly half of all other families were also poor. In contrast, Latinos in El Paso, Austin, Orlando, Miami, Dallas, and Houston, experienced “only” high concentrations of poverty, with index values ranging from 20.7 in Dallas and Houston to 34.7 in El Paso. Only in Atlanta and Washington did Latinos experience low concentrations of poverty in 1970.

With one exception, all metropolitan areas experienced declines in the concentration of Latino poverty between 1970 and 1980. In Atlanta, however, the Latino poverty concentration index rose from 12.5 to 18.0 between the two dates and changed little thereafter, ending with a value of 18.8 in 2010. Although the spatial concentration of Latino poverty fell in other metropolitan areas from 1970 to 1980, during the 1980s poverty concentration rose sharply upward, with the index equaling or exceeding the original 1970 value by 1990. From 1990 to 2000 the index values either increased or held steady across all areas, but declined thereafter. In 2010, Atlanta, Dallas, Orlando, and Washington, evinced low concentrations of Latino poverty (though index values in the first three metropolitan areas fell just below the threshold for the high range). The remaining metropolitan areas displayed high index values ranging from 20.1 to 31.9, with El Paso and McAllen experiencing sharp drops out of the extreme range (declining from 41.6 to 27.4 in the former area and from 45.9 to 24.3 for the latter), leaving no metropolitan area with an extreme concentration of poverty by the end of the period.

Whereas the spatial concentration of poverty compounds the negative effects of individual socioeconomic disadvantage to reduce the odds of upward mobility, the spatial concentration of



affluence magnifies the benefits of individual advantage to increase the likelihood of upward mobility (or at least to reduce the odds of downward mobility). Here we define affluence as having a family income more than four times the poverty rate. Figure 40 shows that trends in the concentration of affluence are precisely opposite those observed for the concentration of poverty, with the concentration of Latino affluence rising during the 1970s, falling through the 1980s and 1990s, and then rising from 2000 to 2010. In addition, the ordering of the metropolitan areas in both 1970 and 2010 is reversed. Whereas in the prior figure McAllen displayed the highest concentration of poverty throughout the period and Washington the lowest, in this figure Washington displays the highest concentration of Latino affluence while McAllen experiences the lowest throughout the period.

#### FIGURE 40 ABOUT HERE

In both metropolitan areas, however, the concentration of Latino affluence rose over the four decades, albeit unevenly, with that in Washington rising from 48.0 in 1970 and 56.9 in 2010 and that in McAllen increasing from 12.7 to 24.3. Setting aside the case of Washington, DC which stands distinctly above other metropolitan areas, the range of index values generally decreases over the period, declining from a range of around 37 points in 1970 to around 15 points in 2010. Except for Washington, indices of concentrated affluence fall in the high but not the extreme range as of 2010, mostly in the upper portion of that range from 30 to 40. However, the concentration indices for Latinos in Atlanta, Austin, Houston, and Dallas lie very close to the extreme range (with respective values of 39.5, 39.3, 37.8, and 38.5) and that for McAllen lying closer to the low range with a value of 24.3).

High concentrations of affluence generally occur when affluent Latinos are able to use their income, occupational, and educational attainments to gain access to more advantaged

neighborhoods in which non-Hispanic whites tend to predominate, yielding a decline in Latino-white segregation as socioeconomic status rises. This is more or less what we observe in Figure 41, which presents Latino-white dissimilarity indices by income quintile. Interpretation of these results is complicated by the fact that dissimilarity indices tend to inflate as the number of Latinos grows small relative to the number of census tracts in a metropolitan area. This circumstance tends to prevail in the upper income quintiles. In the figure, we generally observe increasing or steady levels of Latino segregation in the first and second quintiles, followed by a clear decline between the second and fourth quintiles, suggesting that Latinos in these metropolitan areas are able to translate income attainments into residential integration.

#### FIGURE 41 ABOUT HERE

In the United States, movement into more integrated and advantaged areas often involves a shift from city to suburban residence, and Figure 42 assesses this aspect of integration by plotting Latino suburbanization rates from 1970 through 2010. Suburbanization is defined simply as the share of Latinos living in suburbs outside of a metropolitan area's central city. A quick glance at the figure reveals that the ten metropolitan areas bifurcate into two groups. At the bottom we see a cluster of five metropolitan areas, all in Texas, that are characterized by low levels of suburbanization with indices ranging from around 14% to 38%. At the top, we observe five other metropolitan areas with relatively high suburbanization levels ranging from 55% to 83%, only one of which is in Texas.

#### FIGURE 42 ABOUT HERE

Among those metropolitan areas characterized by high levels of Latino suburbanization, we observe relatively flat trends in Orlando and McAllen and rising trends in Atlanta, Washington, and Miami. Although Latino suburbanization in Orlando rose from 52.5% to 60.1% between 1970 and

1980, thereafter the level changed very little, ending up at 62.3% in 2010. We observe even less movement in McAllen, where Latino suburbanization actually declined slightly from 57.8% in 1970 to 54.6% in 2010. In contrast, between 1970 and 2010 the degree of Latino suburbanization in Atlanta rose from 49.4% to 83.2% while that in Miami rose from 41.5% to 76.7%. Although Latino suburbanization in Washington declined slightly from 55.2% to 54.0% during the 1970s, thereafter it rose steadily to end at 75.8% in 2010. At that date, Latinos were highly suburbanized in Atlanta, Miami, and Washington, with at least three quarters occupying suburban neighborhoods.

Among the five metropolitan areas with low levels of Latino suburbanization, we observe increases in suburbanization in Dallas (where the rate moves from 13.2% to 32.7% over the period) and Austin (from 1.8% to 29.7%). In contrast, the degree of Latino suburbanization changes little over time in Houston, starting out at 22.3% in 1970 and ending at 26.2% in 2010. Although Latino suburbanization does rise in El Paso and San Antonio, it remains quite low in 2010, with the rate of suburbanization over the period going from 4.3% to 14.4% in the former area and from 6.9% to 22.8% in the latter. Thus, with the exception of McAllen, Latinos in Texas continue to concentrate heavily in central cities, with upwards of two-thirds located in the city rather than the suburbs; and even in McAllen, almost half live in the central city and the share in suburbs declined over the four decades.

City versus suburban location is important because suburban areas, in general, are associated with lower degrees of residential segregation from non-Hispanic whites. Figure 43 thus presents Latino-white dissimilarity scores in cities and suburbs of the ten cities under consideration. However, we observe this expected city-suburb differential in only half the cases. In three metropolitan areas the drop in segregation moving from city to suburb is substantial. In Houston, for example, Latino-white segregation drops from a score of 56.1 in the city to 38.9 in the suburbs.

Likewise, the decline is from 46.4 to 36.0 in Austin, and from 53.9 to 40.7 in Dallas. In contrast, Latino-white segregation drops only from 60.8 to 56.1 in Miami and from 40.4% to 36.4% in Orlando.

#### FIGURE 43 ABOUT HERE

In the five metropolitan areas where we do not observe a decline in segregation moving from city to suburb, the differential is small in three of them, with the respective city and suburban dissimilarity indices of 49.1 and 49.6 in Atlanta, 41.7 and 43.6 in El Paso, and 47.6 and 48.5 in Washington. In two cases, however, Latino segregation was substantially greater in suburbs than the central city. In McAllen the Latino-white segregation score was 34.2 in the city but 40.7 in the suburbs, while in San Antonio the city score was 39.0 compared to a suburban score of 44.8. In these five metropolitan areas, Latinos were either the large majority among both city and suburban dwellers (in El Paso, McAllen, and San Antonio) or most Latinos in the area actually lived in the suburbs (as in Atlanta and Washington).

This point is underscored by Figure 44, which shows Latino isolation indices in the ten metropolitan areas. In majority-Latino areas it matters little whether one lives in a city or suburb, since in either case Latinos are overwhelmingly likely to live in neighborhoods with other Latinos (see the bar graphs for El Paso, McAllen, and San Antonio). Likewise, in places where Latinos are heavily suburbanized, city and suburban isolation indices tend to be similar. Thus in Atlanta the respective city and suburban isolation indices are 24.5 and 24.2; in Miami they are 63.3 and 62.5, and in Washington 24.1 and 26.3. Only in metropolitan areas with lower rates of suburbanization and lower percentages of Latinos do we observe lower isolation levels in suburbs, as in Austin (where Latino isolation drops from 46.6 to 39.2 moving from city to suburb), Dallas (where the shift is from 49.9 to 33.0), Houston (from 53.7 to 41), and Orlando (from 44.8 to 31.9).

#### FIGURE 44 ABOUT HERE

With the exception of San Antonio, all of the metropolitan areas were radically transformed by immigration from Latin America after 1970. Rapid immigration tends to increase levels of residential segregation as new immigrants follow network ties to family members and friends to locate in existing Latino enclaves. This pattern is confirmed by Figure 45, which shows Latino-white dissimilarity indices computed separately for the native and foreign born. In each of the ten metropolitan areas the segregation of native born Latinos is lower than that of foreign born Latinos, often quite a bit lower. The differential is greatest in Austin, where the Latino-white dissimilarity index drops from 57.8 among the foreign born to 41.0 among those born in the United States. Larger differentials of ten points or more are also observed in Dallas (with respective indices of 69.2 and 46.4), Washington (55.3 and 42.8), and Atlanta (57.4 and 45.9). The native-foreign gap is smallest in Orlando where Latino-white segregation is 43.7 among immigrants and 42.8 among natives and Miami (59.8 among immigrants and 55.0 among natives). The differential is modest in the remaining metropolitan areas of El Paso (48.6 for foreigners versus 41.3 for natives), Houston (58.7 versus 49.4), McAllen (57.2 versus 41.7) and San Antonio (51.6 versus 45.1).

#### FIGURE 45 ABOUT HERE

In addition to nativity, residential segregation among Latinos varies strongly by race, with black Latinos being highly segregated, white Latinos much less segregated, and racially mixed Latinos falling in-between. As Figure 46 shows, this ordering prevails in all metropolitan areas except Miami, where we observe a sharp differential in Latino-white dissimilarity indices moving from black to mixed-race Latinos (72.0 versus 57.8) but no decline moving between mixed-race and white Latinos (57.8 versus 59.0). In the remaining metropolitan areas, the gaps in segregation levels by race are generally substantial. In McAllen, for example, we see a 33-point gap between the

segregation scores of black versus white Latinos (75.1 versus 42.4, with mixed-race Latinos falling in-between at 54.1). The black-white segregation gap is 32 points in Austin, 27 points in Washington, 26 in Dallas, 25 in San Antonio, 22 in Atlanta, and 21 Orlando. With a 14-point gap, the differential in El Paso is closer to that in Miami, mainly because black Latinos there have the lowest segregation score observed across the ten metropolitan areas.

#### FIGURE 46 ABOUT HERE

As an Afro-Caribbean population, segregation levels tend to be greater for Puerto Ricans than Mexicans, who are largely a mestizo population of blended European and indigenous origins (Massey and Bitterman 1985; Denton and Massey 1989; Massey and Denton 1992). As shown in Figure 47, among the ten metropolitan areas considered here, this differential prevails in six cases. The Puerto Rican-Mexican gap is greatest in McAllen where the Puerto Rican-white dissimilarity index is 65.7 compared with a value of just 43.2 for the Mexican-white index. In the other five areas the segregation differential is more modest, ranging from around three to six points. In four areas, however, Mexicans display greater segregation from whites than Puerto Ricans, though except for in Miami the differential is not very large. In Orlando the two groups are about equally segregated, with a score of 47.5 for Mexicans and 47.0 for Puerto Ricans. In Washington, DC the Mexican-white segregation score is 52.9 compared with 51.3 for Puerto Ricans, and in Atlanta the respective values are 58.6 and 53.5. In Miami, however, the differential in segregation indices is nearly ten points (58.9 for Mexicans and 49.2 for Puerto Ricans).

#### FIGURE 47 ABOUT HERE

To assess the relative influence of the foregoing factors in generating Latino segregation across Southern metropolitan areas in 2010, we regressed Latino-white dissimilarity indices on the percentage of Latinos living in suburbs, the ratio of Latino-to-white household income, the

percentage of nonwhite Latinos, and the percent foreign born among Latinos, along with other variables prior research has identified as determinants of racial-ethnic segregation in the United States. These variables include the percentage of Latinos in each metropolitan area, the size of the metropolitan area's total population (logged), the size of the metropolitan area's military population (also logged), the restrictiveness of suburban density zoning, the median year of home construction, the degree to which affluent Latinos are segregated from the poor, the degree of anti-Latino sentiment, and the percentage of Latinos who are undocumented.

In general, we expect Latino-white segregation to be greater in large metropolitan areas with high shares of Latinos, less segregation between affluent Latinos and the poor, small military populations, restrictive suburban density zoning, and older housing stock, greater anti-Latino sentiment, and large shares of undocumented migrants. The military is the most successfully integrated institution in the United States and areas with large military bases tend, on average, to be less segregated, as are areas with a newer housing stock and a larger share of homes built after the 1968 Fair Housing Act (Rugh and Massey 2014). Research has also shown that when suburbs are covered by zoning regimes that limit the density of housing, housing is more costly and metropolitan levels of segregation are higher. To measure the restrictiveness of suburban density zoning we here use an instrumental variable developed by Rothwell and Massey (2009). Anti-Latino sentiment is measured using a tabulation of Google search frequencies on the term “illegal alien” at the metropolitan level developed by Rugh and Massey (2014). The class segregation of affluent Latinos is measured by computing the dissimilarity index for affluent Latinos versus the poor of any racial or ethnic origin (from Massey and Rugh 2019). Finally, the share of Latinos who are undocumented is estimated by taking metropolitan-level estimates of the number of

undocumented migrants in 2010 developed by the Center for Migration Studies and dividing them by the area's Latino population.

Figure 48 summarizes the results of a regression estimated across 115 metropolitan areas in the South to predict Latino-white segregation. The bar chart shows depicts standardized regression coefficients arrayed in descending order of magnitude with negative effects indicated by black bars and positive effects indicated by gray bars and statistically significant effects indicated by an asterisk. Seven variables proved to be significant at the 0.05 level with the model displaying an adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.59, indicating that nearly 60% of the inter-metropolitan variation in Latino-white segregation is explained by the variables in the equation. As expected, segregation is greater in large metropolitan areas ( $\beta=0.518$ ) that are characterized by a high degree of Anti-Latino sentiment ( $\beta=0.454$ ), a high share of immigrant Latinos ( $\beta=0.398$ ) with suburbs covered by restrictive density zoning regimes ( $\beta=0.339$ ). Less powerful but still statistically significant are three negative effects. Latino-white segregation falls as Latinos become more suburbanized ( $\beta=-0.251$ ), as affluent Latinos grow more segregated from the poor ( $\beta=-0.200$ ), and as the size of the military population rises ( $\beta=-0.168$ ).

#### FIGURE 48 ABOUT HERE

As noted earlier, the spatial isolation of Latinos within predominantly Latino neighborhoods is mathematically dependent on their share in the metropolitan population. In a metropolis such as McAllen, which is 91% Latino, even if whites and Latinos are evenly distributed across neighborhoods to produce a dissimilarity index of zero, the average Latino would live in a neighborhood that was 91% Latino. Thus it is no surprise that inter-metropolitan variation in the spatial isolation index is primarily determined by the metro-wide Latino percentage ( $\beta=0.803$ ) in combination with the much weaker influence of Latino-white segregation ( $\beta=0.154$ ). Although as



Figure 49 shows, several other variables have statistically significant effects, their substantive influence on Latino spatial isolation is marginal at best. Together the percentage of Latinos and Latino-white dissimilarity by themselves explain 98% of the variation in Latino isolation.

FIGURE 49 ABOUT HERE

Figure 50 summarizes the results of a regression equation estimated to predict the spatial concentration of Latino poverty from the independent variables under consideration, which yields an  $R^2$  of 0.49. Contrary to expectations more restrictive density zoning in suburbs has a strong *negative* influence on the concentration of poverty ( $\beta=-0.440$ ), whereas the opposite is true for the concentration of African American poverty (Massey and Rugh 2019). The remaining significant effects are positive and in line with expectations. Latino poverty is more spatially concentrated in metropolitan areas where Latinos have a high poverty rate ( $\beta=0.404$ ), where affluent Latinos are segregated from the poor ( $\beta=0.324$ ), and where a large share of Latinos are undocumented ( $\beta=0.258$ ). Although Latino-white segregation positively predicts the concentration of Latino poverty, the effect is not statistically significant.

FIGURE 50 ABOUT HERE

Finally, Figure 51 summarizes a regression model estimated to predict the spatial concentration of Latino affluence, yielding an  $R^2$  of 0.70. As seen in the figure, concentrated affluence among Latinos is associated primarily with a high rate of Latino affluence ( $\beta=0.694$ ) and large metropolitan size ( $\beta=0.381$ ) and to a lesser extent with a newer housing stock ( $\beta=0.137$ ) and a high ratio of Latino to white income ( $\beta=-0.128$ ). These findings suggest that affluent Latinos are indeed able to translate their status attainments into spatial separation from people of lower status, especially in larger metropolitan areas.

FIGURE 51 ABOUT HERE

## CONCLUSION

Our analysis of Latinos in the South began with the observation that southern states such as Florida, Louisiana, and Texas were once part of the Spanish colonial empire and housed Latino populations before they became part of the United States. States in the South were also slave states before the Civil War and governed by the Jim Crow regime of legal segregation and white supremacy from the end of Reconstruction in 1876 into the 1970s, a system where Latinos generally fell on the wrong side of a rigid color line imposed to exploit and subjugate people of color. As a result, Mexicans in Texas and Afro-origin Latinos in Florida and Louisiana were subject to systematic discrimination in housing, employment, criminal justice, and education.

For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Latino population of the South was dominated by Texas and its large population of Mexicans in San Antonio and border cities such as Brownsville, El Paso, Laredo, and McAllen. The Latino populations of Florida and Miami began to grow only in the 1960s with the arrival first of Cuban immigrants and later of Latino immigrants from elsewhere in the Caribbean and Latin America. In Texas, Houston began to grow with the arrival of new cohorts of Mexican and Central American immigrants in the 1970s and 1980s, with the Latino population of Dallas-Fort Worth expanding with the arrival of new immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s.

The Latino population of Miami only surpassed that of San Antonio in the 1970s, followed by Houston in the 1980s and Dallas in the 1990s. Latino populations in other Southern cities and states did not begin to grow rapidly until the 1990s. From a figure of around 2.5 million in 1970 the Latino population of the South rose to around 6.6 million in 1990 and to 18.3 million in 2010, with just under 21 million as of 2015. Over the 45 years from 1970 to 2015 the Latino percentage in the south grew from 4.5% to 17.2%. Despite the recent rapid growth of Latino populations outside of Texas and Florida, those two states continue to dominate the Southern region. In 2015 Latinos

numbered 10.7 million in Texas and almost 5 million in Florida. In no other state did Latinos reach the million person mark and the combined total across the 15 other states and the District of Columbia was only 5.2 million. After 1990, Latino population growth was greatest in Georgia and North Carolina, where the Latino populations had surpassed 900,000 persons by 2015, and in Virginia and Maryland where Latinos had surpassed 750,000 and 570,000 persons, respectively. The least growth was observed in Delaware, Mississippi, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, where Latinos still numbered fewer than 100,000 persons in 2015.

With respect to demographics, among Latinos fertility rates have generally declined over time, the share currently married has dropped, and the population has aged. Since 2000 the share of Southern Latinos who self-identify as white has risen, going from 59.2% in that year to 77.4% in 2015 while the share self-identifying as multiracial has fallen, going from 38.8% to 20.2%. The share of black Latinos was only around 2.1% in 2015. Although Mexicans continue to dominate the Latino population of the South, their share has fallen from 76% in 1970 to 60% in 2015, owing mainly to increases in the relative number of Puerto Ricans, South Americans, and especially Central Americans.

Rising immigration during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s has transformed the generational structure of the Latino population. Whereas in 1970 46% percent of all Latinos were native born to native parents by 2015 this figure had declined to 24% as the population came to be dominated by immigrants and their children. The percentage foreign born is highest among Dominicans, Central Americans, Cubans, and South Americans and lowest among Mexicans and Other Latinos. Given these statistics it is hardly surprising that a majority of all groups except Other Latinos reported speaking Spanish at home in 2015, with the share ranging from 57% among Puerto Ricans to around 80% among Cubans and South Americans. Although citizenship rates fell with the arrival

of new immigrants between 1970 and 2000, by 2015 a majority of all groups had attained U.S. citizenship, with the precise share ranging from 59% of Central Americans to 92% of Other Latinos. Despite rising and generally high rates of citizenship, however, many fewer Latinos in the South actually voted. Only among Cubans did a majority (58%) vote in the 2012 election, compared with 43% for Puerto Ricans, 40% for Dominicans, 35% for Central and South Americans, and 29% for Mexicans, suggesting a surfeit of unrealized political power for Southern Latinos at the ballot box.

Although education levels have risen since 1970 most of the improvement has occurred through the greater completion of high school rather than college and the share of college graduates varies widely by origin. Whereas 41% of South Americans had completed college in 2015, the figure was only 13%-14% for Mexicans and Central Americans and 24%-27% for the other origin groups. Among Latinos, employment rates for males have fallen while those of females have risen, with notable spikes in unemployment for both genders in 1990 and 2010. The occupations held by Latinos generally fall in the low to middle ranges of status, with South Americans and Cubans at the top of the job hierarchy, Mexicans and Central Americans at the bottom, and other groups in-between. A similar ordering is observed with respect to median income. Although Mexicans display relatively high rates of home ownership, the properties they own are the least valuable of all groups, giving them the least potential home wealth. Joining them at the bottom of the potential home wealth distribution were Central Americans, with South Americans and Cubans at the top and Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in-between.

Among Southern metropolitan areas, four housed Latino populations greater than one million persons in 2015: Miami (2.6 million), Houston (2.4 million), Dallas-Fort Worth (2.0 million), and San Antonio (1.3 million). Close behind is Washington DC (977,000), followed by

McAllen (769,000), Orlando (683,000), and El Paso (680,000). Rounding out the top ten metropolitan Latino communities are Austin (651,000) and Atlanta (503,000). Thus six of the ten largest metropolitan Latino communities are in Texas, two are in Florida, and two are elsewhere (Atlanta and Washington). In three Texan areas Latinos constituted absolute majorities of the metropolitan population: McAllen (91%), El Paso (81%), and San Antonio (56%). In these areas, Mexicans unsurprisingly were the vast majority of Latinos, with respective shares of 96%, 95%, and 87%. Mexicans also dominated the Latino population of other metropolitan areas, comprising around 84% of those in Austin and Dallas and 78% of those in Houston. The other metropolitan areas were far more diverse, though with Caribbean origin Latinos making up a majority of those in Miami and Orlando (mostly Cubans in the former and Puerto Ricans in the latter) and Mesoamerican Latinos commanding a majority in Atlanta and Washington (mostly Mexicans in the former and Central Americans in the latter).

Over the decades from 1970 to 2010 Latino-white segregation levels converged on the upper portion of the moderate range of dissimilarity values (37 to 53) but with widely dispersed levels of racial isolation within neighborhoods owing to the large range of Latino percentages across metropolitan areas. In general, the spatial concentration of poverty among Latinos fell during the 1970s, rose during the 1980s and 1990s and diminished between 2000 and 2010, but with high concentrations of poverty (index values of 20-30) prevailing in Miami and the Texan metropolitan areas in the latter year and lower concentrations (index values of 10-20) occurring in Atlanta, Washington, and Orlando. In contrast, the spatial concentration of Latino affluence rose during the 1970s, declined during the 1980s and 1990s, and increased during the early 2000s. As of 2010, the concentration of Latino affluence was extremely high in Washington (57), and in the upper portion

of the high range (30-40) everywhere else except for McAllen, which fell into the lower portion of the high range (24).

Across metropolitan areas, levels of Latino-white segregation generally fell with rising income, were lower in suburbs than central cities, and lower for native-born than foreign-born Latinos, and also lower for white Latinos than multiracial Latinos, who were in turn less segregated than black Latinos. Regression models indicated that Latino segregation levels were boosted in large metropolitan areas characterized by high levels of anti-Latino prejudice, larger shares of immigrants, and more restrictive suburban density zoning, and lowered in metropolitan areas with a large military population, where Latinos were more suburbanized, and where affluent Latinos were more segregated from the poor.

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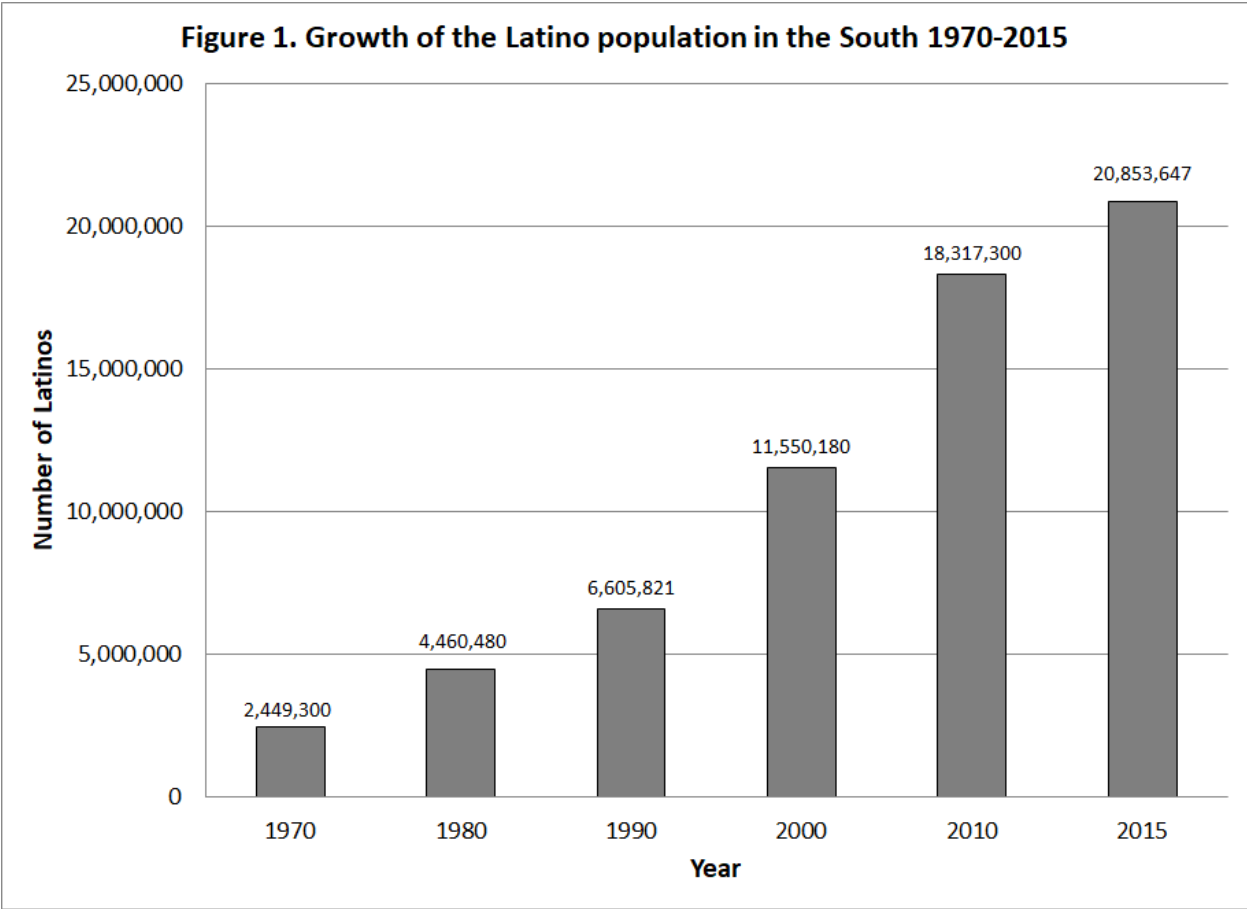
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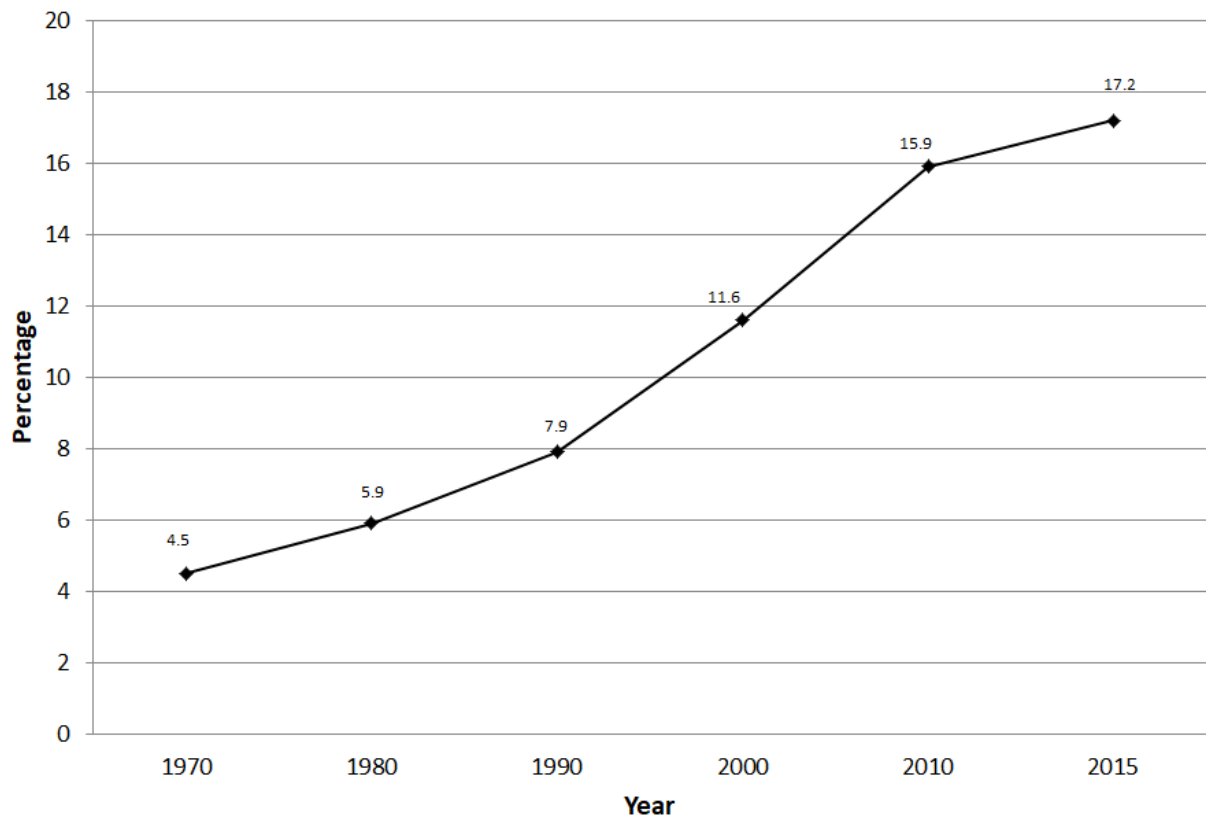
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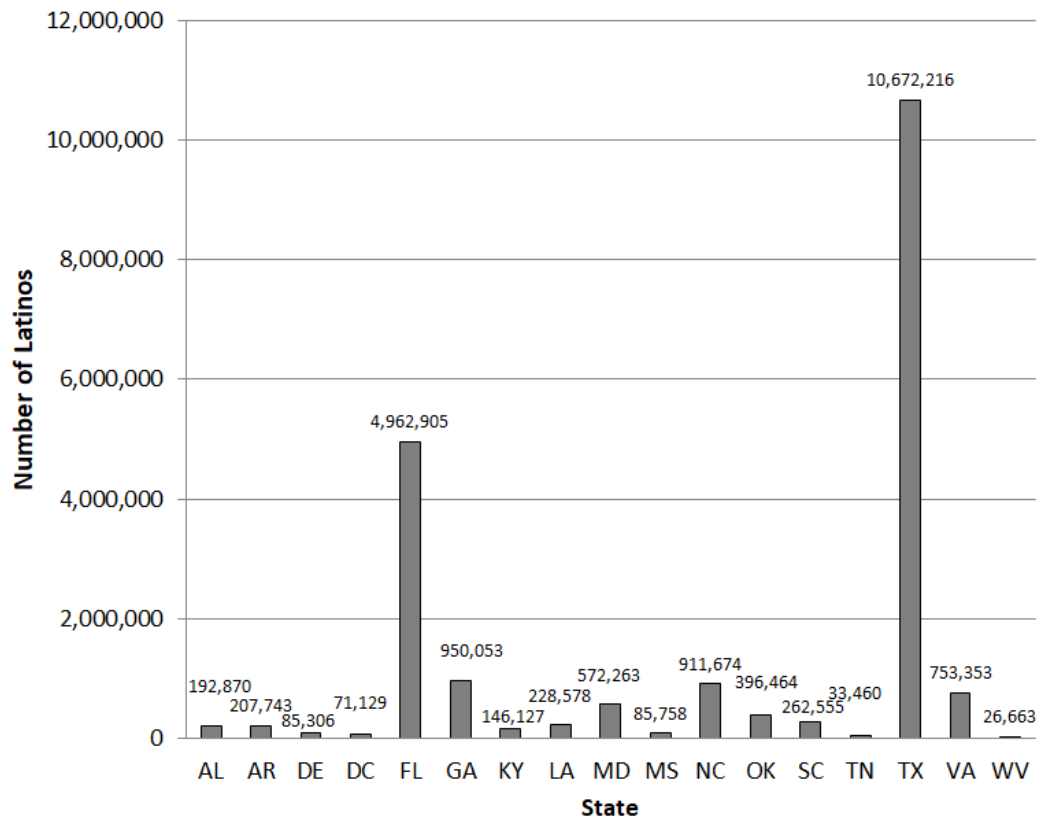
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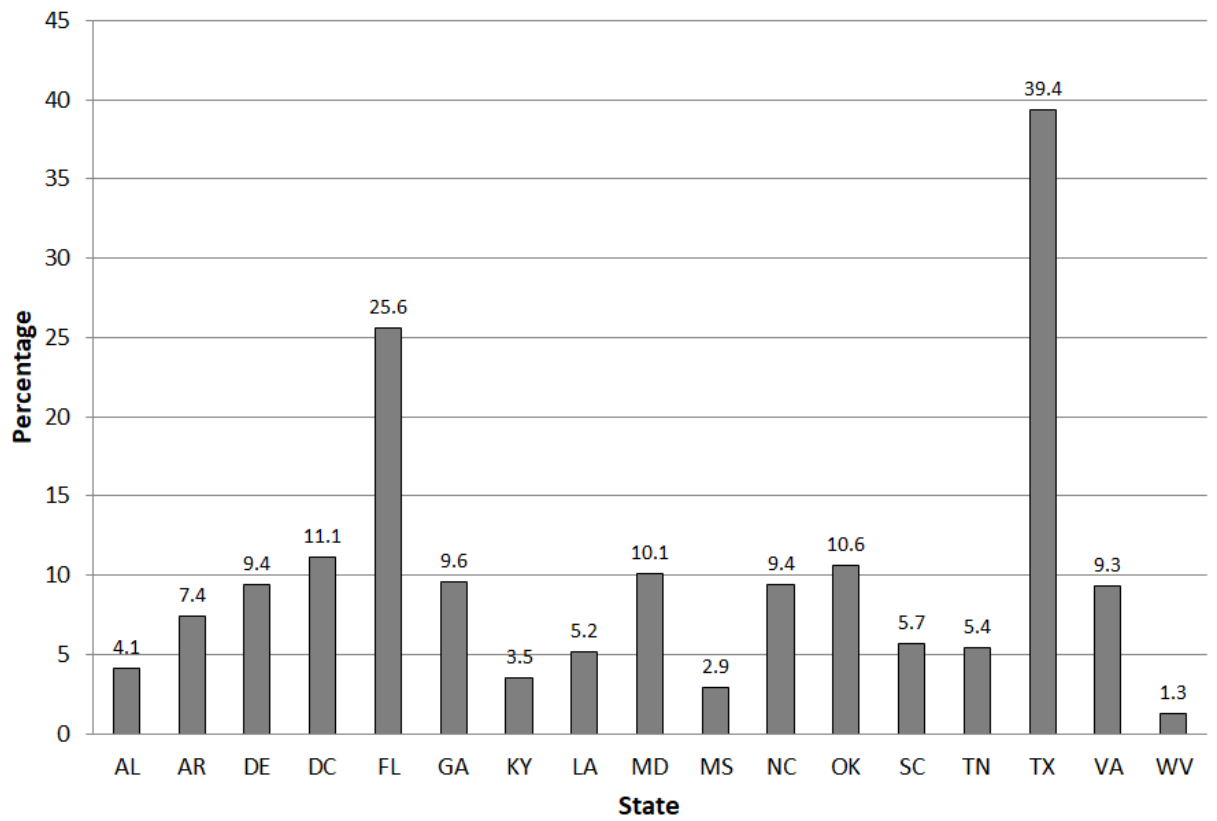
**Figure 2. Percentage of Latinos in states of the South 2015**



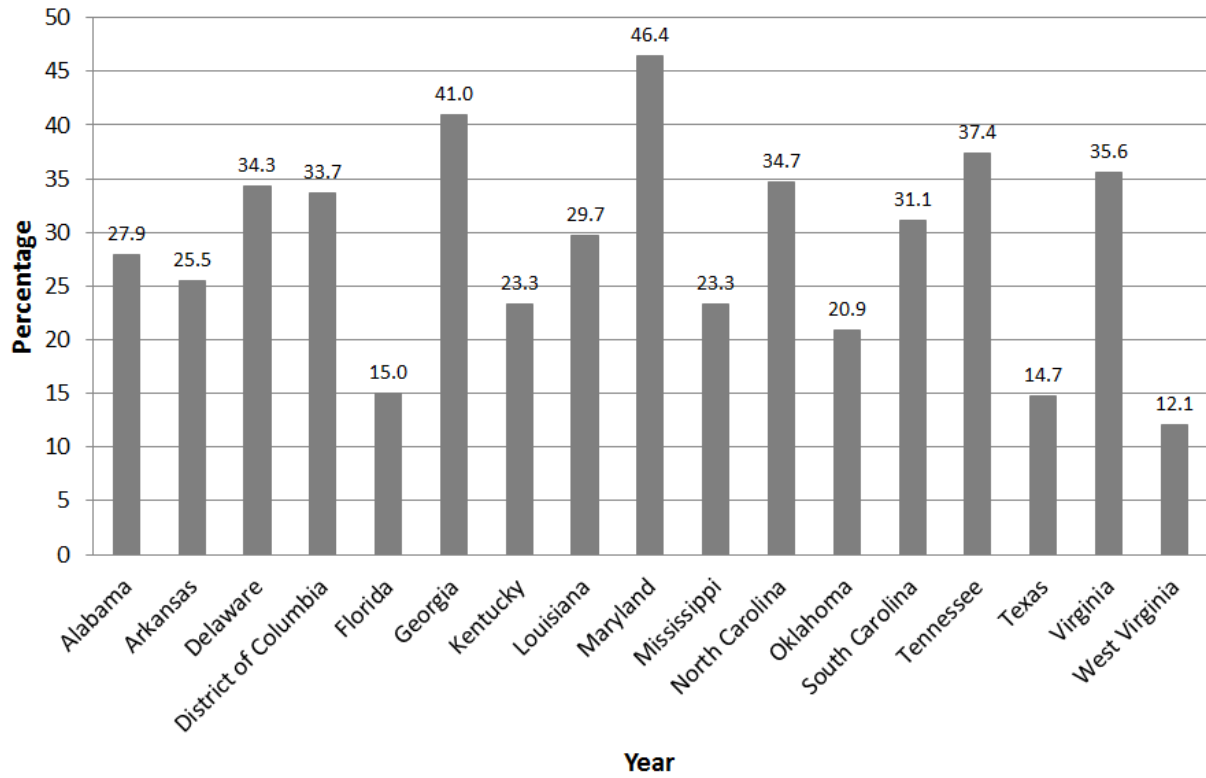
**Figure 3. Latino populations of Southern states 2015**



**Figure 4. Percentage of Latinos in Southern States in 2015**

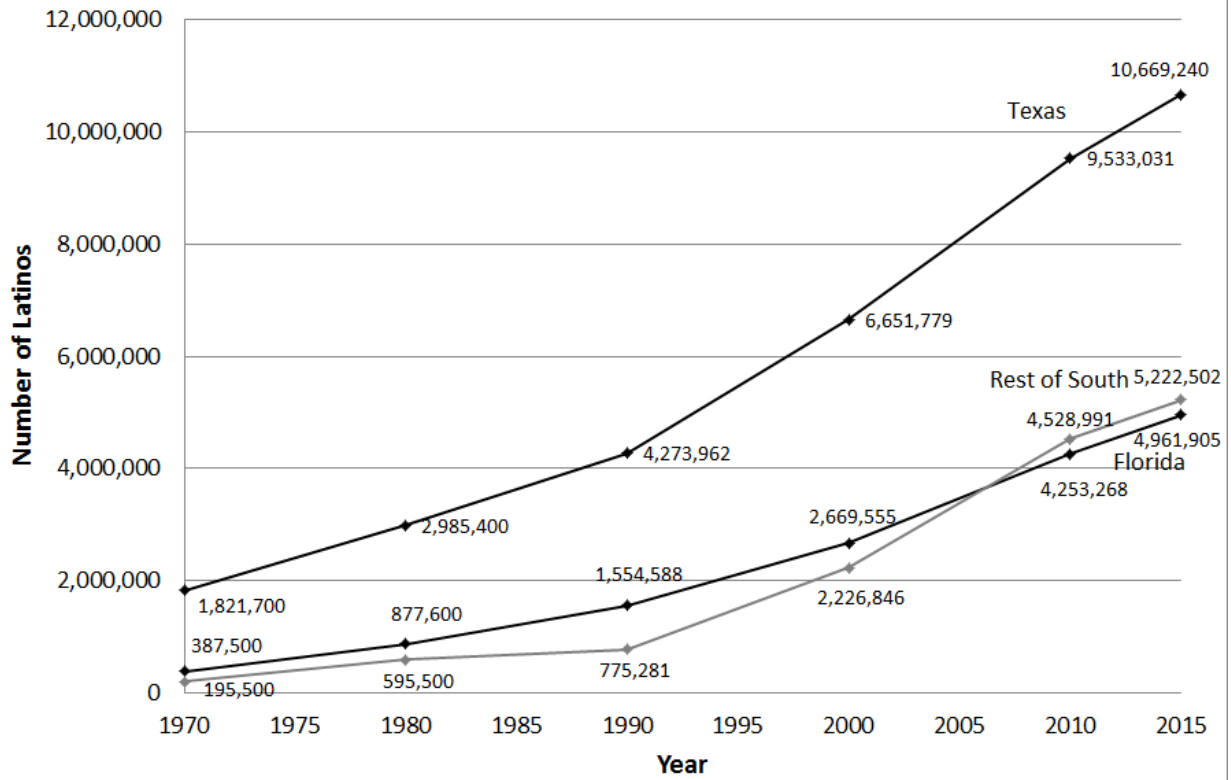


**Figure 5. Estimated undocumented population as a percentage of the Total Latino Population by state in 2016**

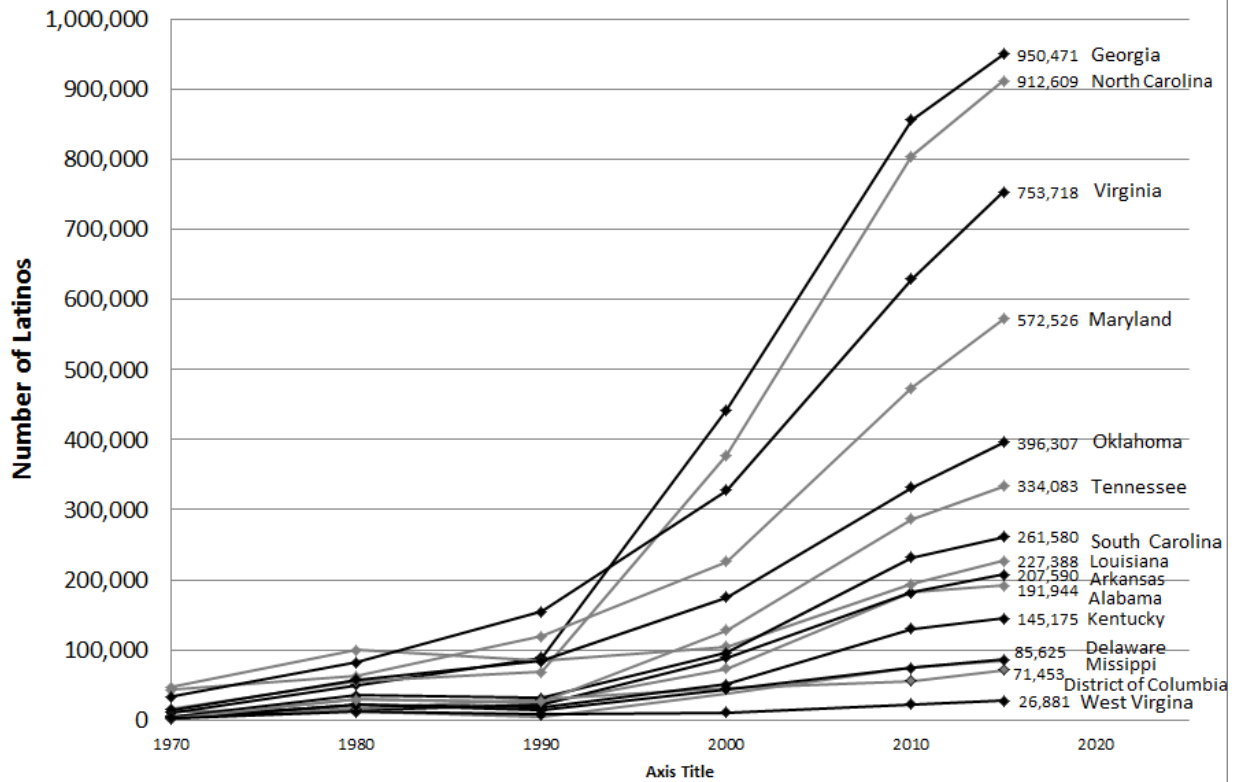




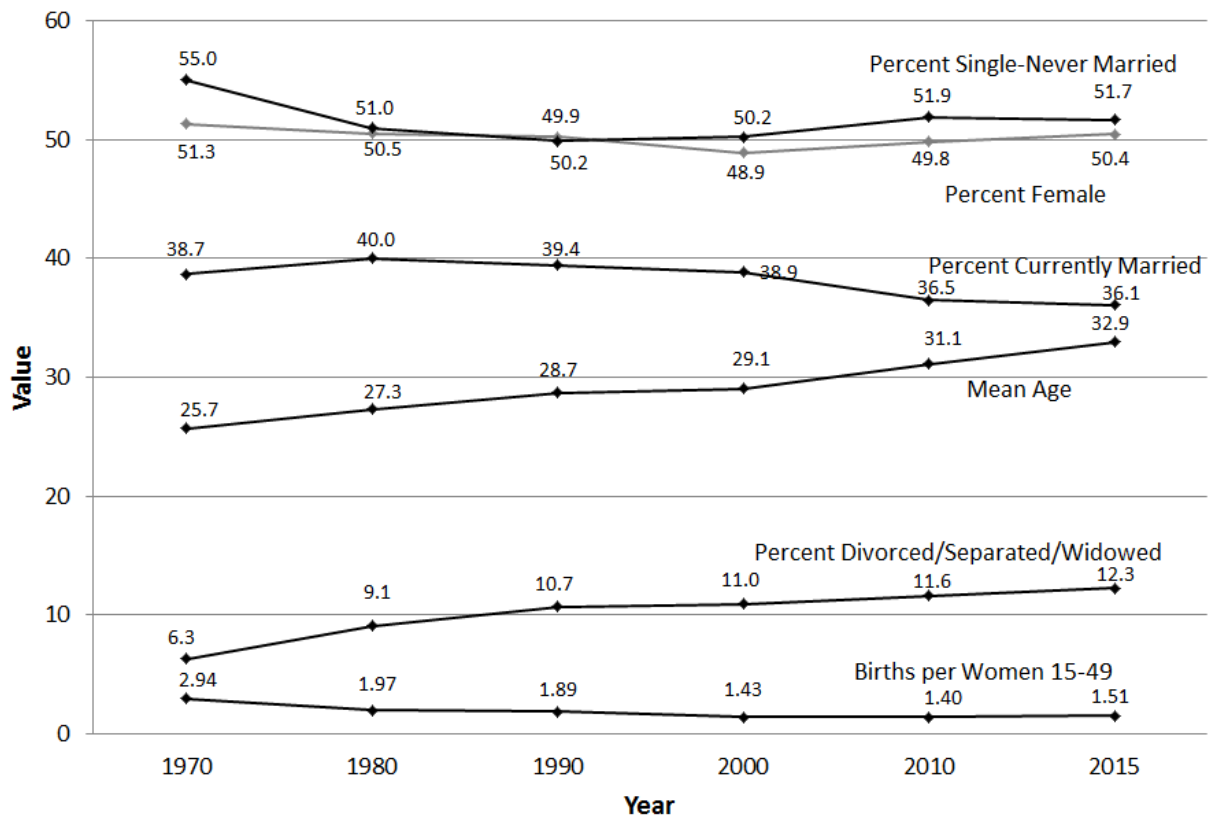
**Figure 6. Growth of Latino population in Florida, Texas, and rest of south  
1970-2015**

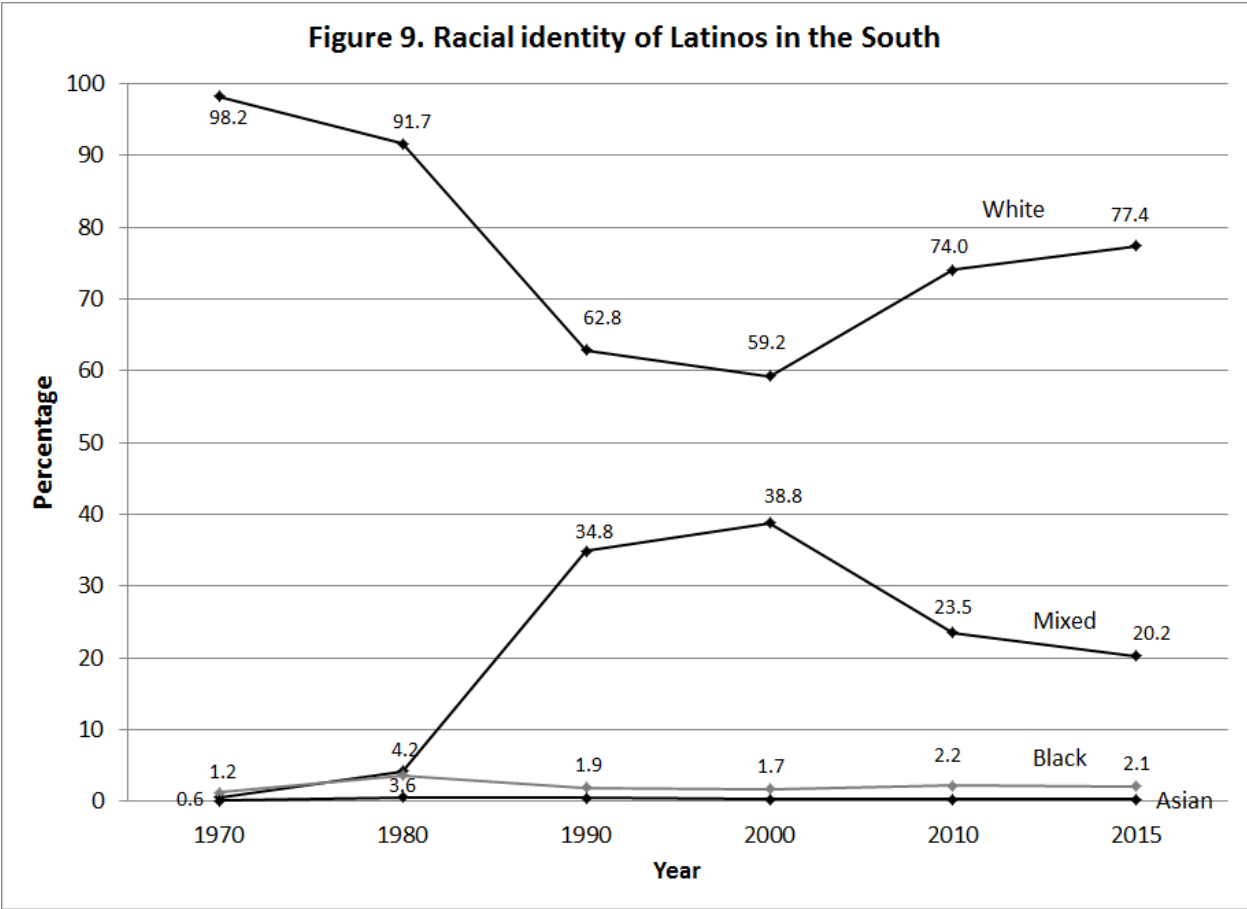


**Figure 7. Growth of the Latino population in Southern states other than Florida and Texas 1970-2015**

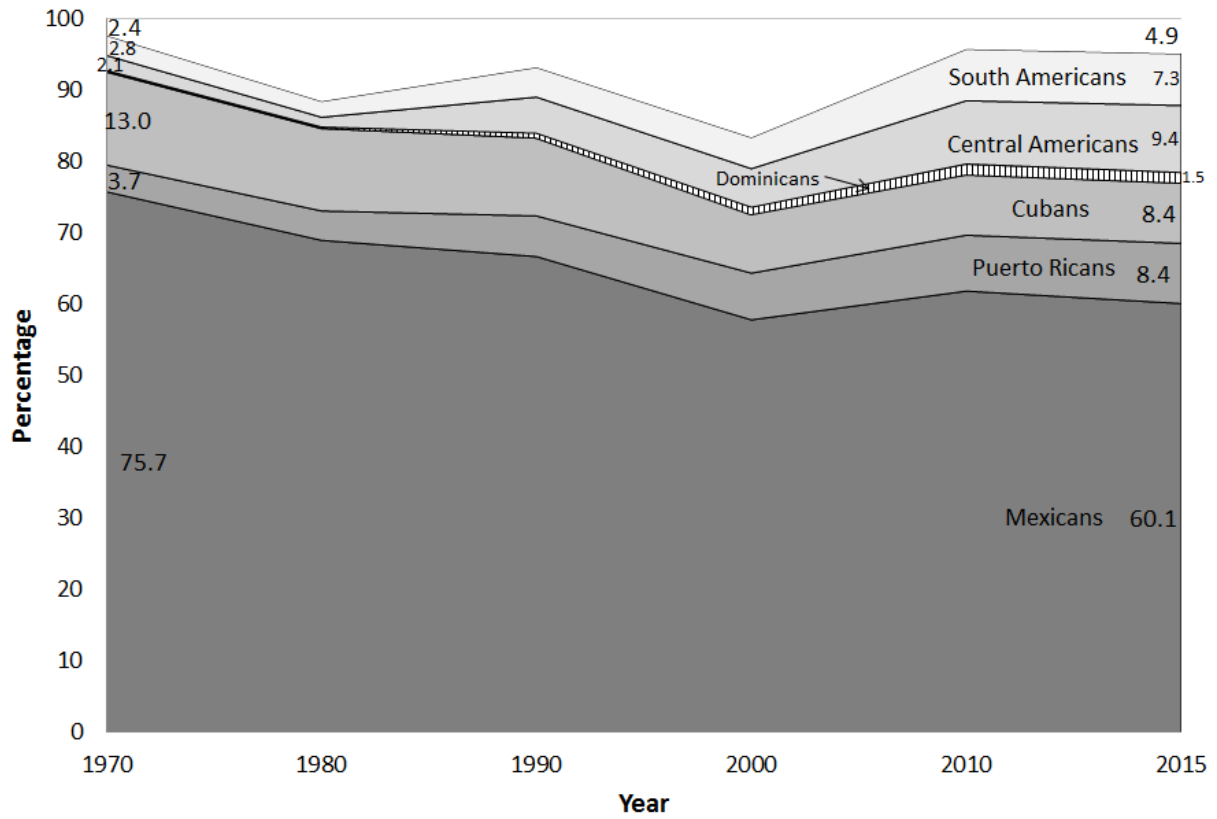


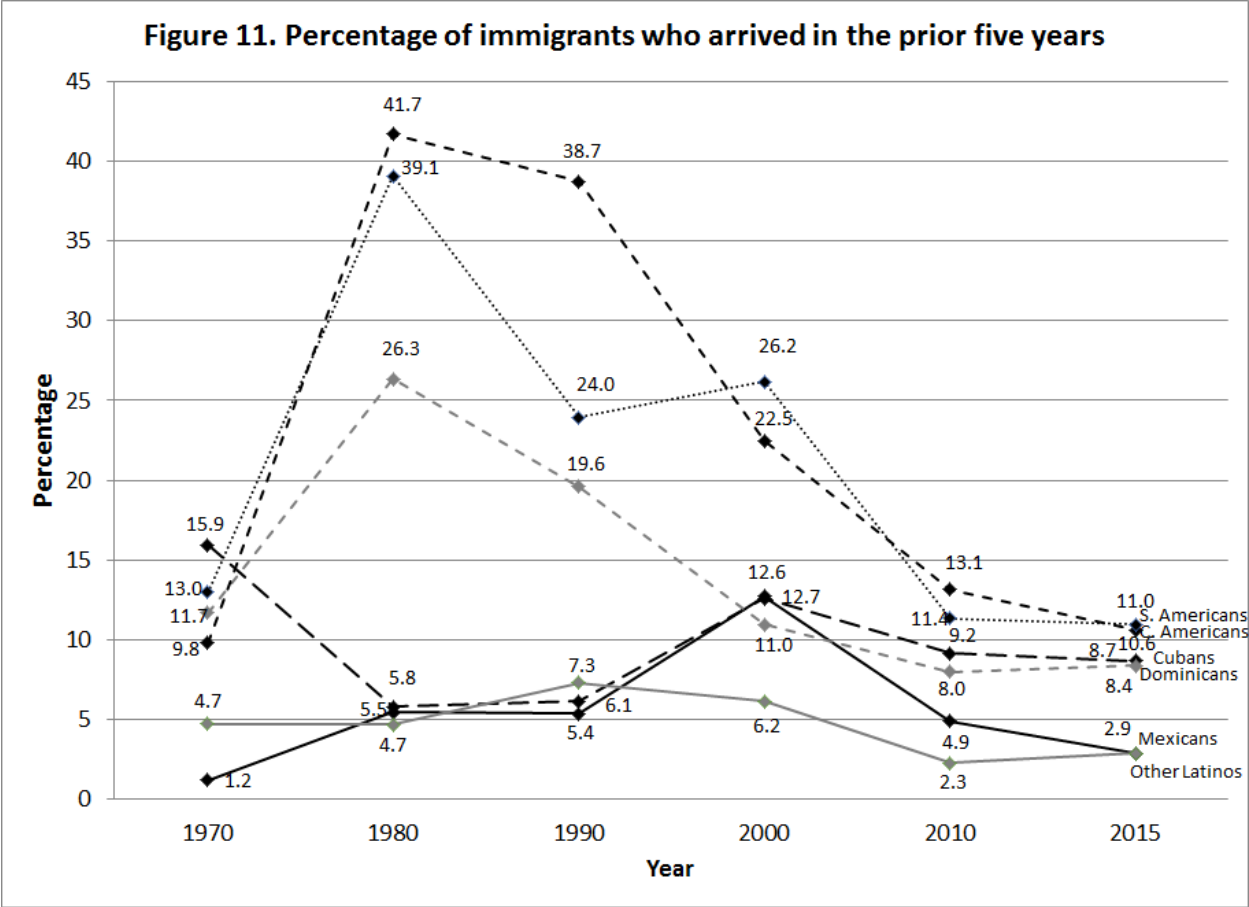
**Figure 8. Demographic characteristics of Latinos in the South**

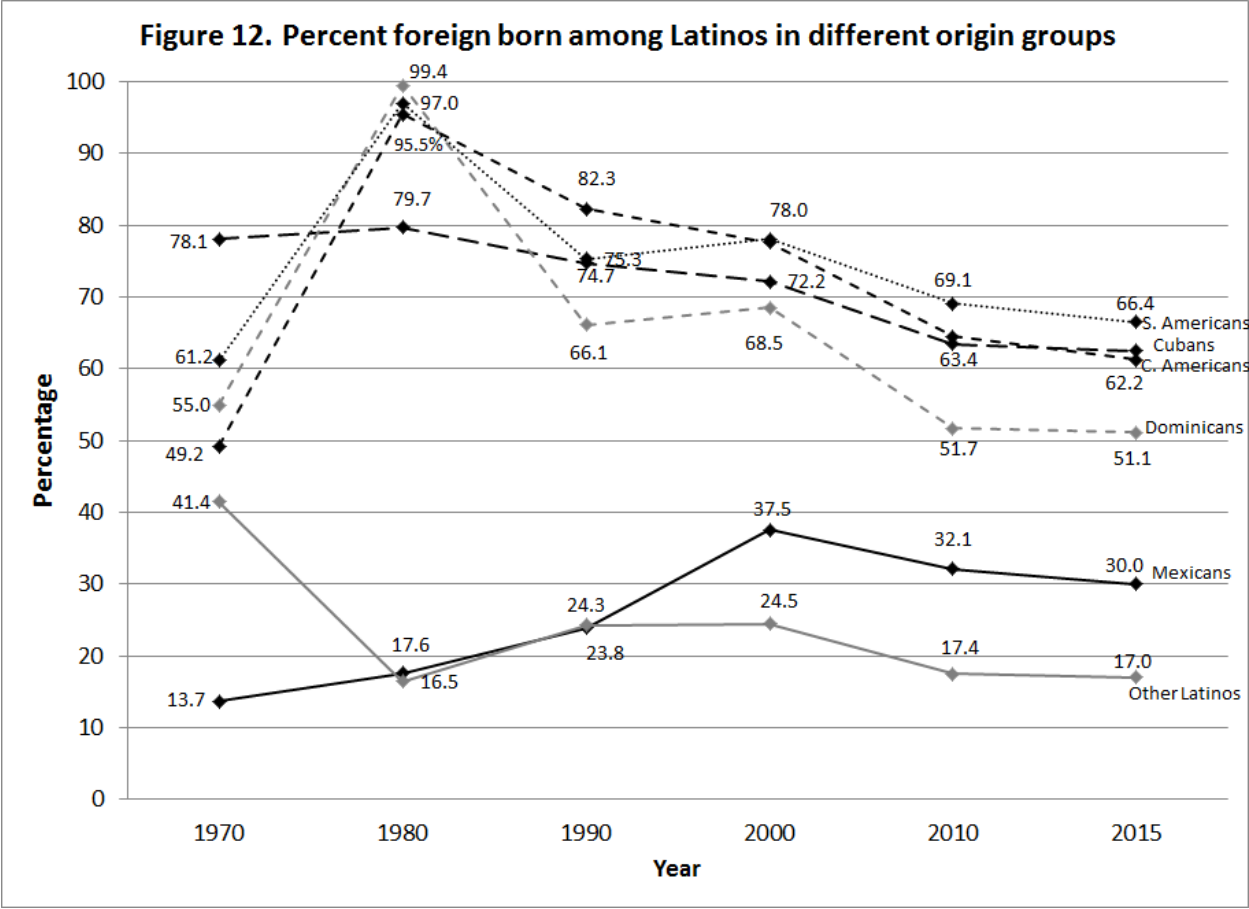




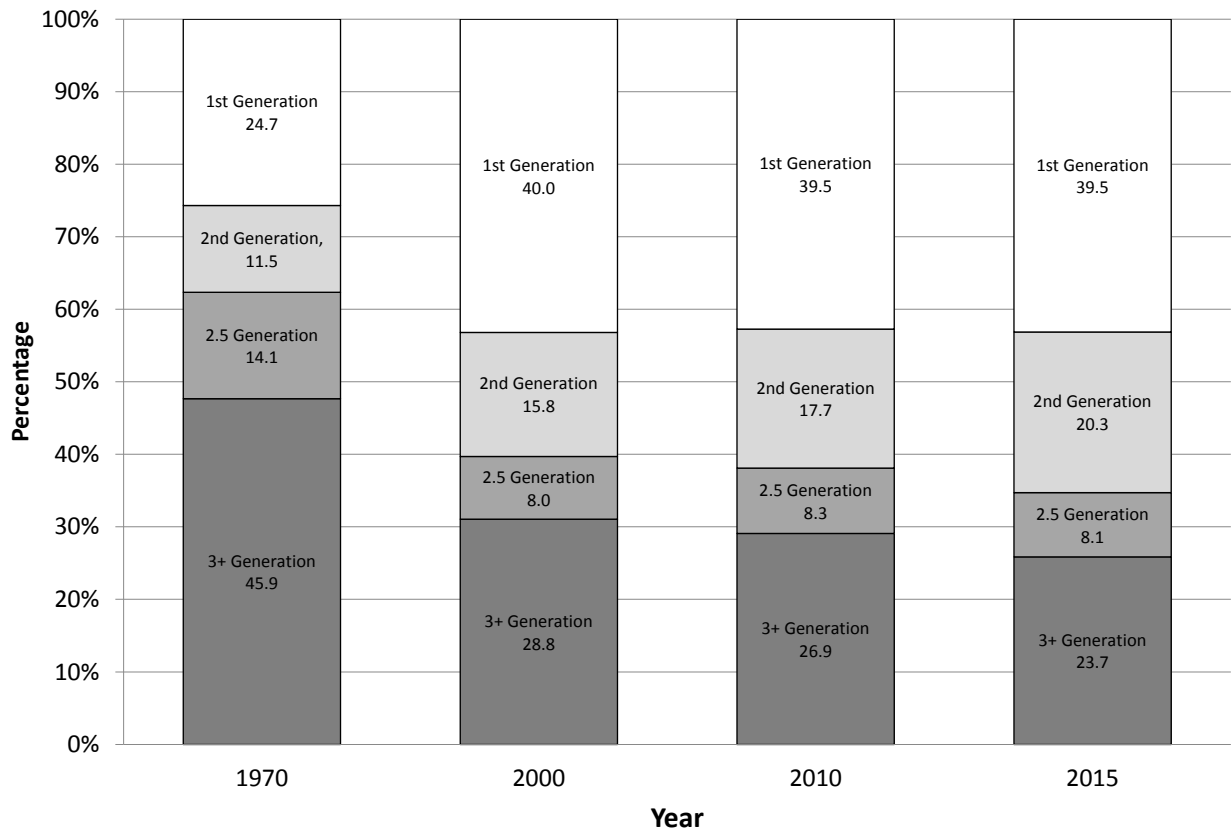
**Figure 10. Origins of Latinos in the South**





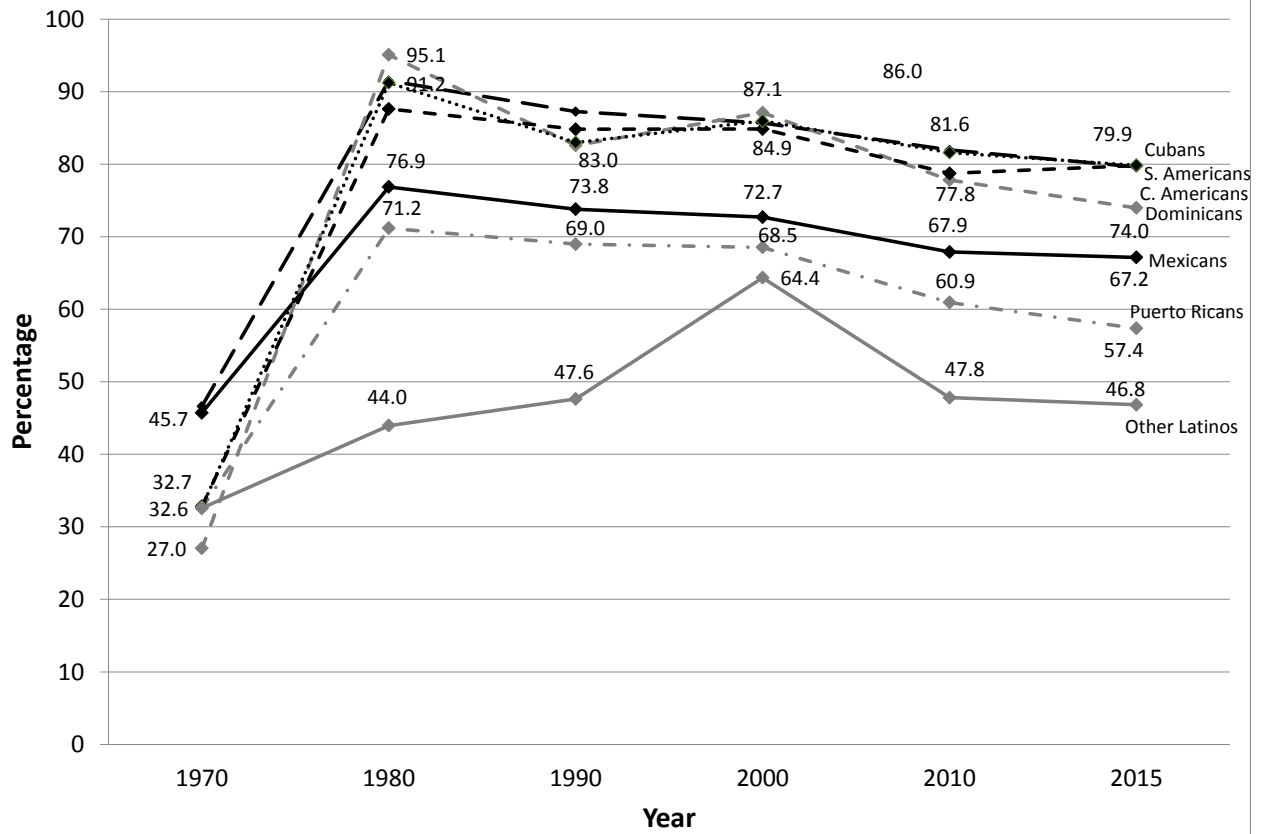


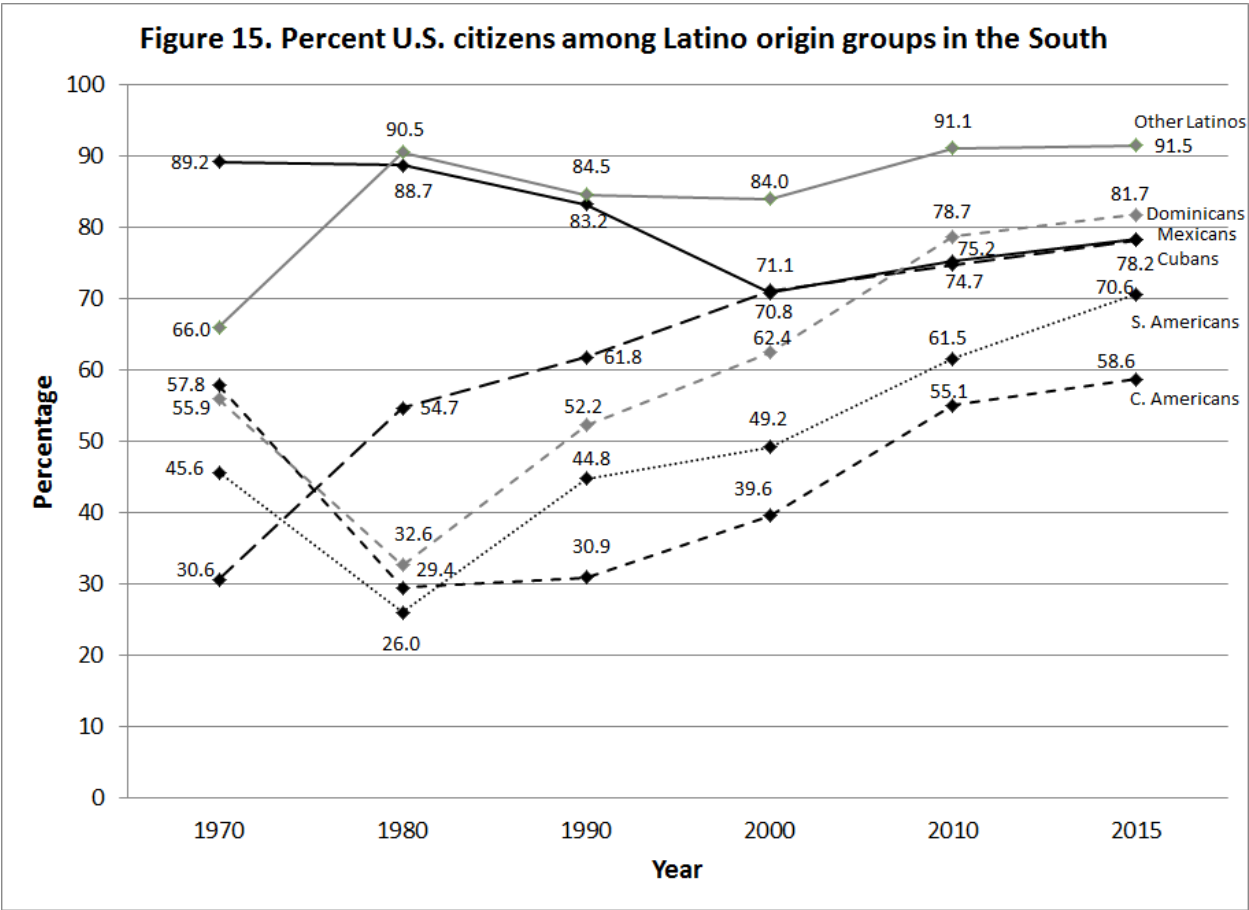
**Figure 13. Generational composition of Latinos in the South**



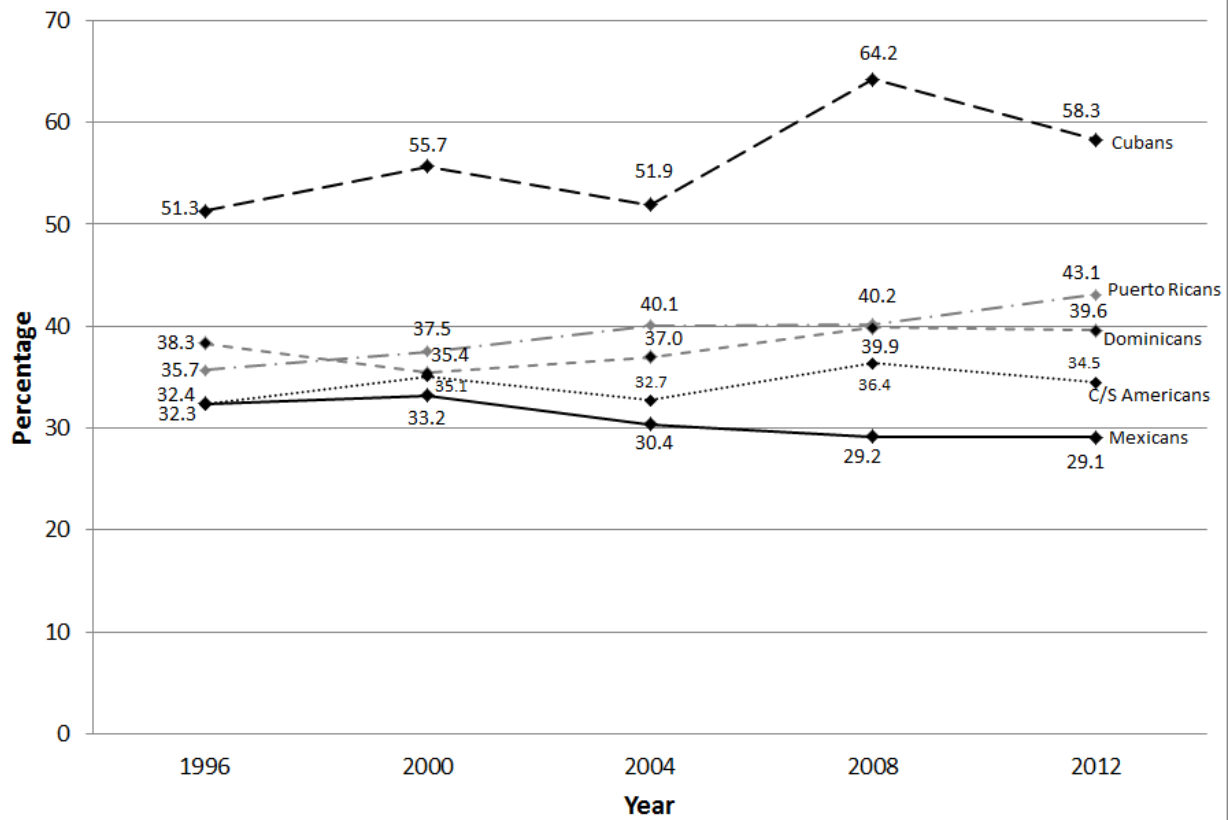


**Figure 14. Percent of Latino origin groups speaking Spanish at home**

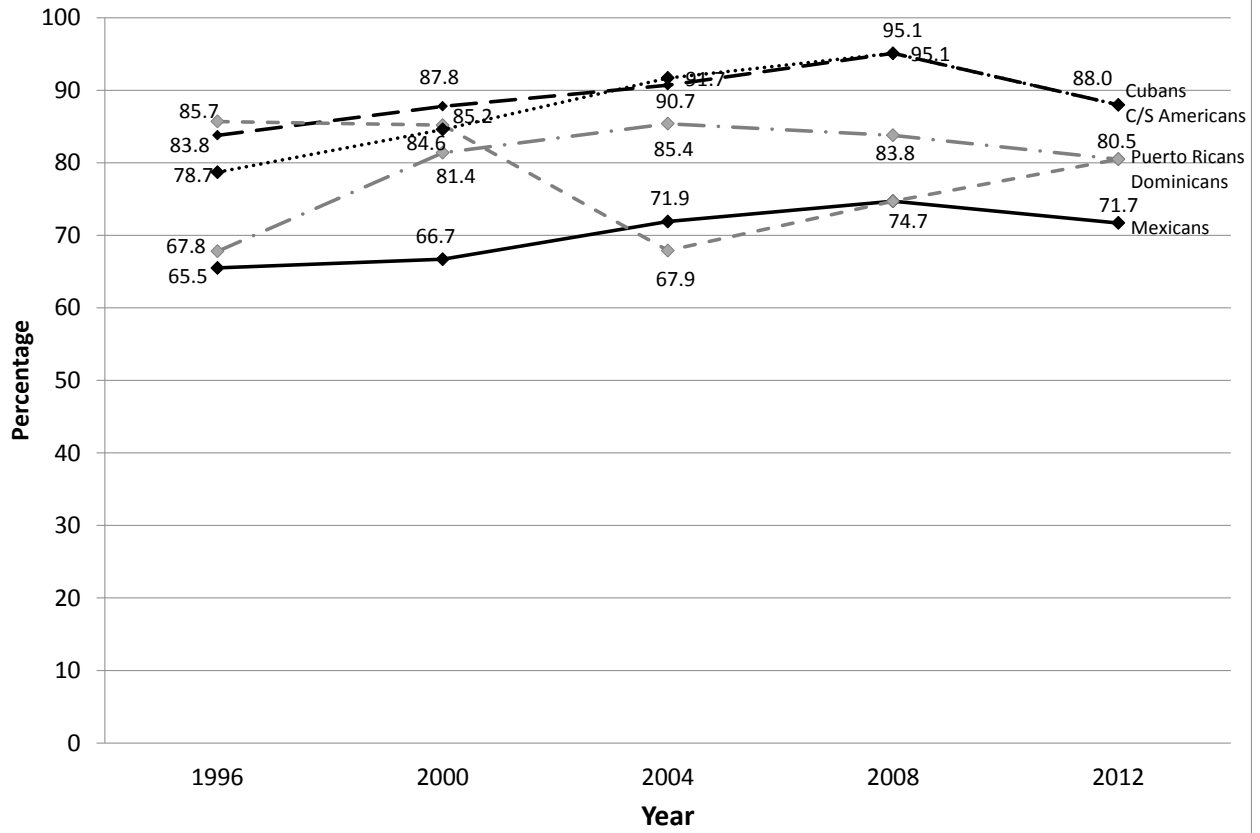




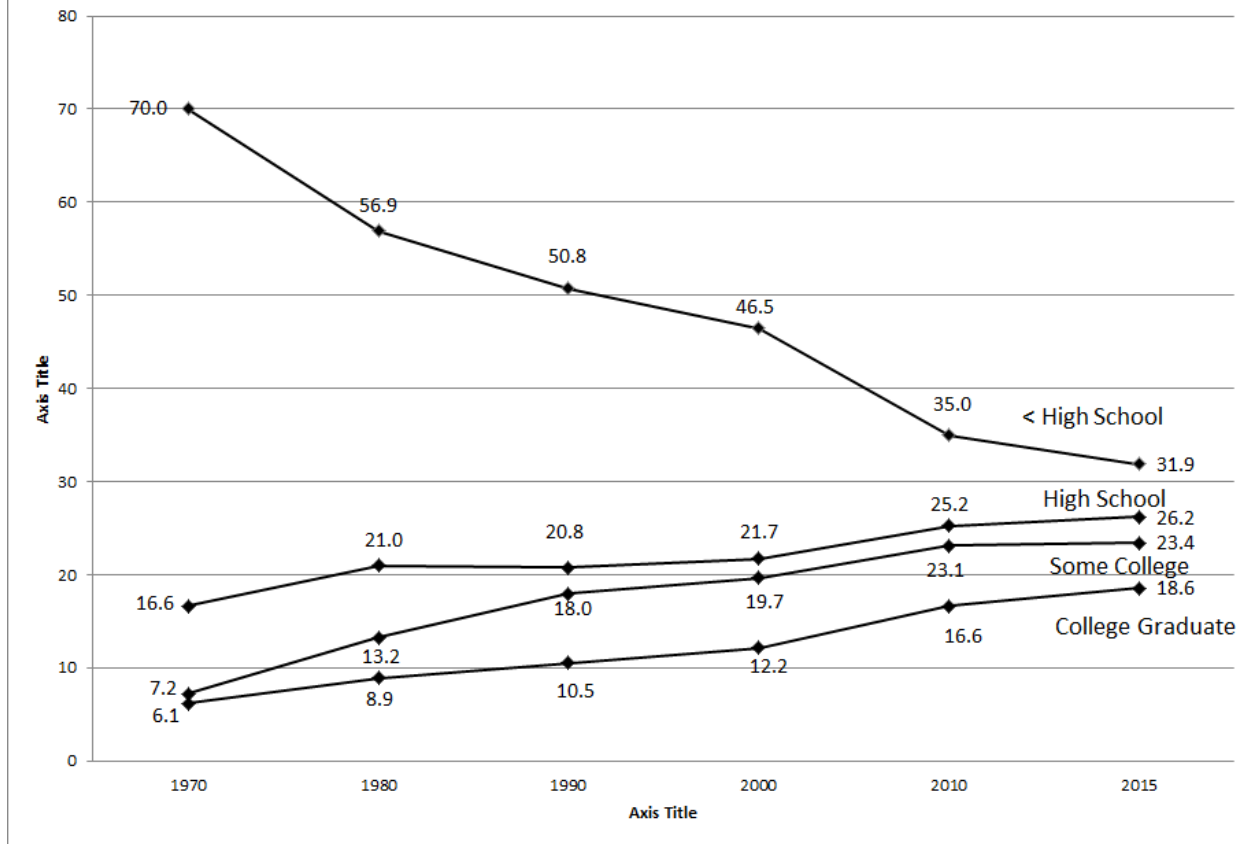
**Figure 16. Percent of Latino origin groups registered to vote**



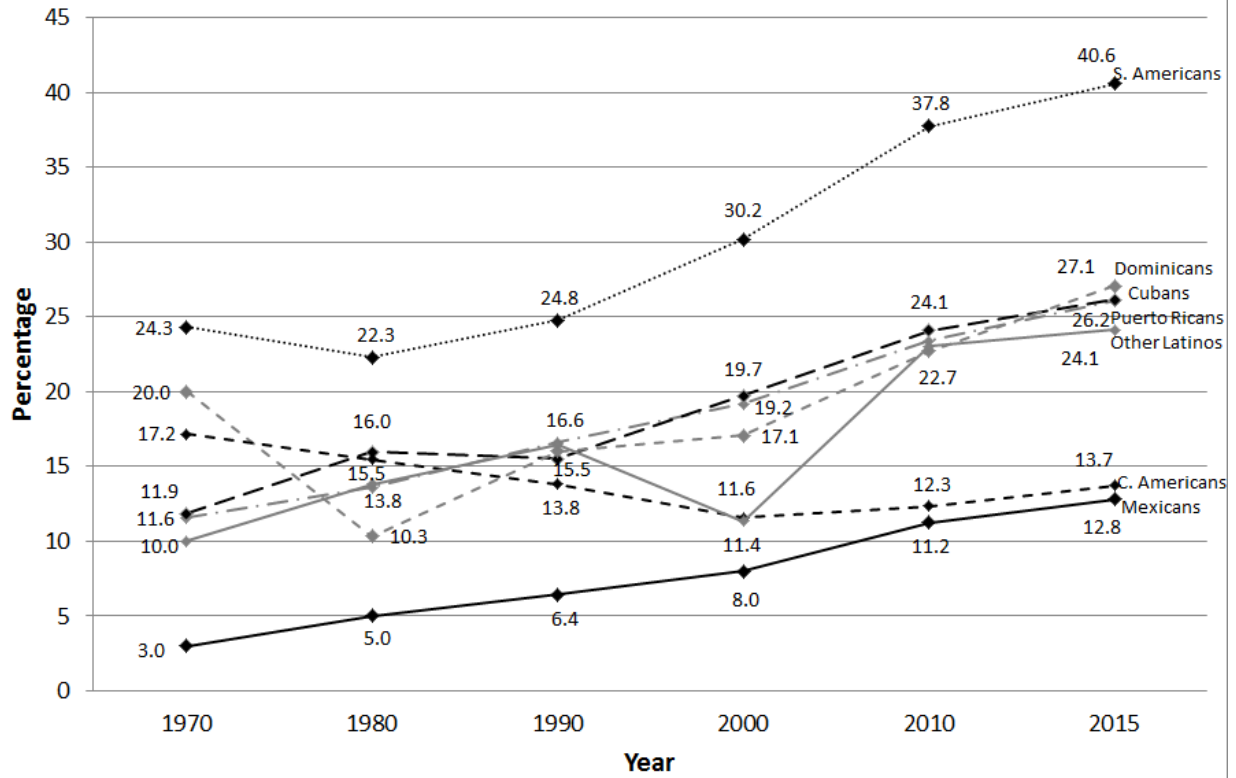
**Figure 17. Percent of registered Latino origin groups who voted**



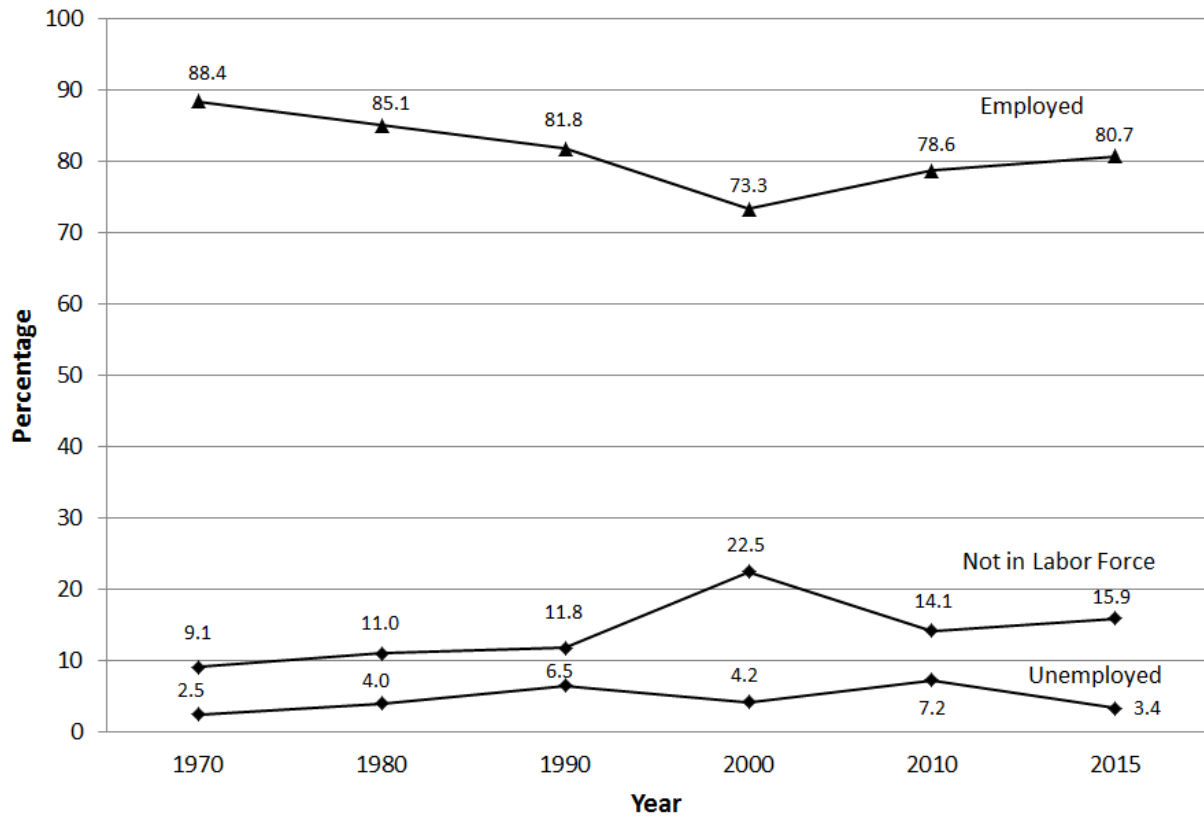
**Figure 18. Educational attainment of Latinos in the South**



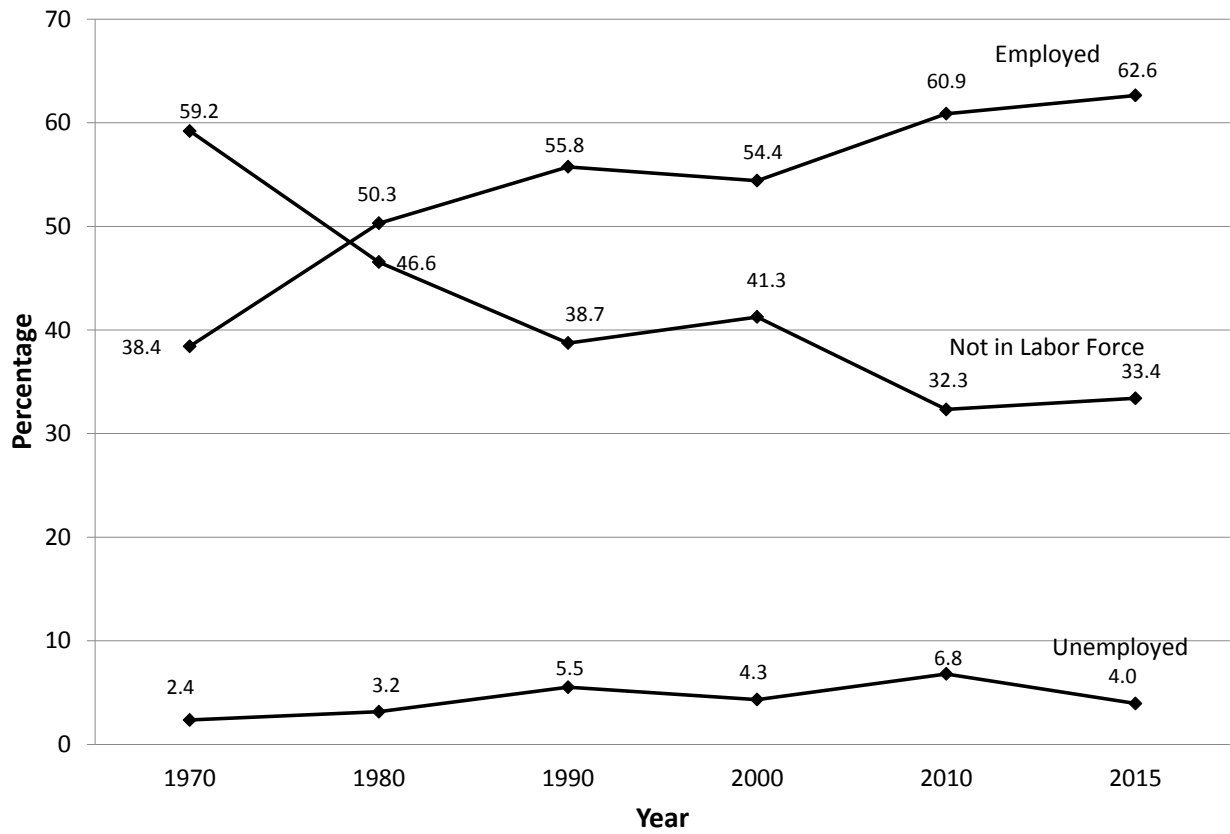
**Figure 19. Percent of college graduates among Latino origin groups in the South**



**Figure 20. Labor force status of Latino males in the south**

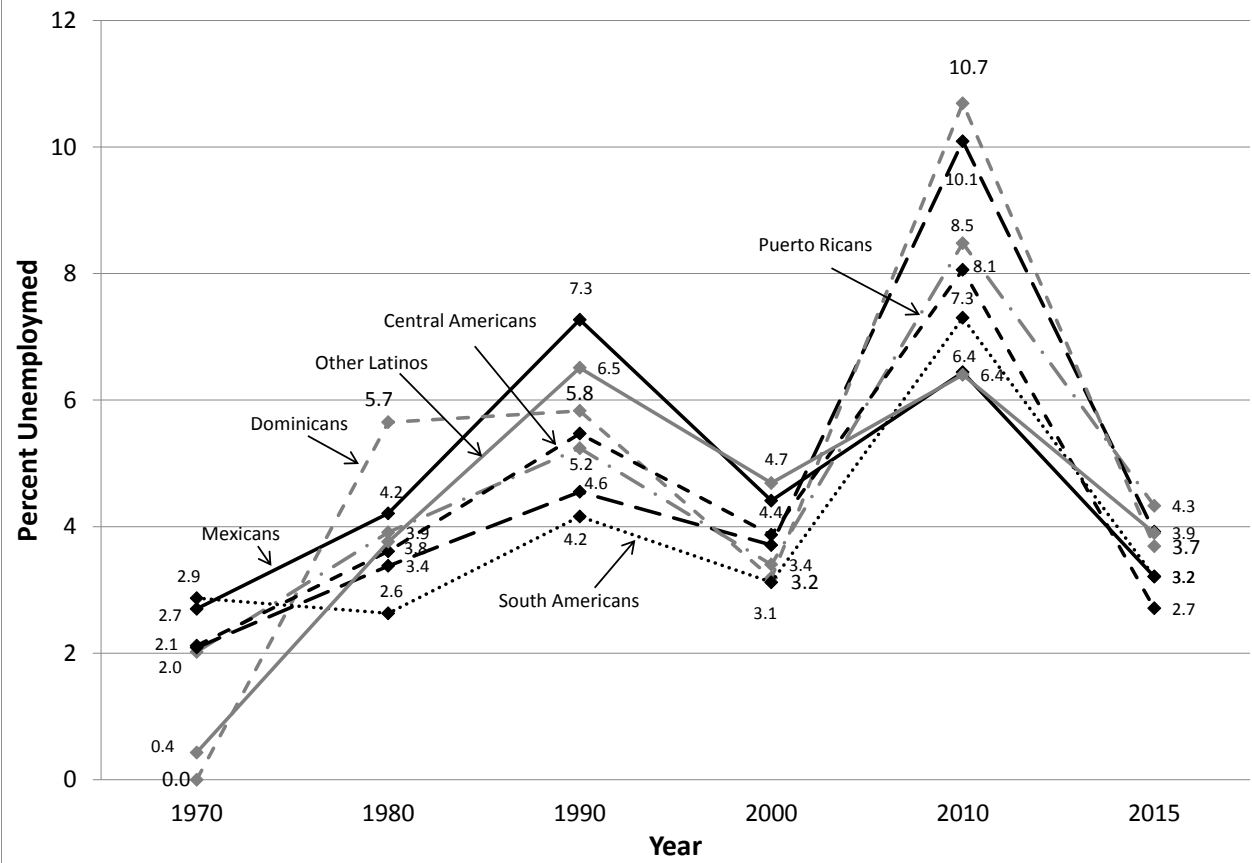


**Figure 21. Labor force status of Latina females in the South**

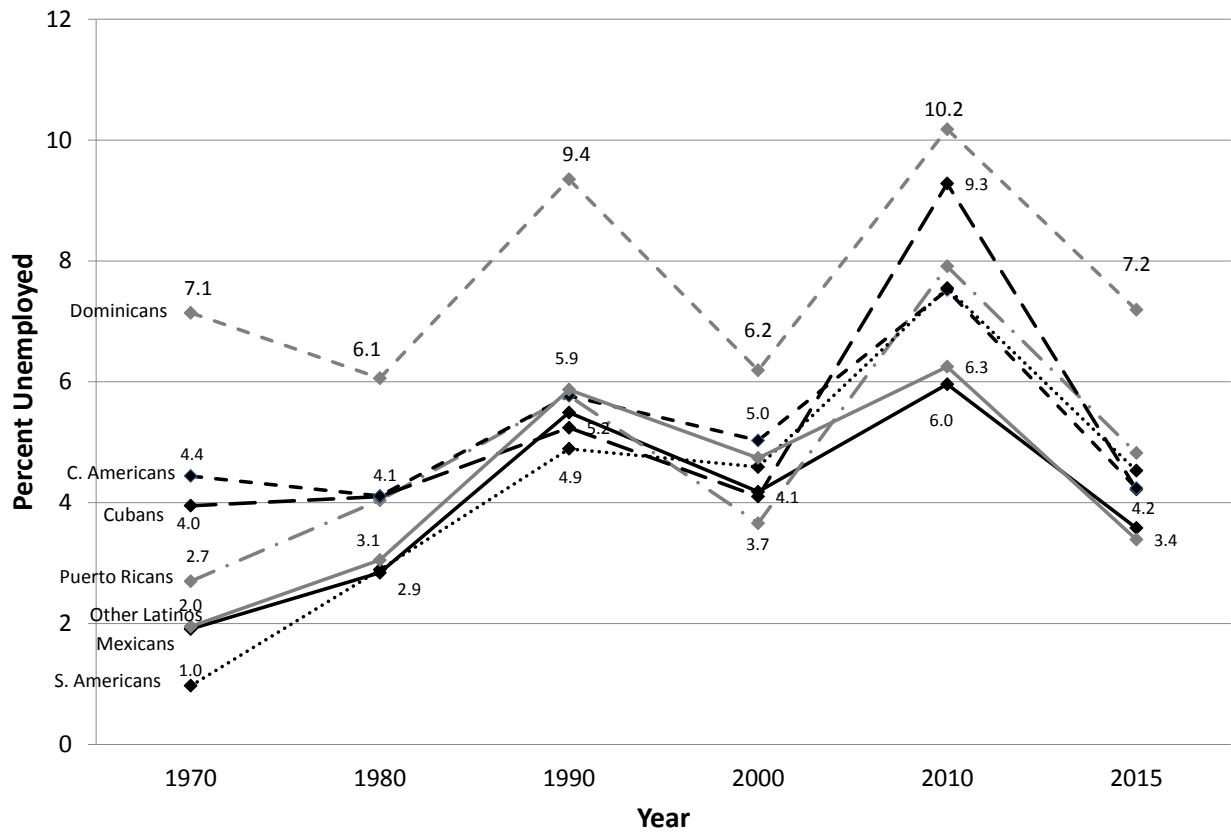




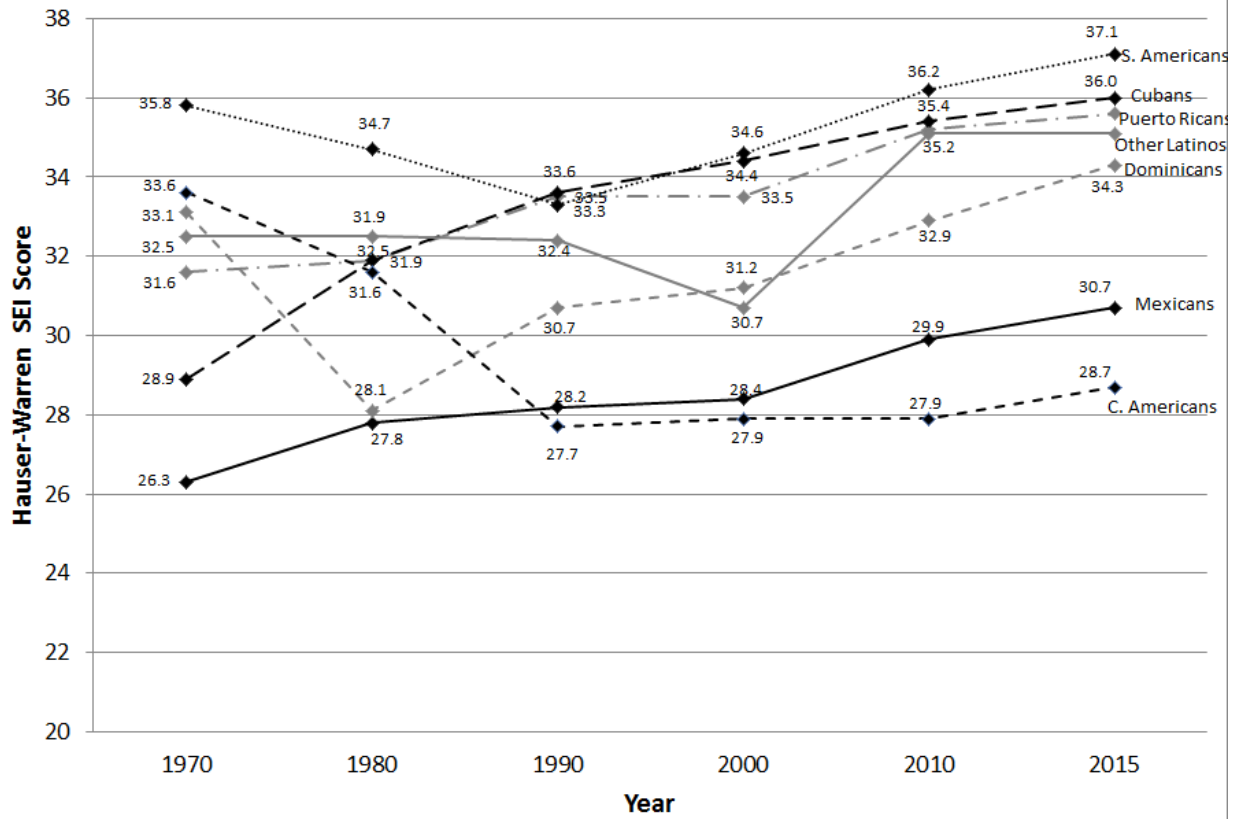
**Figure 22. Male unemployment for Latino origin groups in the South**

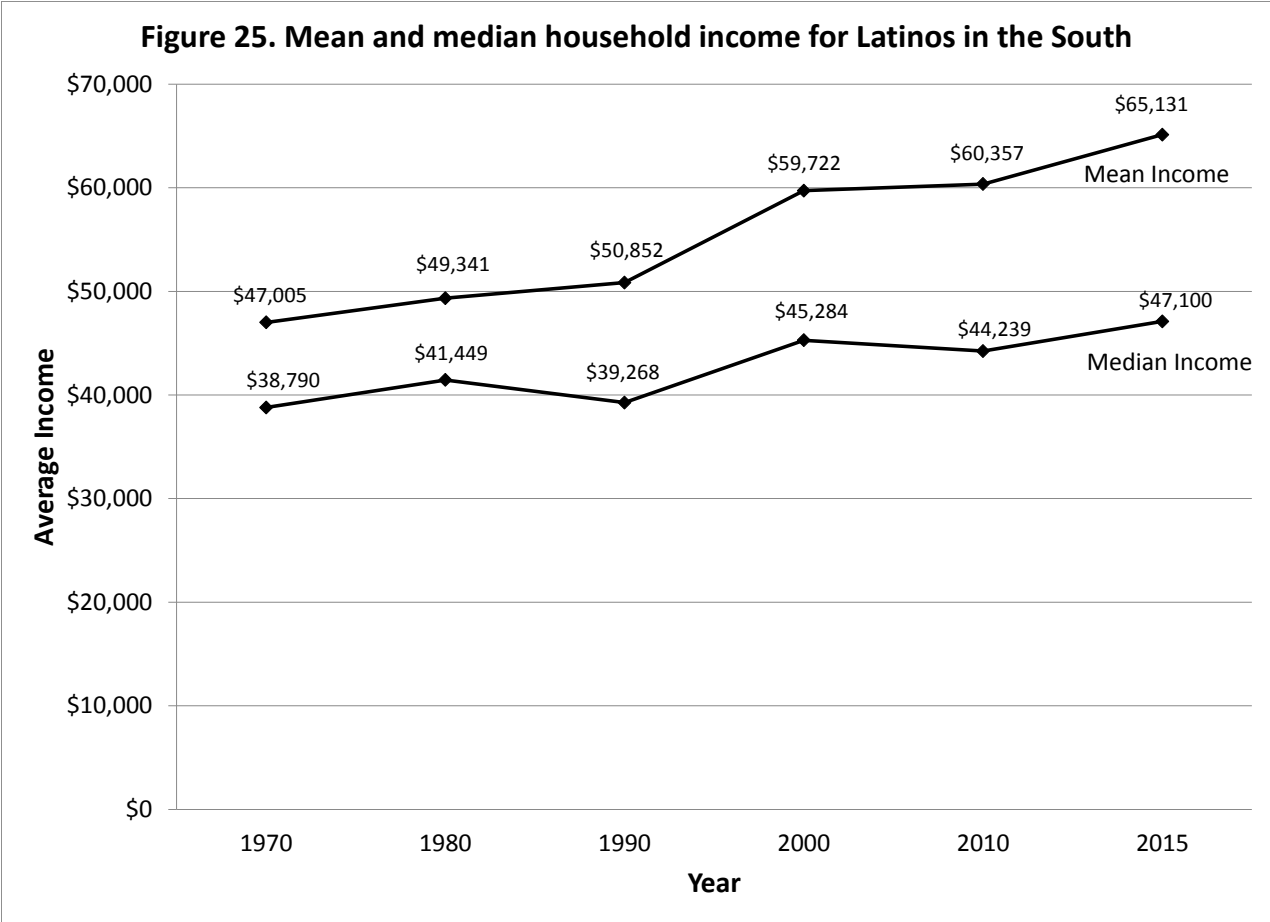


**Figure 23. Female unemployment for Latino origin groups in the South**

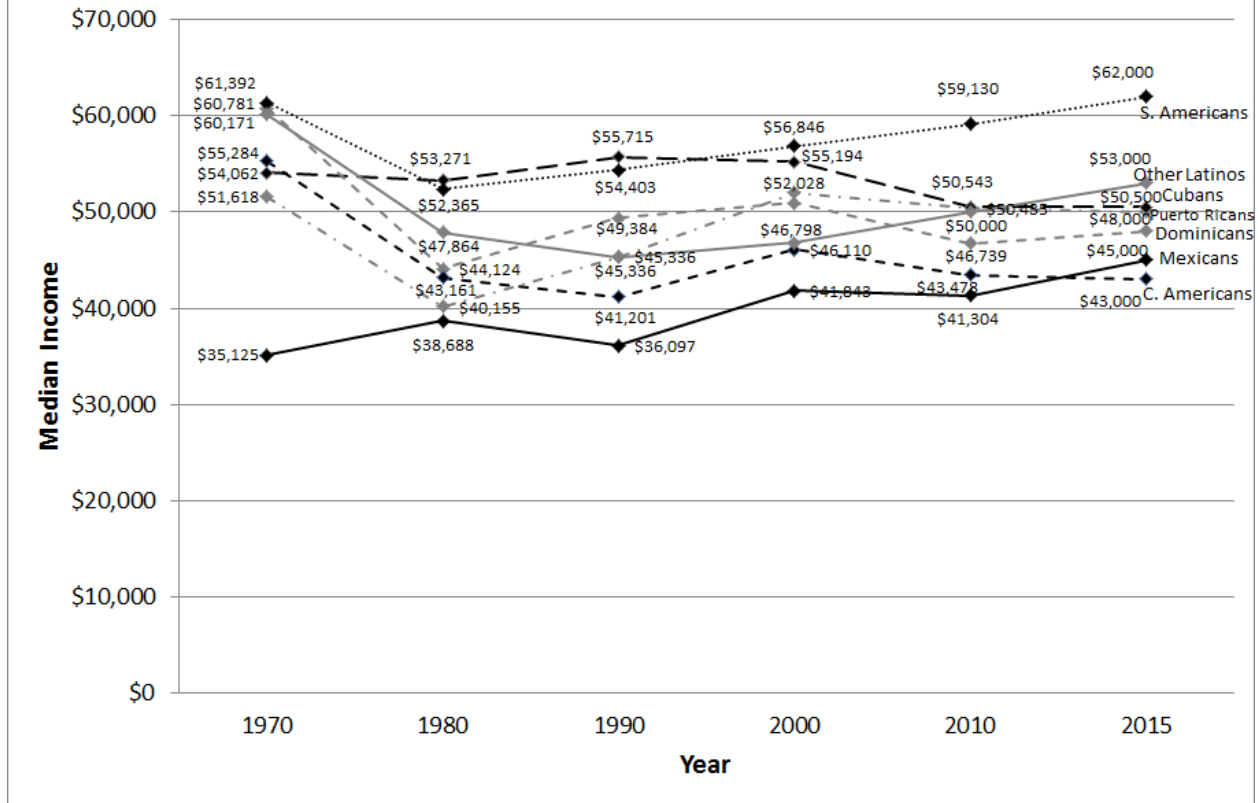


**Figure 24. Occupational status for Latino origin groups in the South**

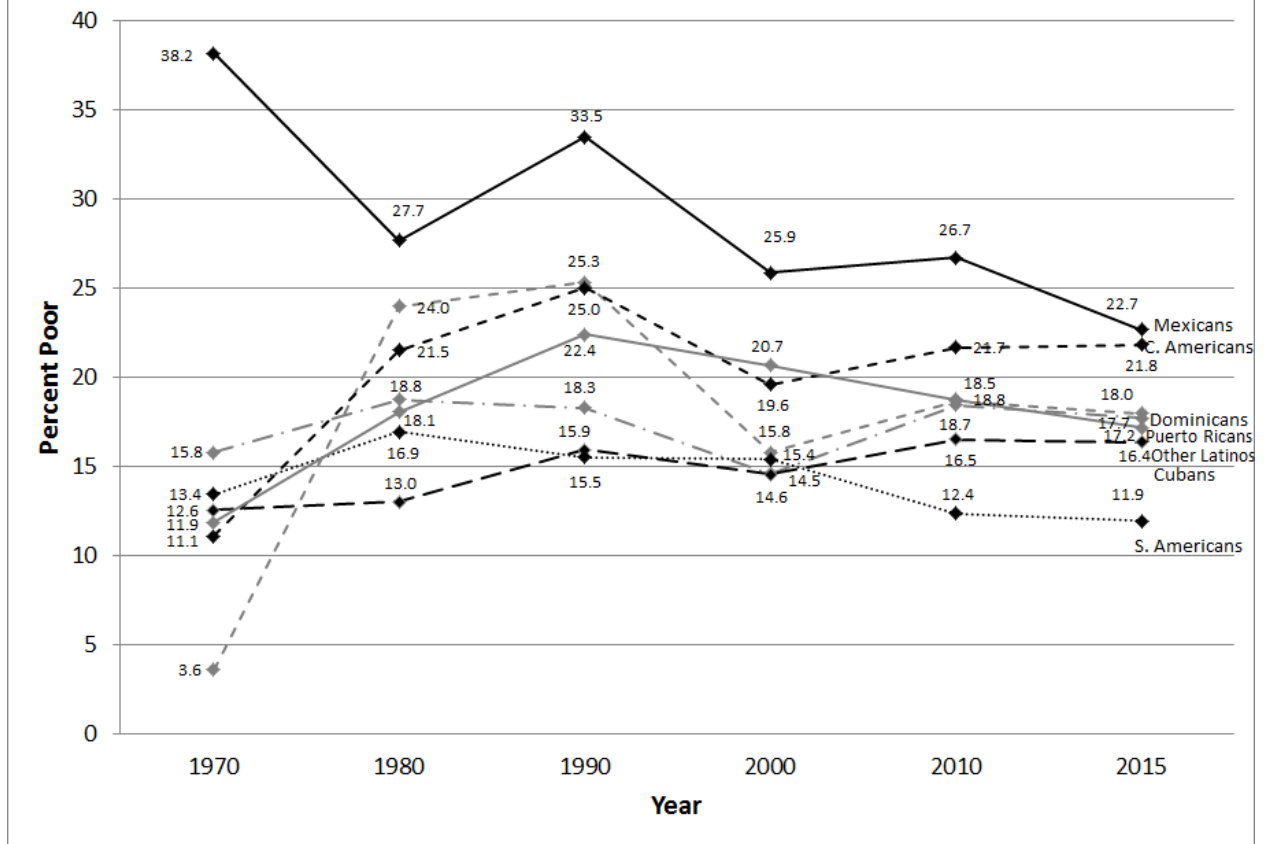




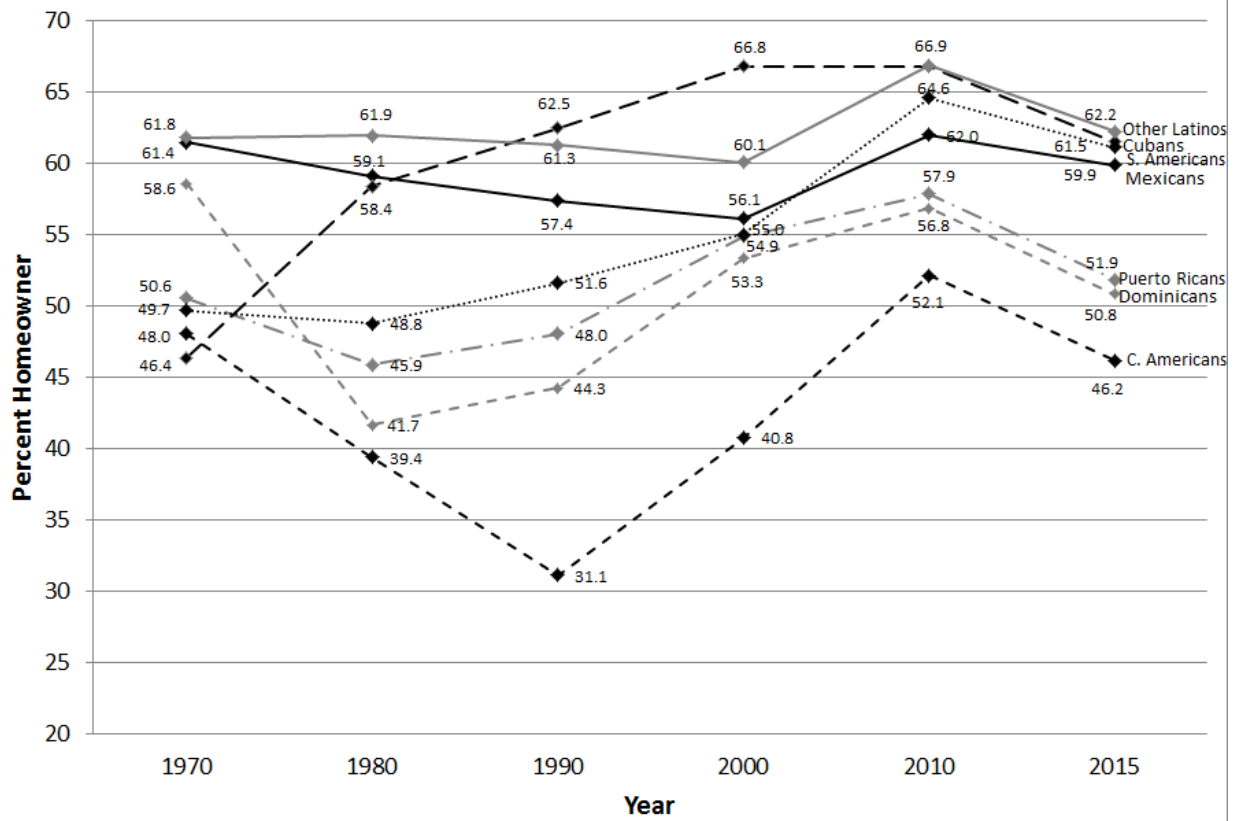
**Figure 26. Median household income for Latino origin groups in the South**



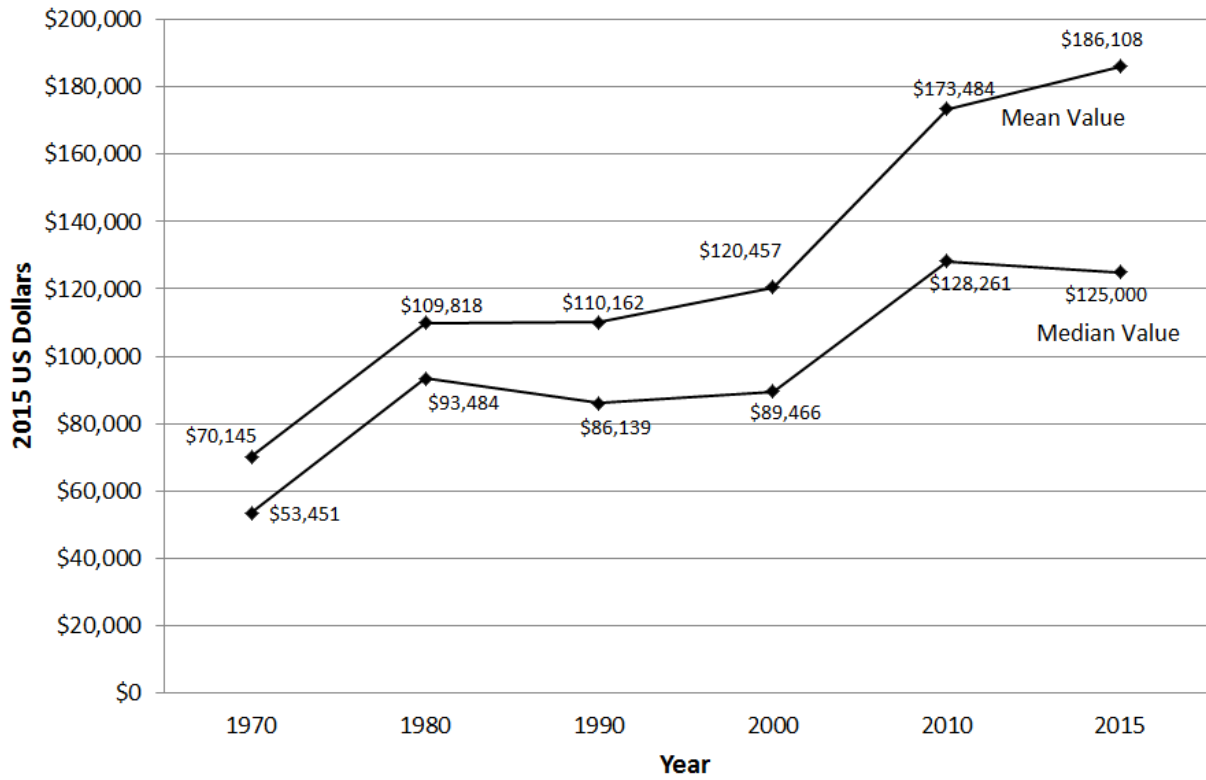
**Figure 27. Poverty rate for Latino origin groups in the South**



**Figure 28. Percent homeowner for Latino origin groups in the South**

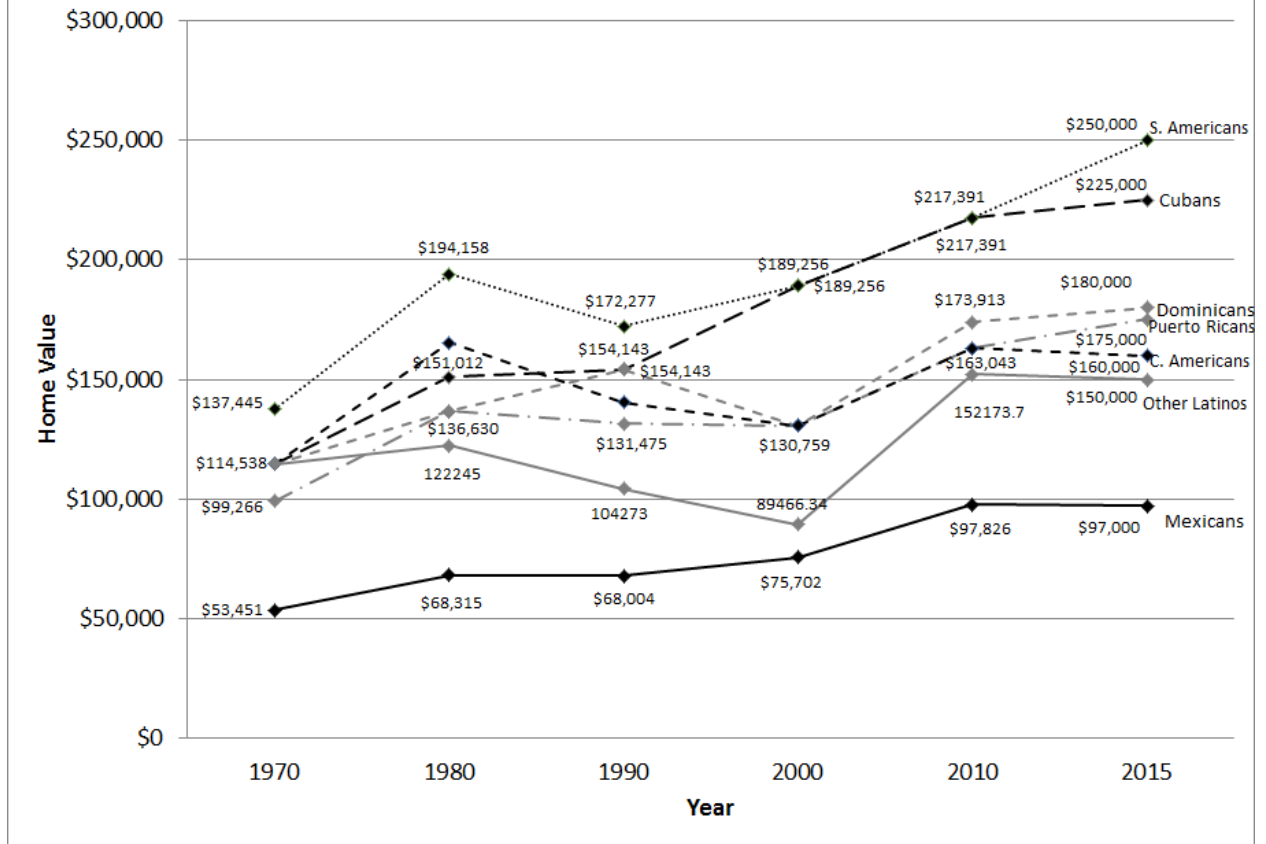


**Figure 29. Mean and median value of homes owned by Latinos in the South**

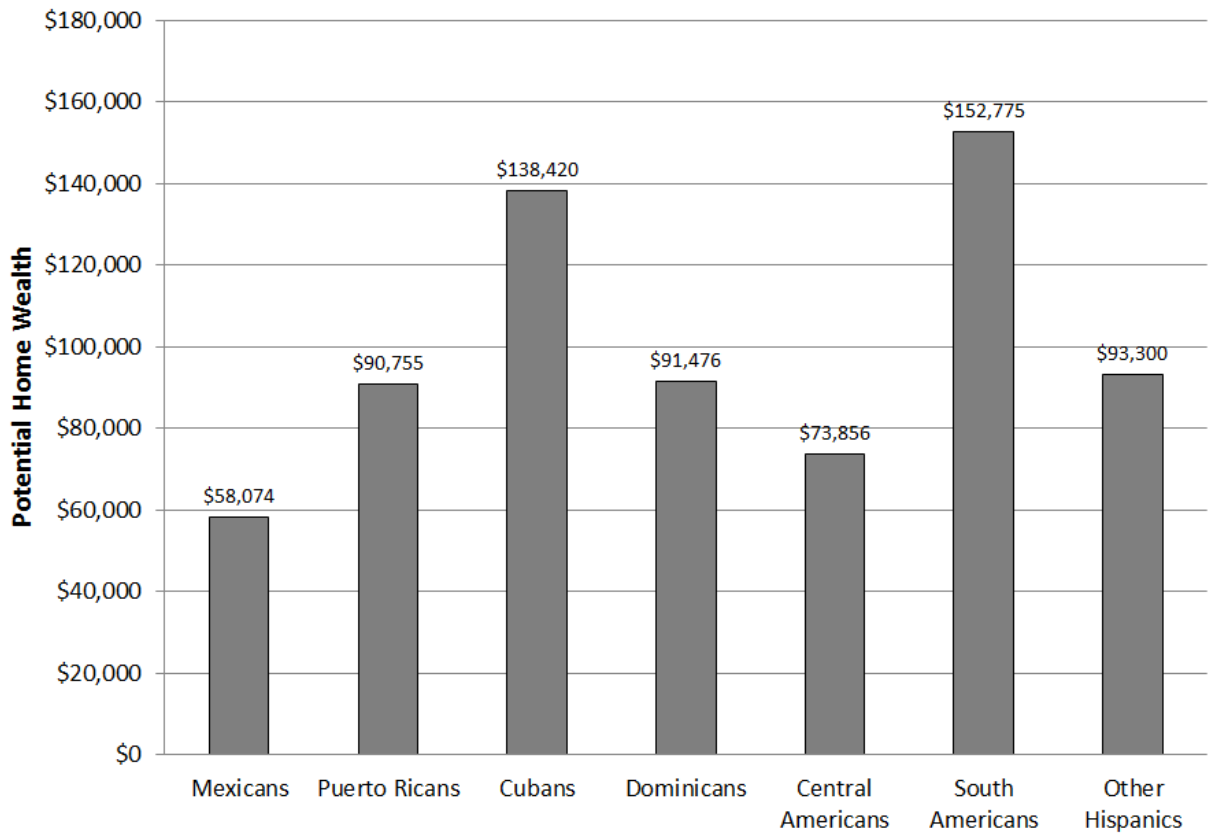


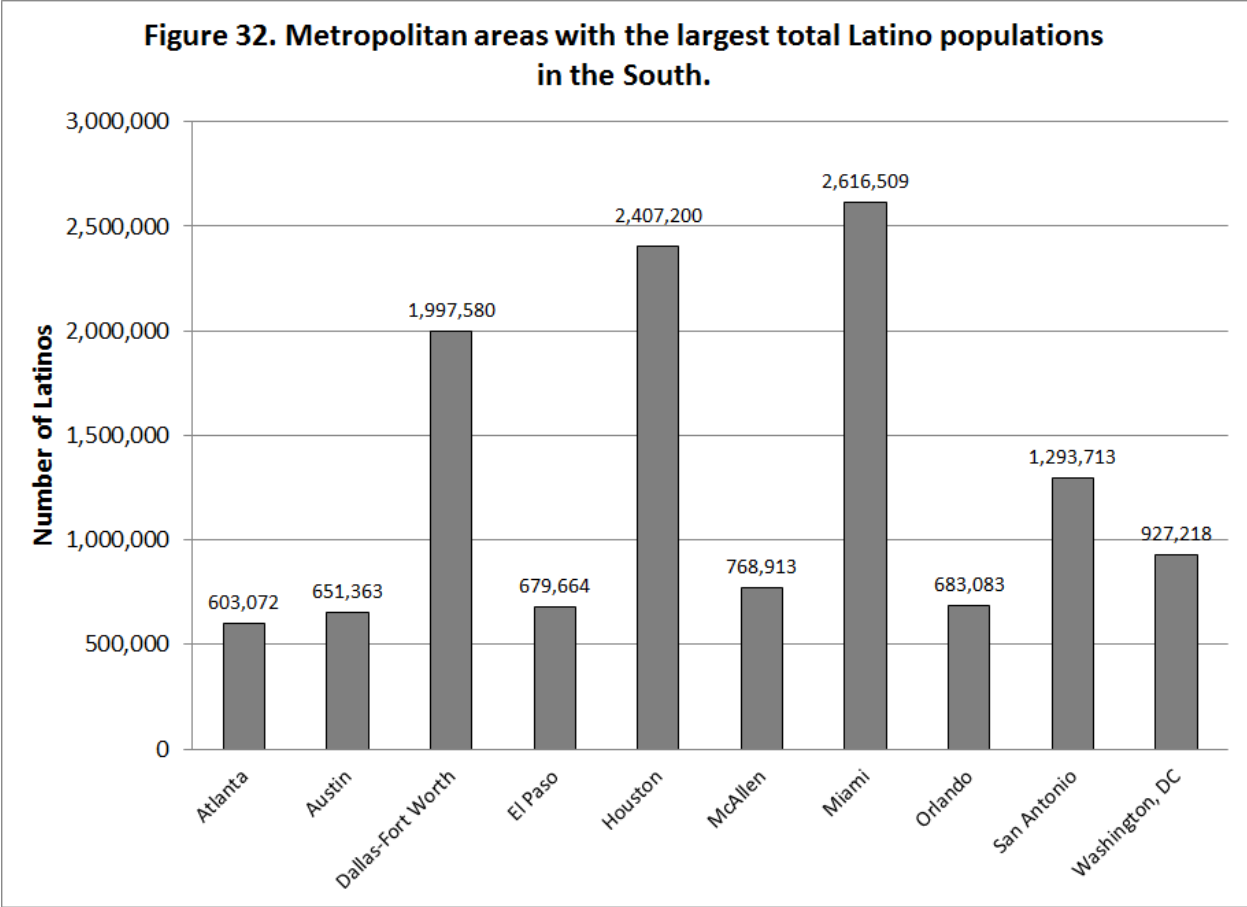


**Figure 30. Median home value for Latino origin groups in the South**

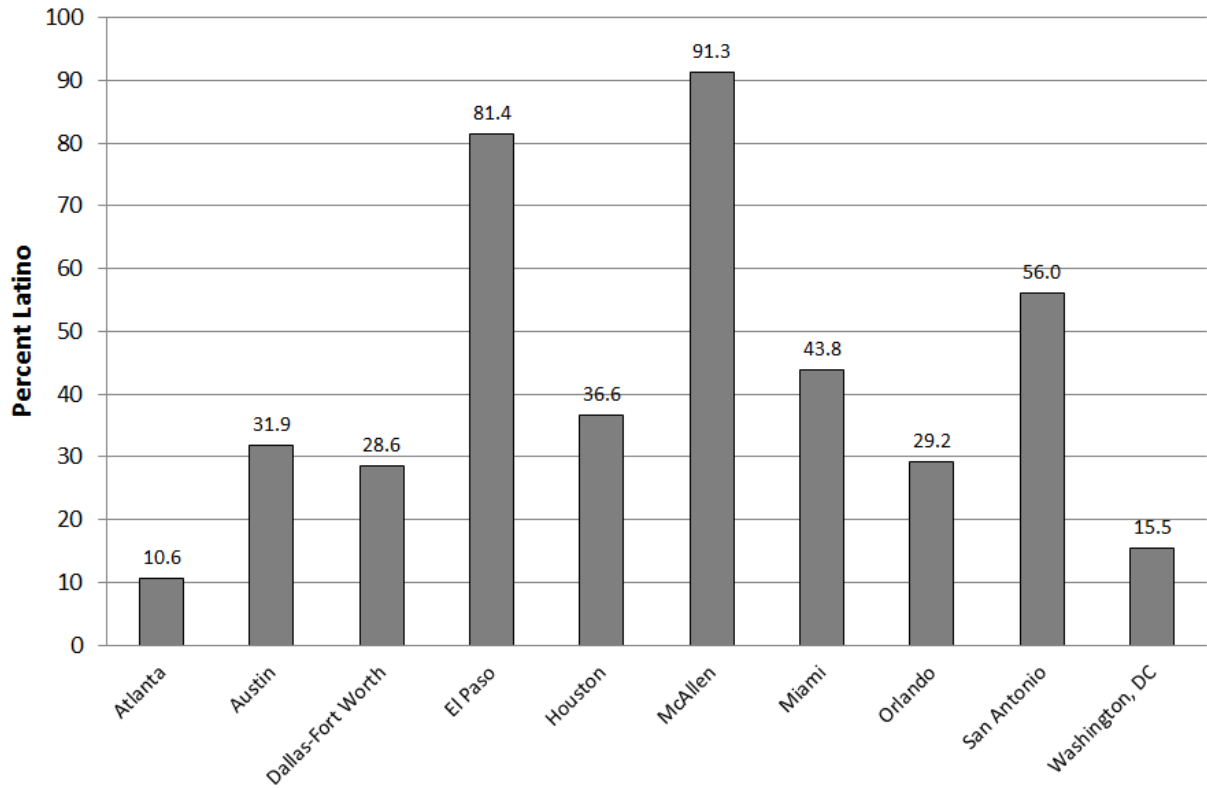


**Figure 31. Potential home wealth for Latino origin groups in 2015**

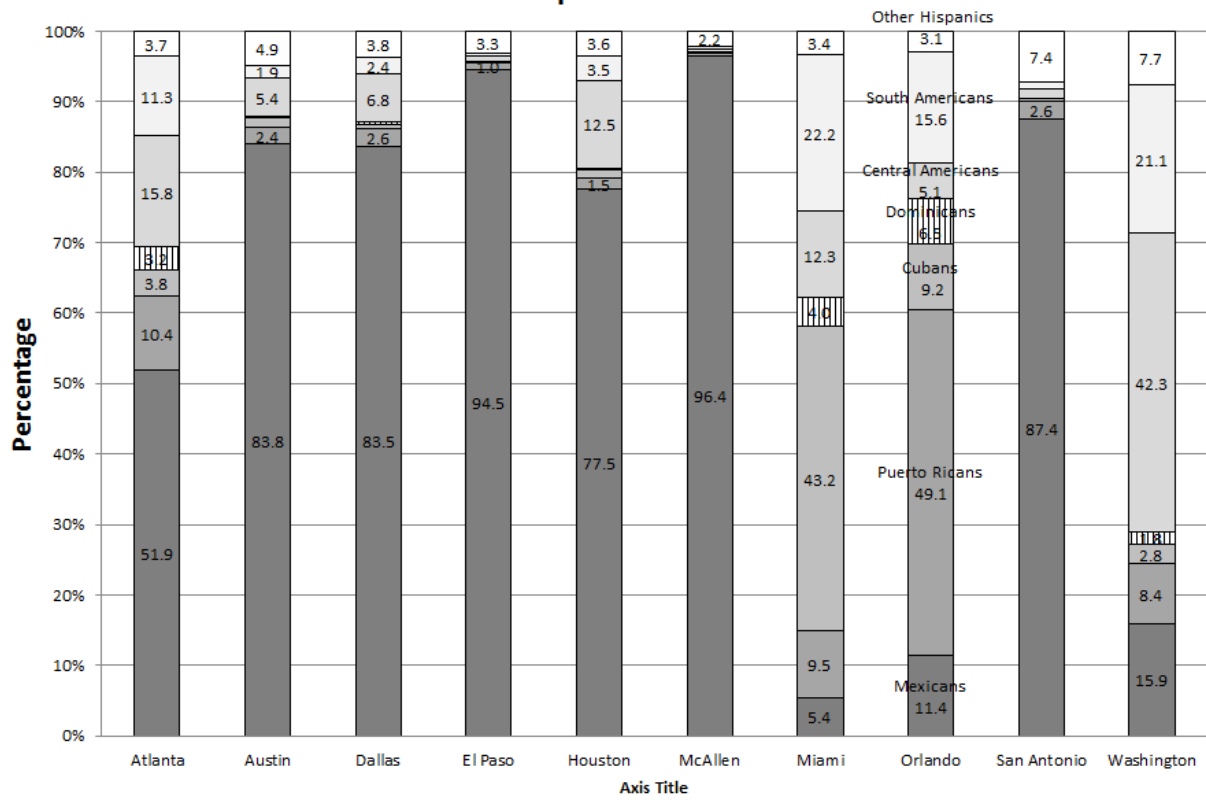




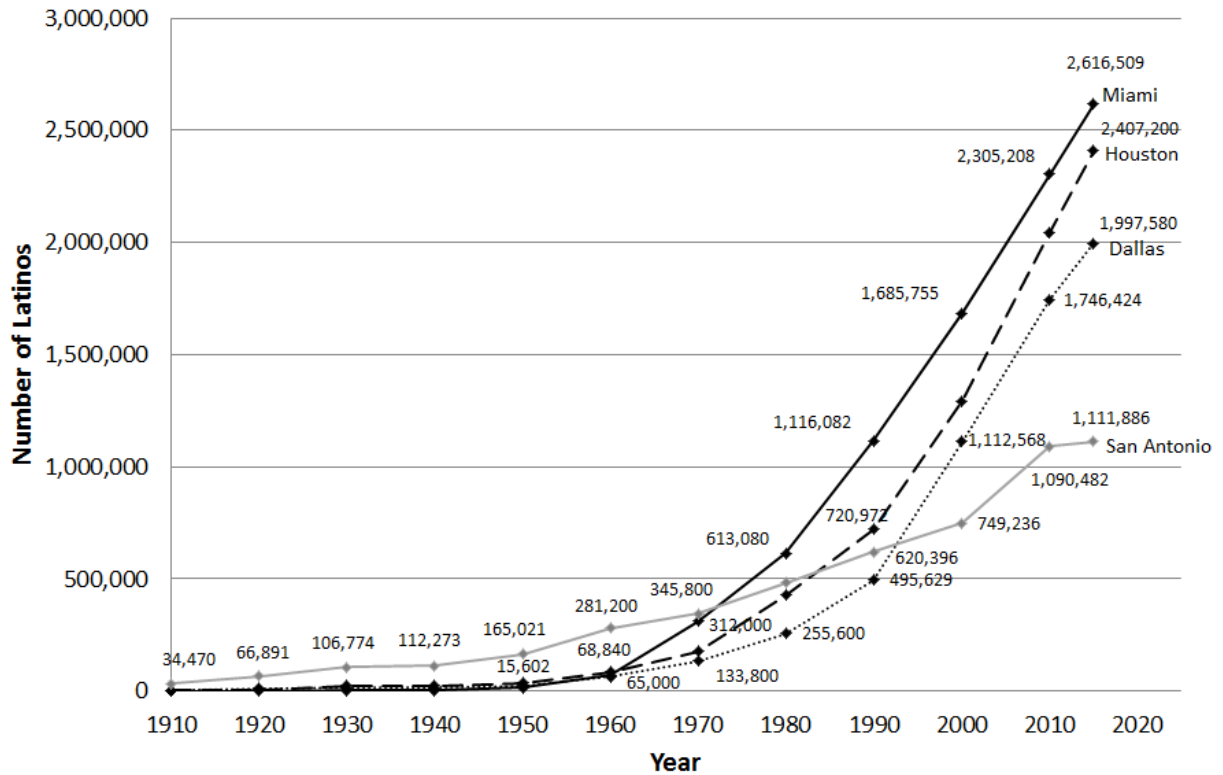
**Figure 33. Percent Latino in Southern metropolitan areas with the largest Latino populations**



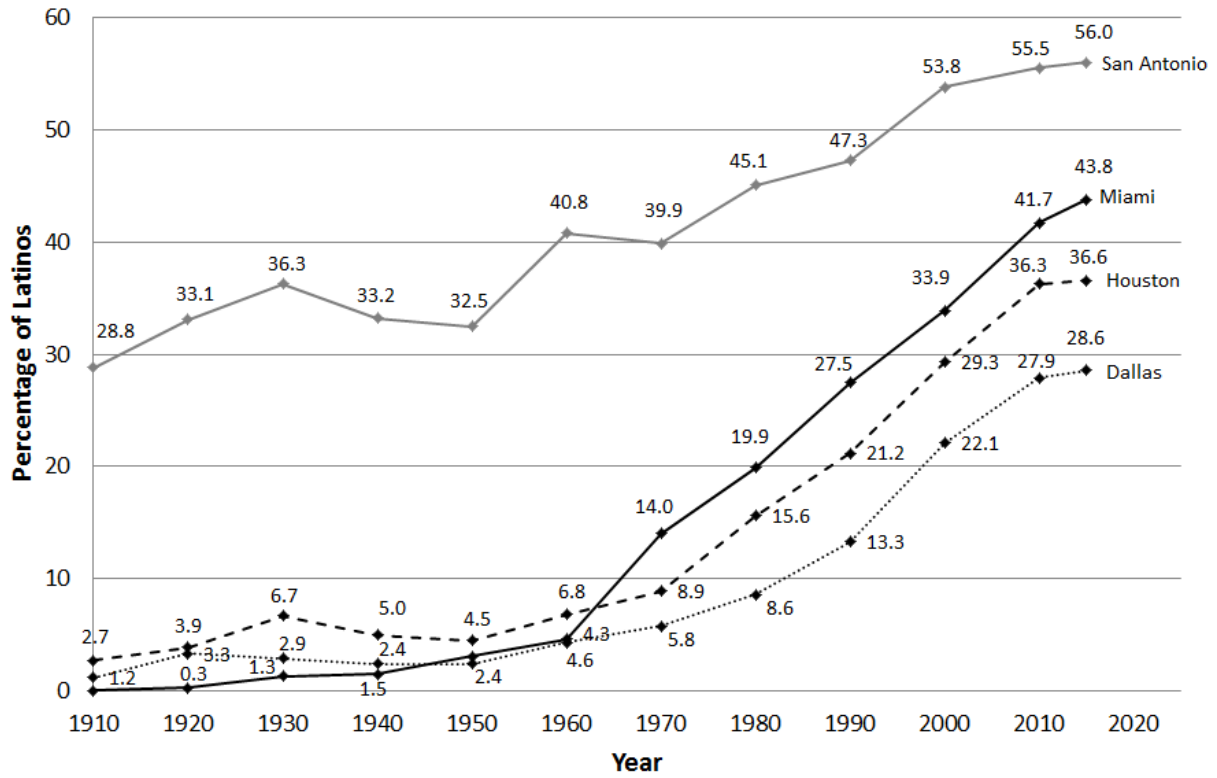
**Figure 34. Composition of the Latino population in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



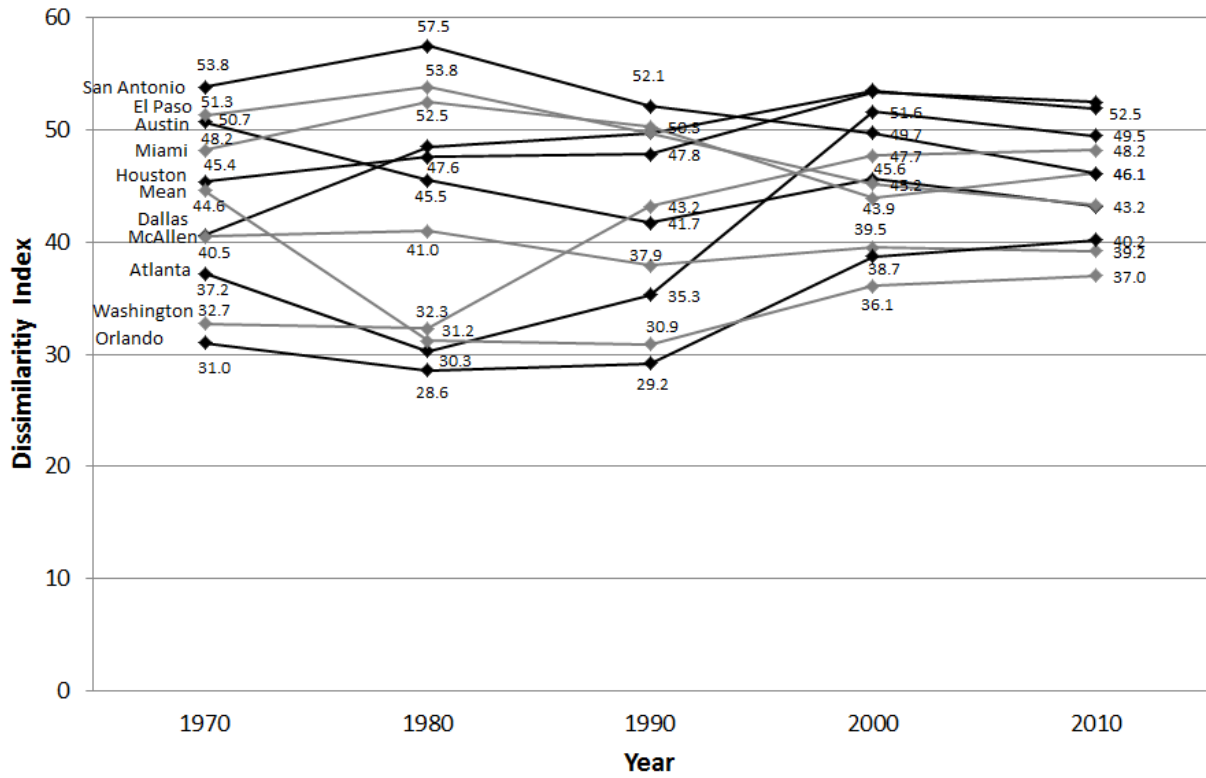
**Figure 35. Growth of Latino population in four Southern metropolitan areas 1910-2015**



**Figure 36. Rise of the Latino percentage in four Southern metropolitan areas**

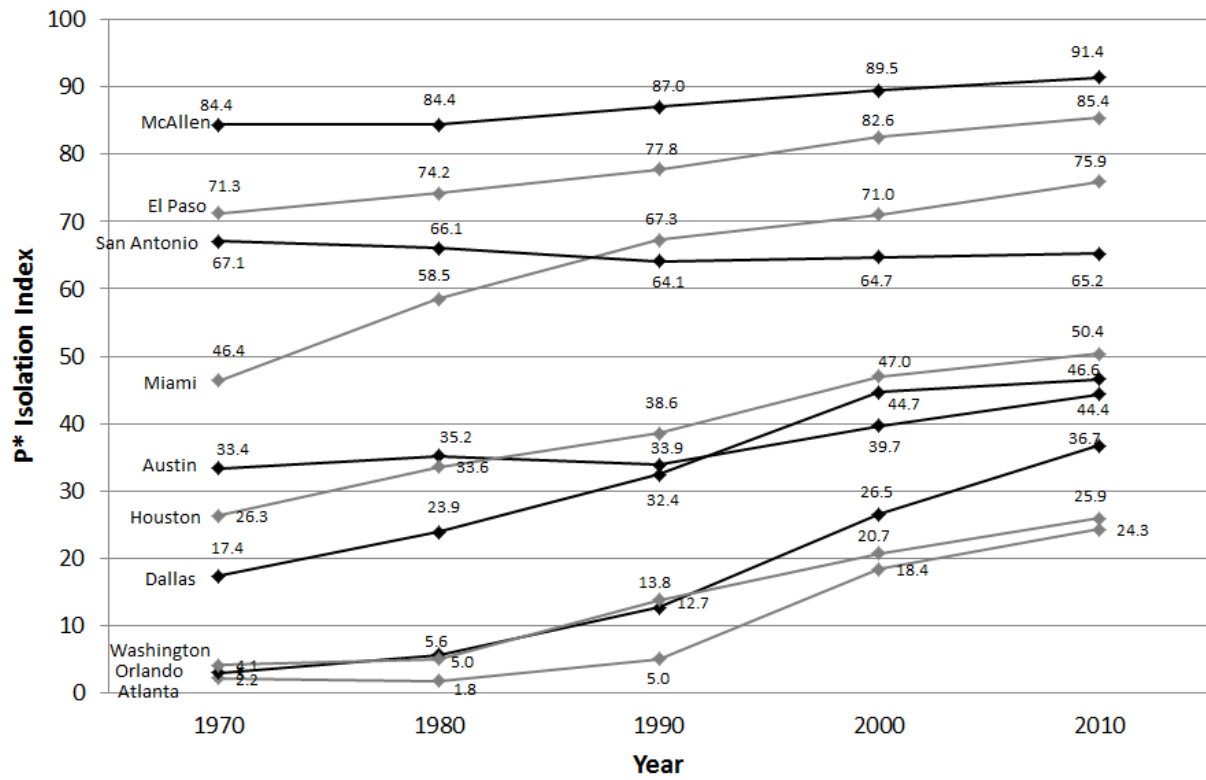


**Figure 37. Latino-white segregation in selected Southern metropolitan areas**

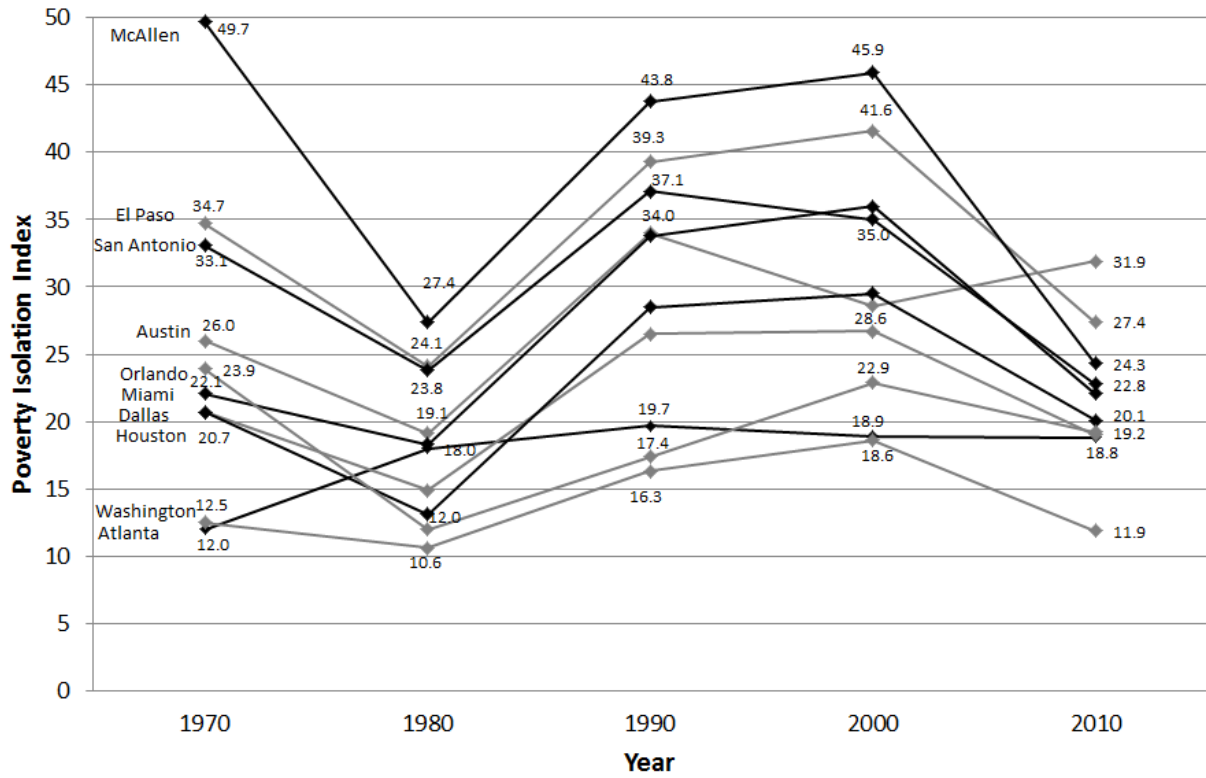




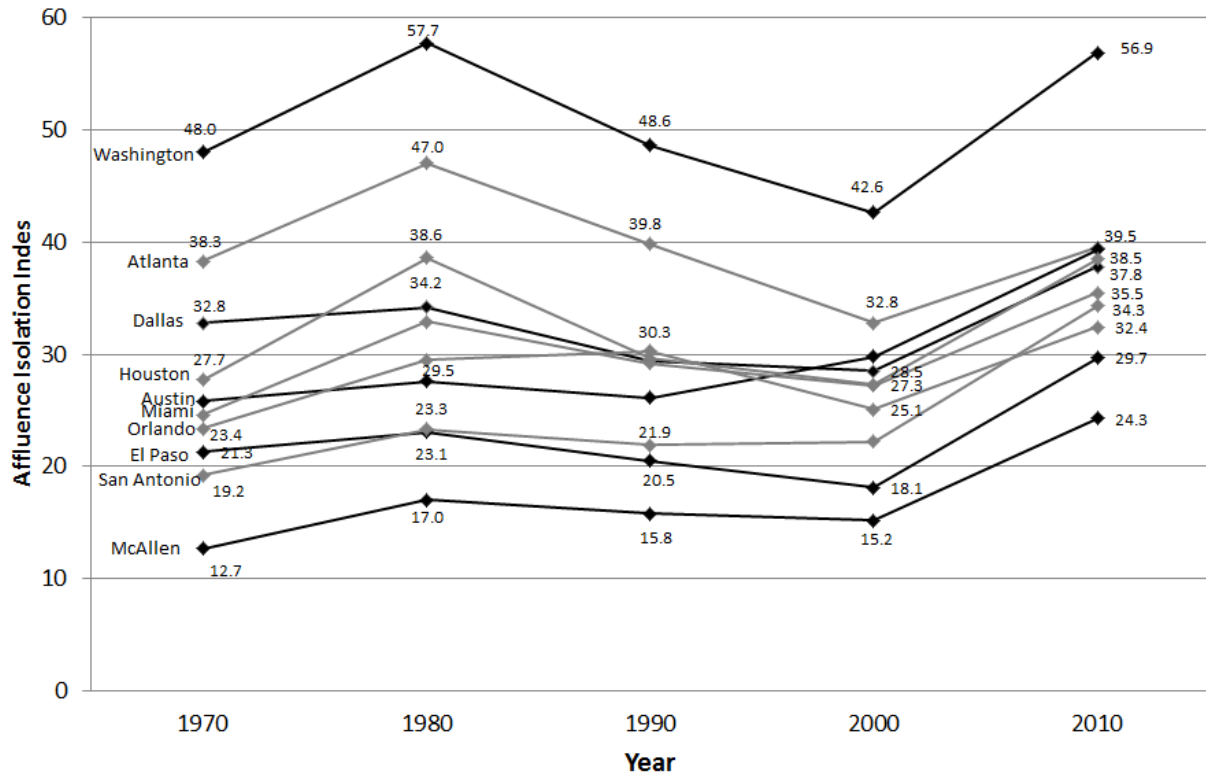
**Figure 38. Spatial isolation of Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



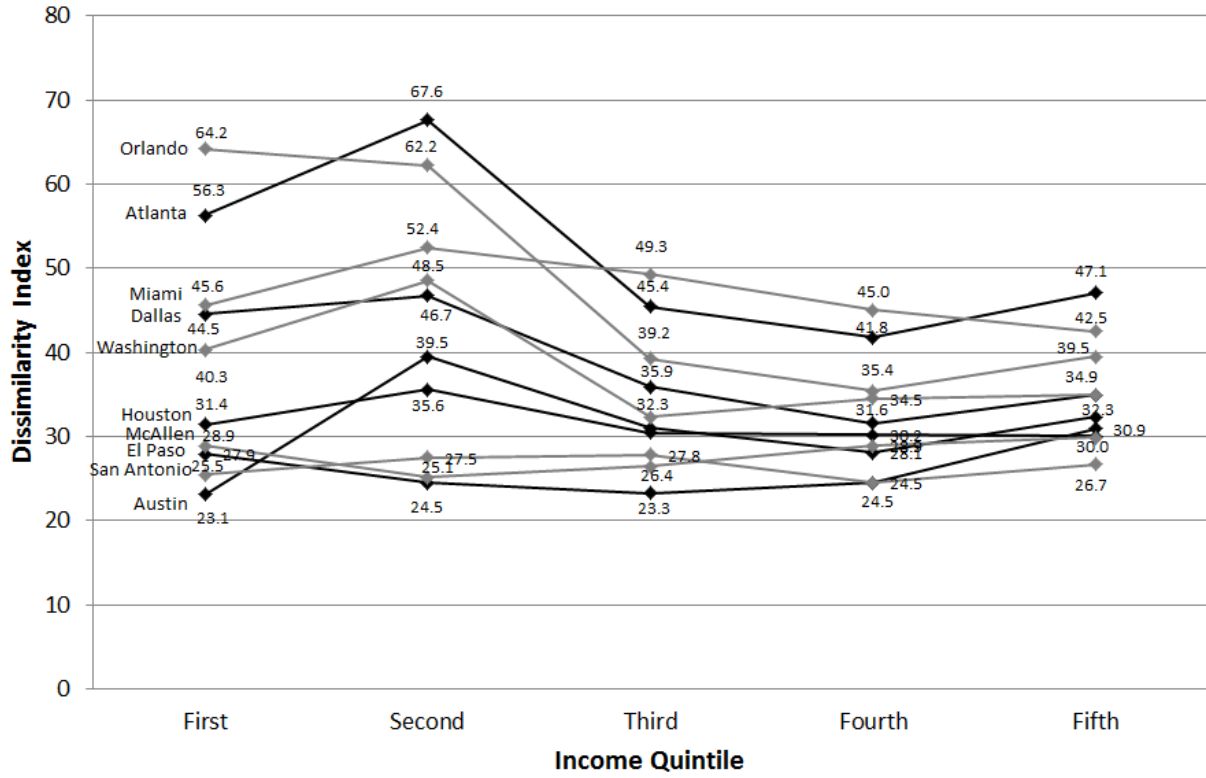
**Figure 39. Spatial concentration of poverty for Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



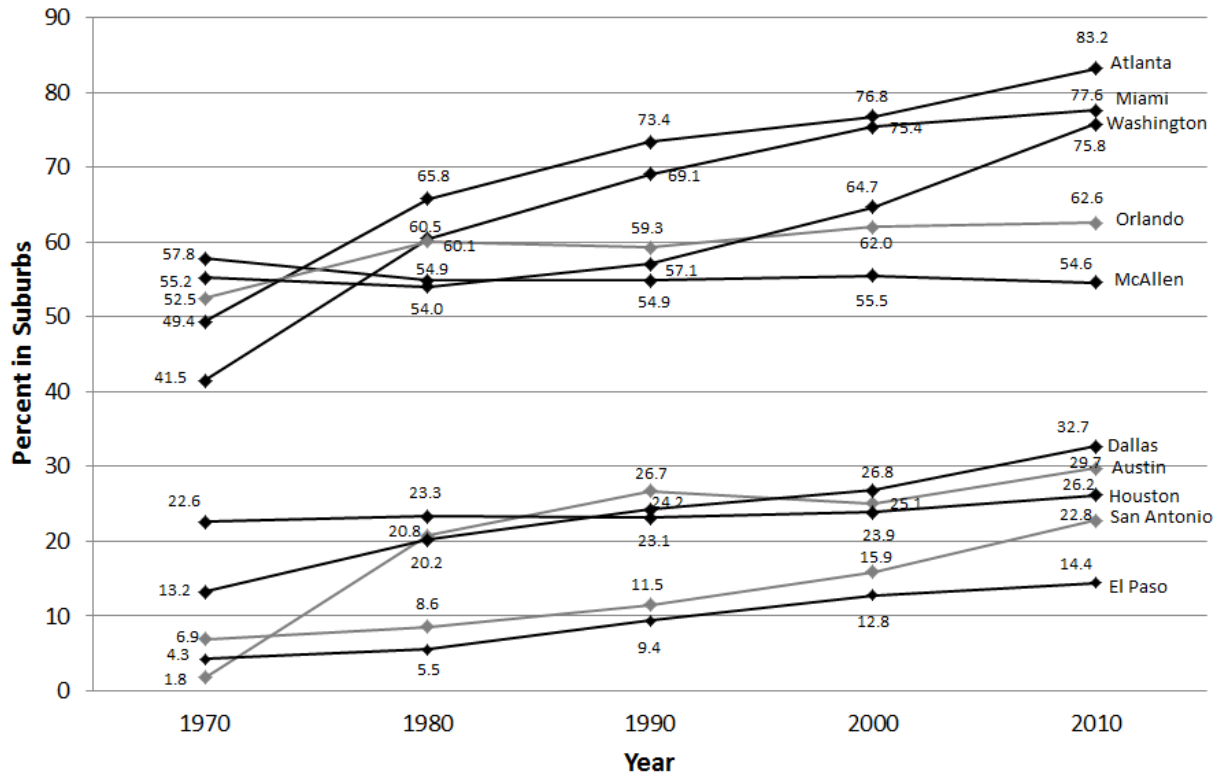
**Figure 40. Spatial concentration of affluence for Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



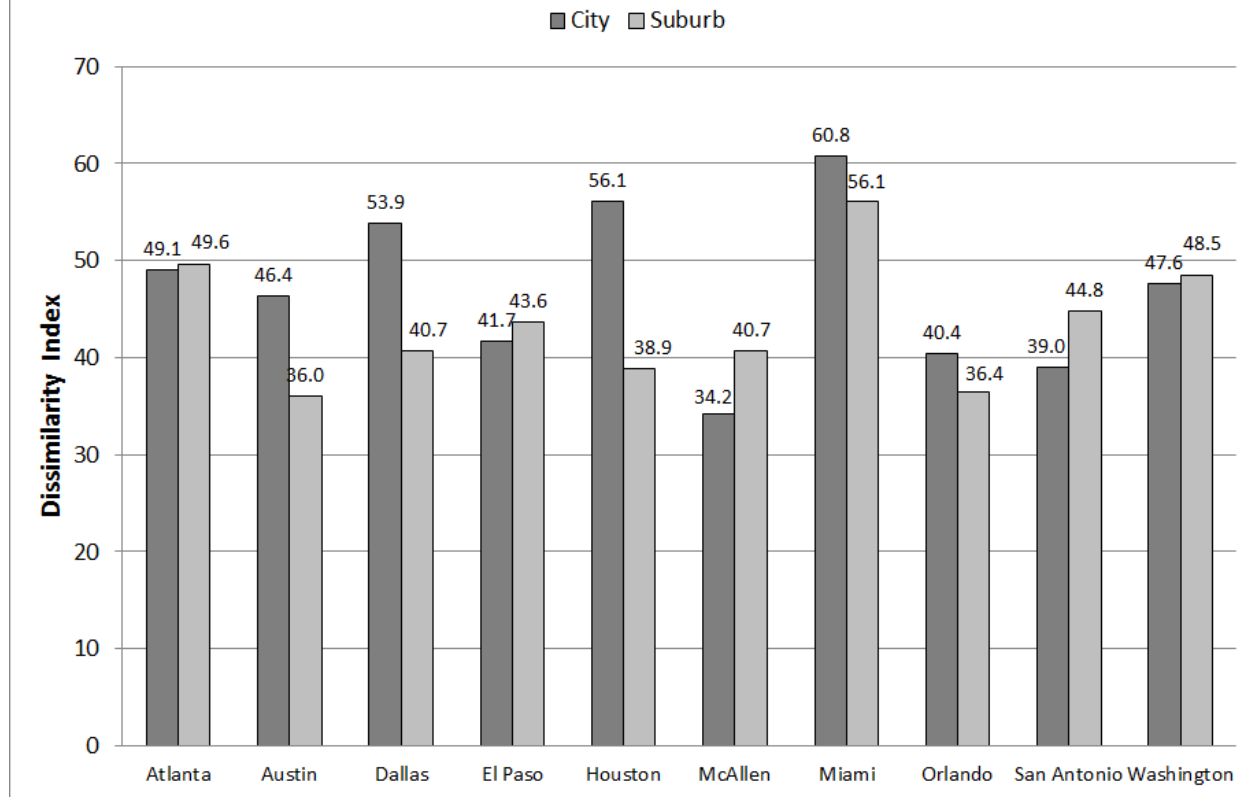
**Figure 41. Latino-white segregation by income quintile 2010 in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



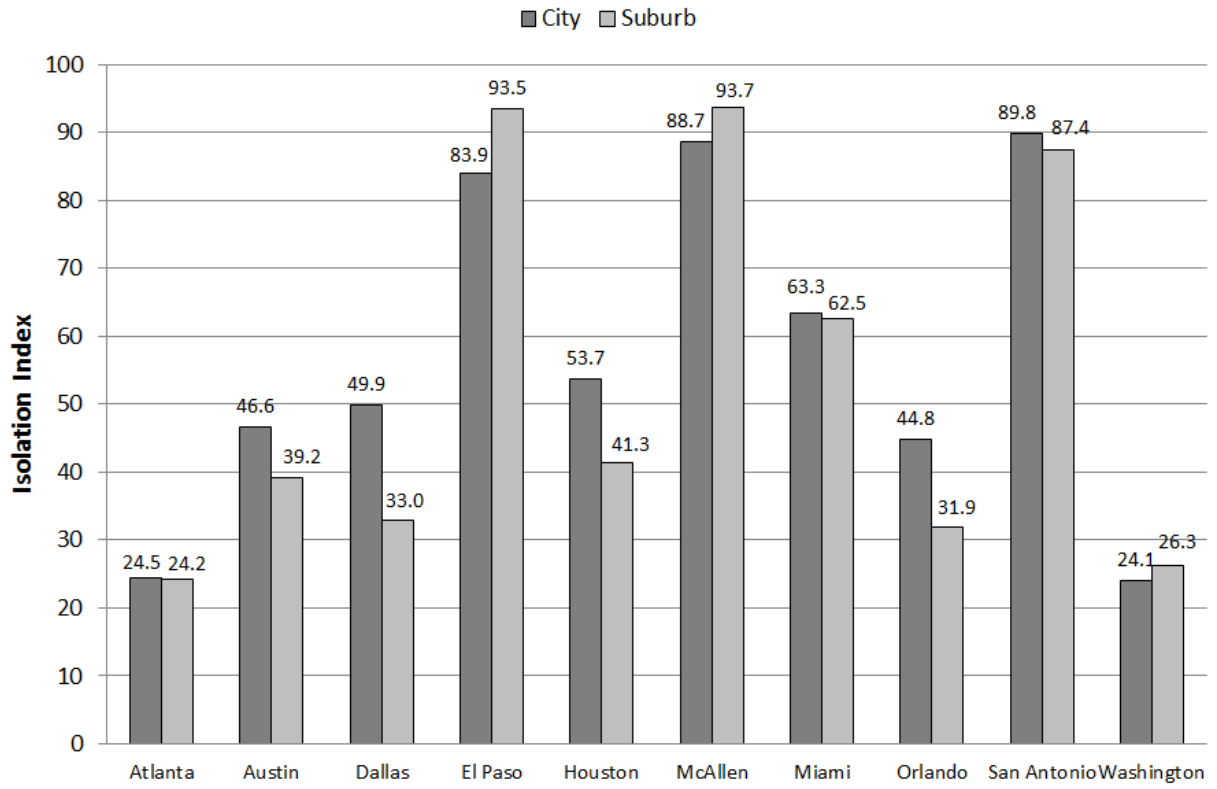
**Figure 42. Suburbanization of Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



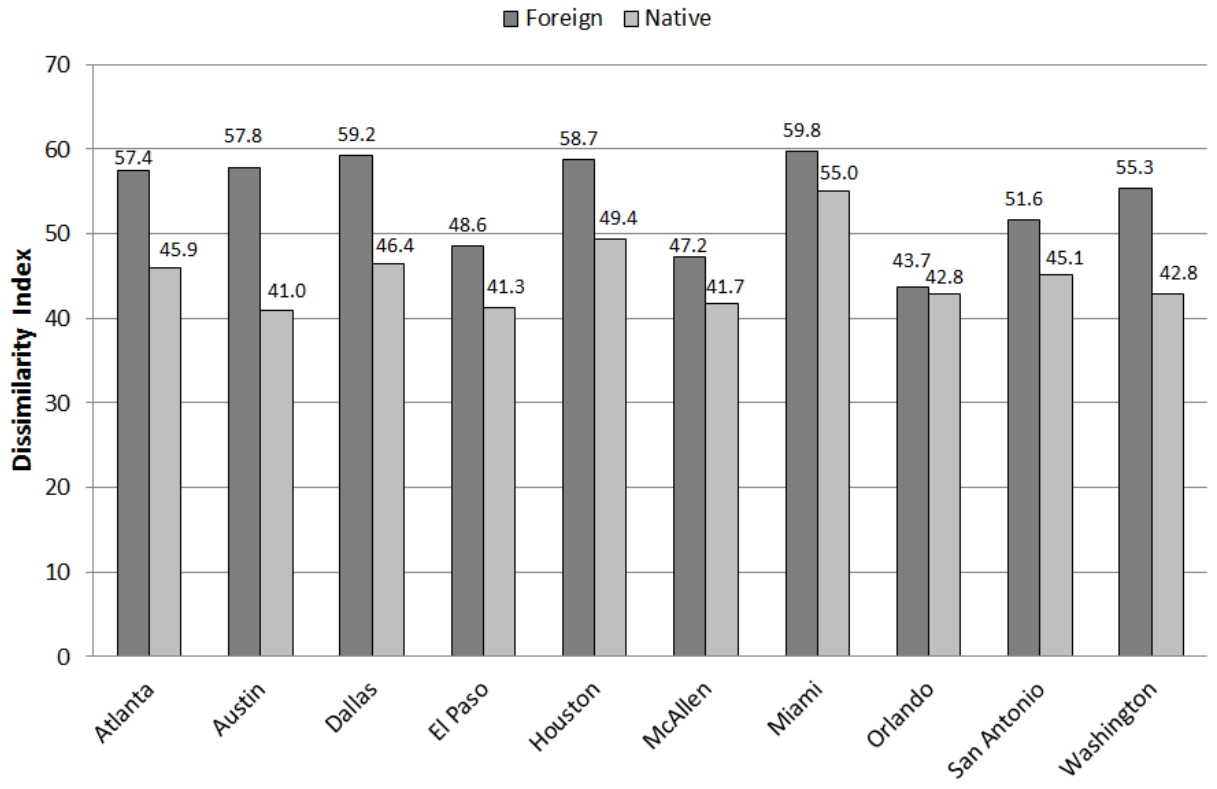
**Figure 43. Latino-white segregation in cities and suburbs of selected Southern metropolitan areas 2010**



**Figure 44. Spatial isolation of Latinos in cities and suburbs of Southern metropolitan areas 2010**

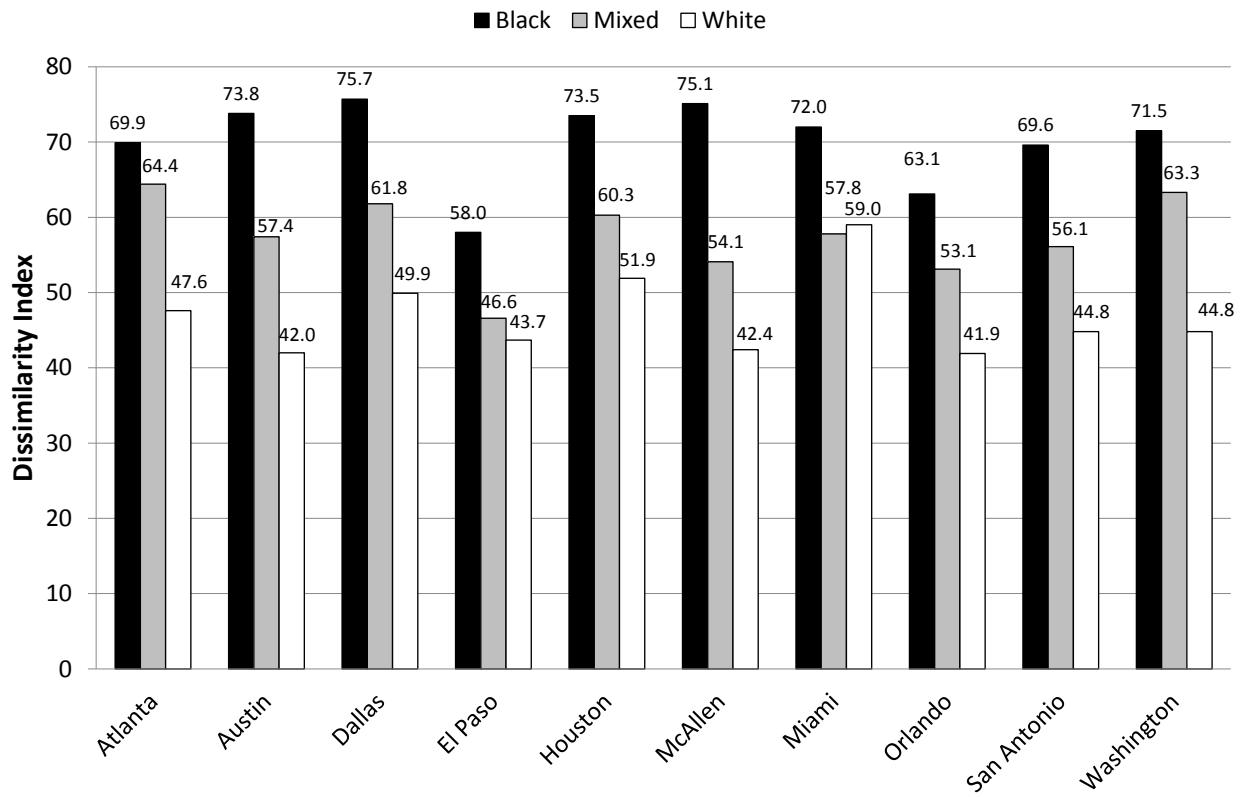


**Figure 45. Segregation of foreign and native born Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas**

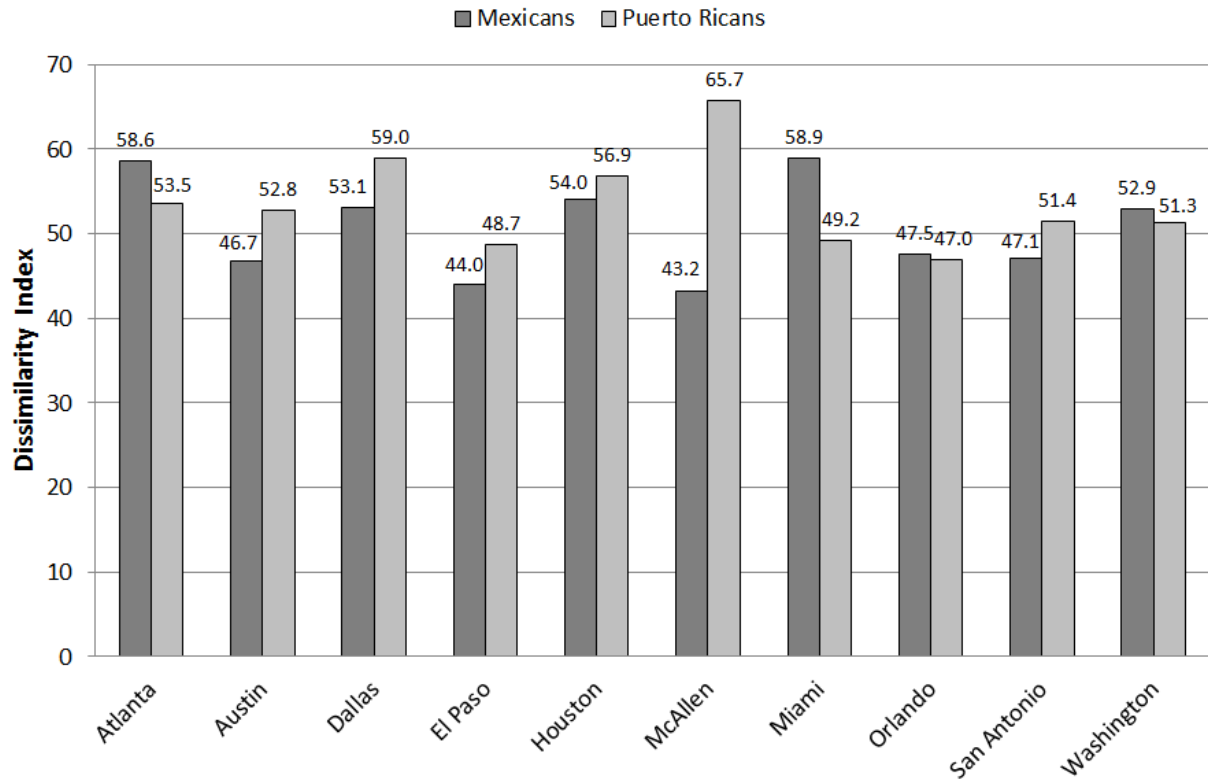




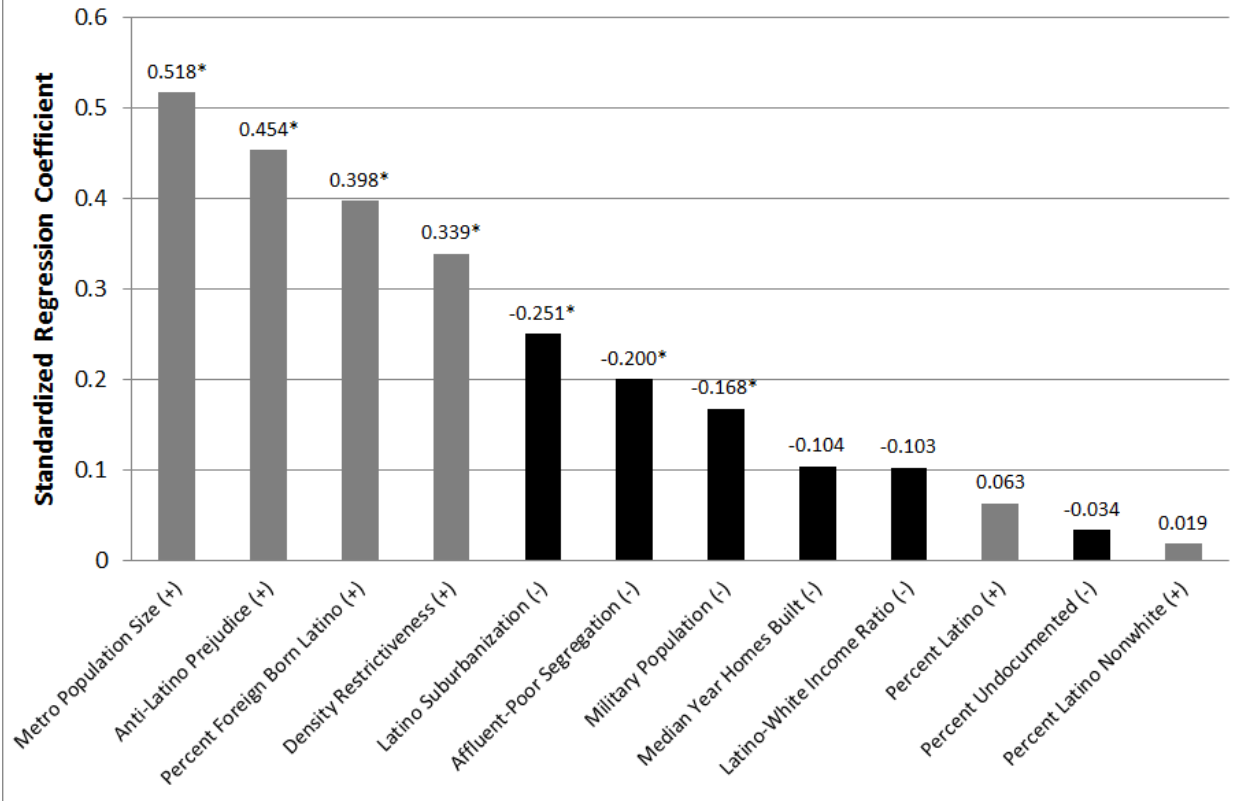
**Figure 46. Latino-white segregation for black, mixed, and white Latinos in selected Southern metropolitan areas in 2010**



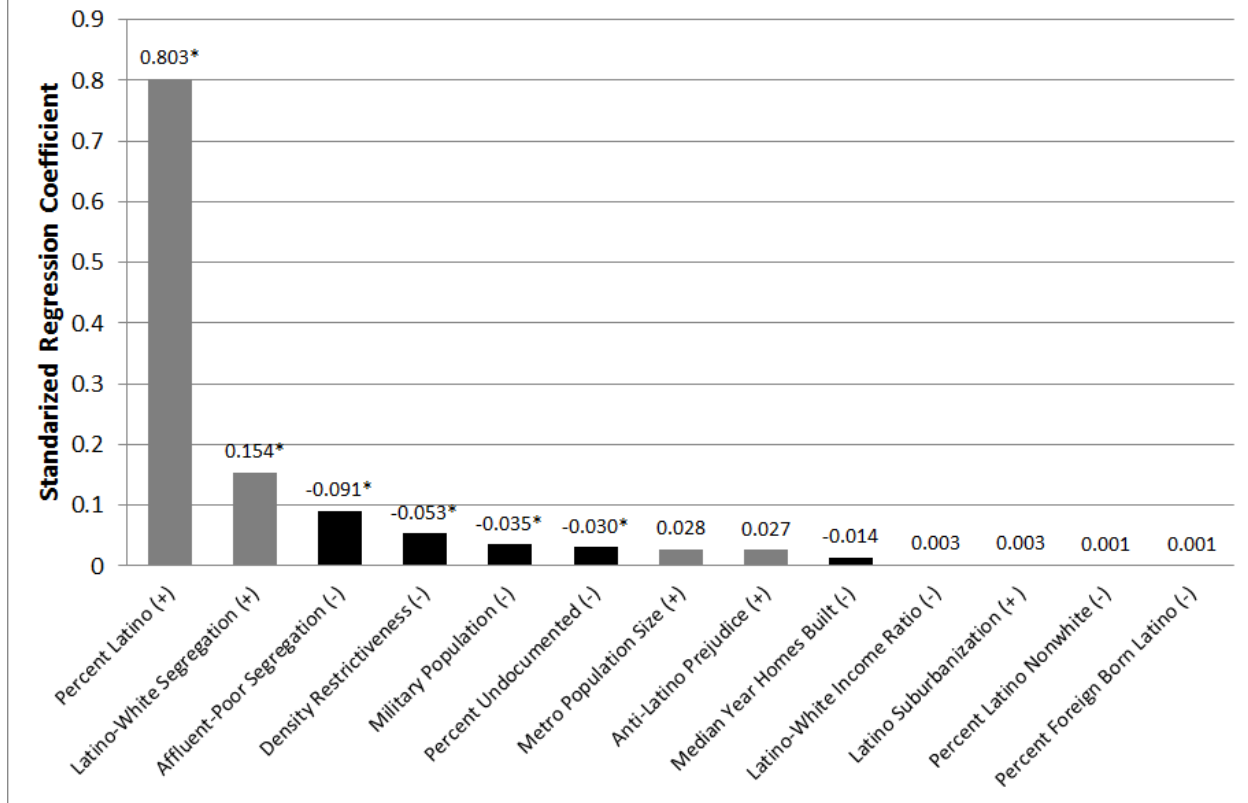
**Figure 47. Segregation of Puerto Ricans and Mexicans from whites in selected Southern metropolitan areas**



**Figure 48. Effect of selected variables on the Latino-white segregation in the South (black=negative coefficient, \* p<0.05)**



**Figure 49. Effect of selected variables on the degree of Latino spatial isolation in the South (black=negative coefficient, \* p<0.05)**



**Figure 50. Effect of selected variables on the spatial concentration of poverty for Latinos in the South (black=negative coefficient, \* p<0.05)**

