

## Population Growth in New Hispanic Destinations

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The spread of America's Hispanic population has been a major source of new population growth in the United States outside traditional immigrant gateways, such as New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Much of the debate and conversation about Hispanic immigration has focused on immigration-induced population growth. Far less attention has been paid to the impact of Hispanic natural increase (more births than deaths). Natural increase is now *the* major engine of Hispanic population growth in both the core and suburbs of large metro areas, in many smaller metro areas, and in rural communities. The increasing importance of natural increase adds a new dimension to the challenge of integrating the growing Hispanic population into rural and urban areas. This brief provides a new demographic portrait of rural and small-town America, one now being redrawn by the infusion of Hispanic migrants and, perhaps more important, by the large number of Hispanic births in the United States.

Our analysis provides a glimpse of America's future. Current trends will remake the social and cultural fabric of communities for decades to come.<sup>1</sup> They raise new concerns about ethnic conflict, flagging immigrant incorporation, and the burdens on local taxpayers (e.g., bilingual education, property taxes, health care, and social services).<sup>2</sup>

More important, the rapid rise in the Hispanic population in America is likely to continue, with or without restrictive immigration legislation. Through natural increase, Hispanic population growth has taken on a momentum of its own.

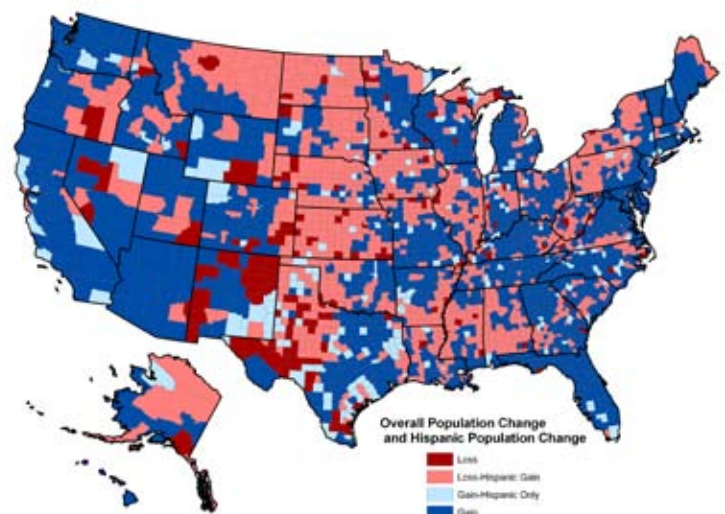
### Hispanics Now Account for Half of U.S. Population Growth

The share of overall U.S. population gain attributable to Hispanics has grown rapidly over the past two decades. During the 1990s, for example, the U.S. population grew by 32.7 million persons—the largest population increase in U.S. history. Hispanics accounted for 13.3 million, or nearly 41 percent, of this population growth. The Hispanic population grew by 60.6 percent during the 1990s, while the overall U.S.

population grew by only 13 percent. Hispanic growth since 2000 has accelerated, and by July 2007 had already grown by 10.2 million. Even more remarkable, though Hispanics represented only 12.5 percent of the U.S. population in 2000, they produced one-half of the entire U.S. population increase between 2000 and 2007. As a result, Hispanics now constitute 15 percent of the population.

For many communities, Hispanic population growth often makes the difference between growth and decline. Indeed, between 2000 and 2005, an unprecedented 221 counties experienced population increases only because Hispanic gains more than offset population decline of non-Hispanics (Figure 1). Hispanic population gains also diminished the overall loss in another 1,100 counties, including large swatches of the Great Plains, where years of decline have threatened the region's economic and demographic viability. In another 1,600 counties, Hispanic population increase combined with gains among the non-Hispanics to accelerate population growth.

FIGURE 1: THE IMPACT OF HISPANIC POPULATION CHANGE ON OVERALL POPULATION CHANGE, 2000 TO 2005



Data: Census 2000 and FSCPE 2007

## A Young Population Means Many Births and Few Deaths, Fueling Population Gains

Populations grow when more people move into an area than leave or when there are more births than deaths. In the case of Hispanics, these demographic processes are occurring simultaneously, producing remarkable Hispanic gains. To be sure, the initial impetus for the recent population surge was immigration—between 2000 and 2007, 4.2 million Hispanics immigrated to the United States, supplementing the 7.7 million who arrived during the 1990s. Most of these immigrants were young adults on the cusp of parenthood, and many started families. The natural increase that resulted from this has now taken center stage in explaining Hispanic growth in the twenty-first century. Between 2000 and 2007, somewhat more than one-half (58.6 percent) of the Hispanic population gain of 10.2 million was from natural increase. And, this natural increase is accelerating.

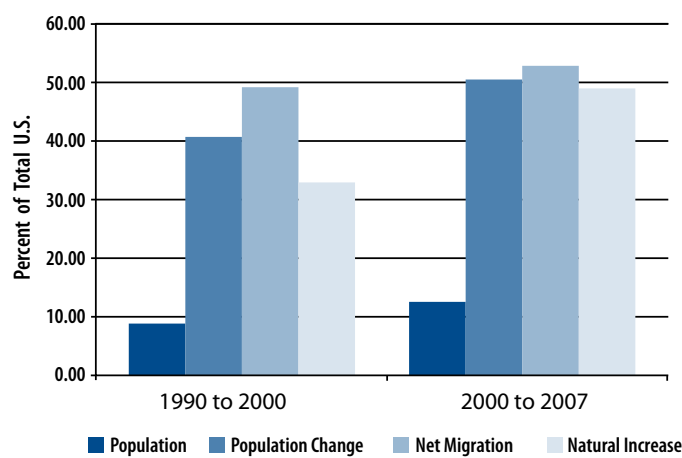
The current Hispanic population gains result from a very high birth to death ratio. For every Hispanic death, there are 8.36 births. In contrast, among non-Hispanics, the ratio is 1.37 births for every death. This pronounced difference reflects, among other things, a much younger Hispanic population (median age of Hispanics is 27.6 compared with 38.6 for non-Hispanics in 2007). In all, 47.3 percent of Hispanic women are of childbearing age (15-44) compared with only 40.6 percent of non-Hispanic women. Hispanic women also tend to have children earlier and they tend to have more children (2.8 children, on average, compared with 2.0 for all U.S. women in 2004). Adding to the impact of high fertility is a comparatively low death rate, among Hispanics, who are much younger than the native population.

The large demographic impact of Hispanics is perhaps best reflected in the demographic components that account for overall U.S. population growth (not Hispanic growth alone). As shown in Figure 2, Hispanics accounted for 50.4 percent of the U.S. population gain between 2000 and 2007, yet they represented only 12.5 percent of the population in 2000. They contributed 52.8 percent of the net migration gain (immigration) during the period and 49 percent of all the natural increase in the country.

The geographic reach of natural increase is broad and deep. In 251 counties (8.0 percent), natural increase is great enough to offset a Hispanic migration loss (Figure 3). Included among these counties are large urban core counties such as Cook (Chicago) and Los Angeles as well as numerous Southwestern counties which have long included substantial Hispanic populations. The net out-migration from such counties reflects the spatial dispersion of Hispanics from traditional gateways into the rural Midwest and South as well as to the urban fringe. In another 594 counties (18.9

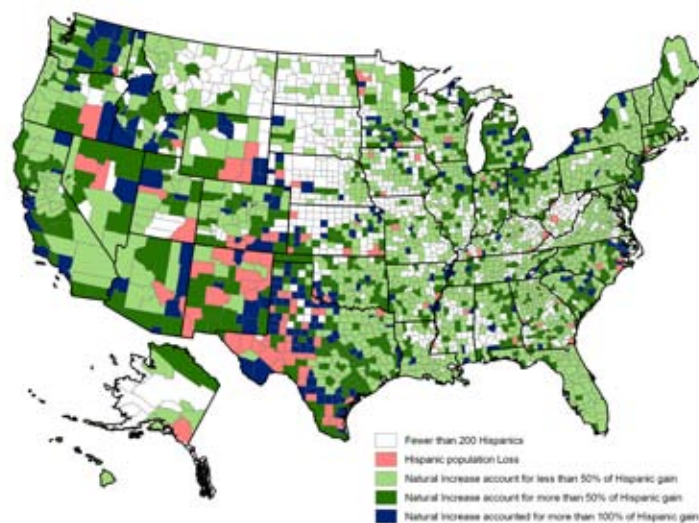
percent), Hispanic growth is fueled primarily by natural increase, though it was supplemented by net in-migration. Migration remains the primary source of Hispanic growth in 1,386 counties (44.1 percent), though nearly all are experiencing natural increase as well. Some of these counties are places where Hispanic growth is recent; in others immigration is ongoing. In only 120 counties is the Hispanic population declining. Finally, although Hispanics have spread beyond traditional gateways, there are still large areas of the country with few Hispanics. One-fourth of U.S. counties had fewer than 200 Hispanics in 2005. Most of these counties are located in the northern and central Great Plains, the Appalachians, and the interior Southeast.

FIGURE 2: HISPANIC PERCENTAGE OF U.S. POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, 1990-2000 AND 2000-2007



Source: 1990 and 2000 Census and 2007 Census Estimates

FIGURE 3: THE CONTRIBUTION OF NATURAL INCREASE TO HISPANIC POPULATION CHANGE, 2000 TO 2005

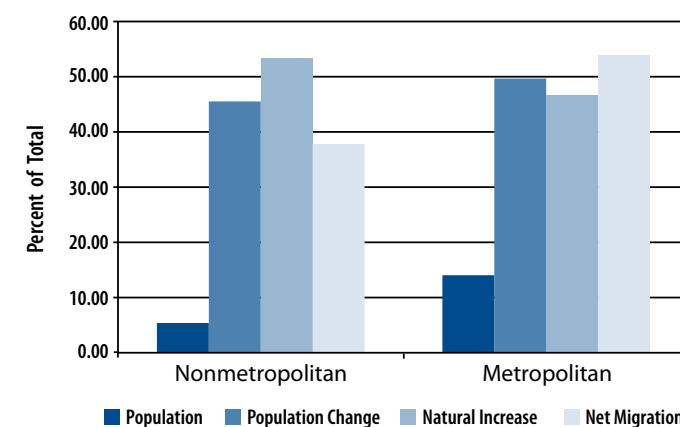


Data: Census Bureau and National Center for Health Statistics  
 Analysis: K.M. Johnson, Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire  
 Mapping: D. Goldblatt, CUERP, Loyola University - Chicago

## Hispanics Helped Stem Population Loss in Rural Areas

Hispanics are a major source of growth in rural America (see Figure 4). Between 2000 and 2005, Hispanics accounted for 45.5 percent of nonmetro population growth. The large demographic footprint belies the small size of the rural Hispanic population. Hispanics represented only 5.4 percent of the nonmetro population in 2000.<sup>3</sup> Yet, they accounted for over half (53.4 percent) of all nonmetropolitan natural increase and 37.8 percent of the rural net migration gain between 2000 and 2005. For many rural communities, such Hispanic gains represent the first population growth in decades.

FIGURE 4: HISPANIC CONTRIBUTION TO POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE, 2000 TO 2005

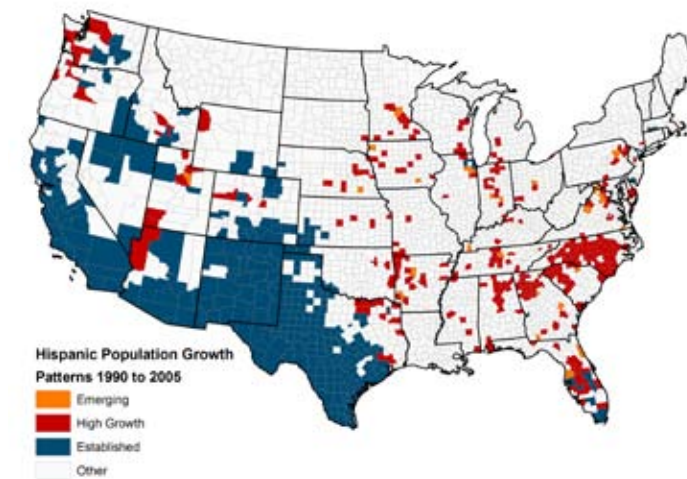


Source: 2000 Census and National Center for Health Statistics

During the 1990s, migration accounted for 57 percent of the overall Hispanic gain in metropolitan areas. In rural areas, migration was an even larger factor, accounting for 67 percent of the Hispanic population gain.<sup>4</sup> The situation changed dramatically after 2000, when natural increase became the main driver of growth. More than 58 percent of the nonmetro Hispanic increase and 55 percent of the metro Hispanic population since 2000 was fueled by natural increase.

The impact of Hispanic population gains on rural communities has as much to do with the aging white population with Hispanic high fertility and low mortality. The toll from a steady exodus of youth from rural communities is a graying population. Many nonmetro counties, in fact, report more deaths than births. Thus, substantial Hispanic natural increase together with migration is critical to the future of many rural areas.

FIGURE 5: HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH PATTERNS, 1990 TO 2005



Source: 1990 and 2000 Census and 2005 Census Estimates

## Hispanics are settling in new destinations

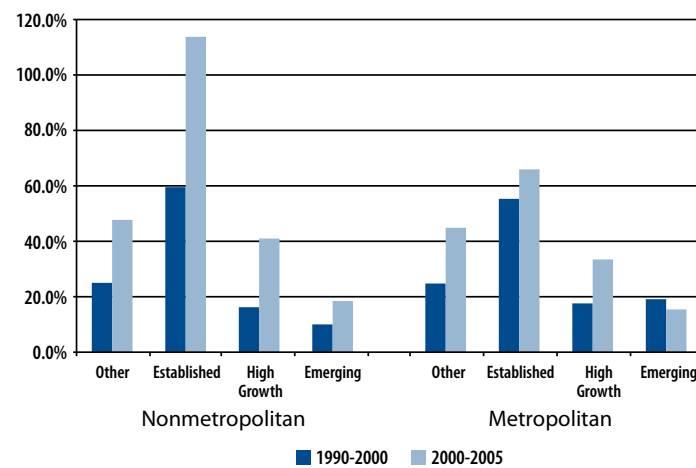
Hispanic growth in both rural and urban areas has been accompanied by a spreading of the population to new destinations. Not surprisingly, most nonmetro Hispanics (1.3 million) reside in the 205 established Hispanic counties—counties at least 10 percent Hispanic in both 1990 and 2000 (see Figure 5).<sup>5</sup> However, 115 counties are Hispanic high growth counties—those with Hispanic population gains during the 1990s of at least 150 percent and with at least 1,000 Hispanics in the population. These counties were home to 359,000 Hispanic residents in 2000, some 13.6 percent of all nonmetro Hispanics. The newest destinations are the 13 emerging nonmetro Hispanic counties—those with at least a 75 percent Hispanic population increase between 2000 and 2005 and an absolute gain of at least 500 Hispanics. An additional 945,000 reside in the other nonmetro counties.

The large majority of America's Hispanic population continues to reside in metro areas. Here Hispanics are heavily concentrated in 121 established Hispanic counties, which account for 74 percent of the 32.7 million urban Hispanics. The 178 high growth counties contain an additional 7.2 percent of urban Hispanics, and the 20 emerging Hispanic counties contain only 0.3 percent. The remaining 770 metro counties are home to 18.4 percent of urban Hispanics.

The increasing importance of natural increase for Hispanic growth means that Hispanics have gained demographic momentum. Both natural increase and migration have contributed to Hispanic population growth in new destinations. The ascendancy of natural increase, not surprisingly, is most



**FIGURE 6: PERCENT OF HISPANIC POPULATION GROWTH DUE TO NATURAL INCREASE BY TYPE AND METROPOLITAN STATUS, 1990 TO 2005**



Source: Census Bureau and National Center for Health Statistics

evident in established Hispanic areas (see Figure 6), but it is spreading to high-growth counties that received sustained influxes of immigrants during the 1990s. In *established* Hispanic areas, for example, natural increase accounted for a growing majority of Hispanic population gain over the study period. In the other areas, the contribution of natural increase to Hispanic population growth accelerated from 25 percent of the gain in the 1990s to approximately 45 percent between 2000 and 2005. Even in the *high growth* counties of the 1990s, the role of natural increase increased significantly after 2000.

## Hispanics are Here to Stay even without Continued Immigration

Hispanic natural increase is a vital but often ignored component of population growth. Well over one-half of the recent Hispanic population growth was due to natural increase—compared with about one-third in the 1990s. Clearly, we are seeing a large secondary effect of past immigration in the form of high fertility and natural increase. The demographic implication is clear: Hispanic population growth is self-sustaining, even if immigration were to be seriously curtailed through new restrictive legislation or by an economic downturn.

In a historical sense, the increasing importance of natural increase among immigrant populations is not wholly unexpected. Every immigrant group has gone through a similar transition. Fertility has consistently been higher among immigrants than the native-born population. The high fertility of Irish immigrants in the nineteenth century, for example, exceeded rates of other immigrant groups and could not be

explained by lower education or other social or economic conditions.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the recent rise in Hispanic natural increase is not without precedent, but few expected its impact would be felt so soon.

Hispanics are now playing an important role in the demographic and economic transformation of many communities. About one-half of the nonmetro Hispanic population now resides outside traditional Hispanic settlements in the rural Southwest. Moreover, a substantial and growing number of nonmetro counties experiencing non-Hispanic white population declines, especially in the Great Plains, have growing Hispanic populations. Hispanics clearly are a source of new demographic vigor in rural America. As we have shown here, more than 200 nonmetro counties—double the number observed for the 1990s<sup>7</sup>—would have experienced population decline between 2000 and 2005 without the substantial influx of new Hispanics and the natural population increase they spurred.

To be sure, Hispanics have revitalized many previously declining and economically stagnant small towns, but they have also brought serious and unprecedented challenges, including new demands for health care, bilingual education, as well as ethnic conflict and competition for scarce jobs. Nonmetro immigrants are often younger, less educated, and less likely to speak English than their counterparts in metro areas.<sup>8</sup> Many have arrived only recently, which presents additional cultural challenges. New Hispanic immigrants are often highly segregated residentially and isolated from mainstream institutions.<sup>9</sup> The political and administrative challenges (e.g., involving cash assistance or food stamps) are further complicated by the fact that Hispanic children are often U.S. citizens—most have been born in America—while their parents are foreign-born and often undocumented.<sup>10</sup> The policy implications associated with in-migration are clearly different from those associated with high fertility and natural increase. Natural increase and the growth of a new second generation in rural America reinforce the need to address questions about immigrant incorporation, education and language, and intergenerational economic mobility.

This new demographic portrait provides a window to America's future. Recent trends portend continuing growth that will shape the social fabric of many communities for decades to come. The ascendancy of Hispanic fertility and natural increase is unlikely to stall anytime soon. While many observers have lamented for decades the decline of small towns, today the most interesting and controversial questions arise from minority population growth and native responses. And now these debates are likely to center as much on high fertility as on immigration.

## Data and Methods

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) provided us with special tabulations of births and deaths by county by Hispanic origin.<sup>11</sup> These data are supplemented with data from the Federal State Cooperative program (FSCPE), which provides population estimates, number of births and deaths, and immigration for each U.S. county. Net domestic migration is estimated by subtracting the FSCPE estimate of immigration from net migration. We calculate population change by comparing data from the 2000 Census to the FSCPE estimate.

We calculated the demographic components of change between 1990 and 2000 following similar procedures, but we based them on 1990 and 2000 census-enumerated population rather than on population estimates. Data for the Hispanic population are from the 1990 and 2000 censuses and from the 2005 and 2007 Census Bureau estimates of population by race/Hispanic origin.<sup>12</sup>

We examine patterns of immigration and Hispanic population change for all 3,141 U.S. counties. County equivalents are used in the New England states.<sup>13</sup> Counties are classified as metro or nonmetro using the 2003 definition of the Office of Management and Budget. Under this definition, metro areas are defined as those containing an urban core of 50,000 or more population. Metro areas include the county containing this urban core (or central city), along with any other counties that are highly integrated with the core county as measured by commuting patterns. There are 1,090 metro counties. The remaining 2,051 counties are classified as nonmetro. We use the terms metro and urban interchangeably as we do the terms nonmetro and rural. By convention, counties classified as nonmetro prior to the 2003, but reclassified as metro by 2003, are treated as metro throughout the analysis.<sup>14</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Leif Jensen, “New Immigrant Settlements in Rural America: Problems, Prospects and Policies.” *Reports on America*, vol. 1, no. 3 (2006). Durham, New Hampshire: Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire. Charles Hirschman and Douglas S. Massey, “Places and Peoples: The New American Mosaic.” In *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, edited by D. S. Massey (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), pp. 1-21.

<sup>2</sup> For more information on ethnic conflict, see Katherine Fennelly, “Prejudice toward Immigrants in the Midwest.” In *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, edited by Douglas S. Massey (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), pp. 151-178. For research on immigrant incorporation see Martha Crowley, Daniel T. Lichter, and Zhenchao Qian, “Beyond Gateway Cities: Economic Restructuring and Poverty among Mexican Immigrant Families and Children,” *Family Relations*, vol. 55 (2006): 345-360.

<sup>3</sup> Hispanic population increases were not restricted to locations proximate to metropolitan areas. The overall nonmetro Hispanic population gain from 1990 to 2000 was 65.7 percent. The gain was larger in nonmetro counties adjacent to a metropolitan area (73.4 percent) than in nonadjacent counties (54.2 percent). In all, nonmetro counties gained just over 1 million Hispanic residents during the 1990s. The metro percentage gain was slightly smaller than that in nonmetro areas (60.2 percent), although it was considerably larger in absolute terms at 12,272,000. Between 2000 and 2005, the nonmetro Hispanic population grew by 18.9 percent adding another 497,000 residents, with the gains in adjacent areas again exceeding those in nonadjacent counties. The metro population also continued to gain Hispanics, with a 21.1 percent gain of 6,885,000.

<sup>4</sup> Recent research suggests that some of the net Hispanic migration gain in rural areas also resulted from movement out of traditional Hispanic settlement areas in the Southwest and elsewhere. See, e.g., Daniel T. Lichter and Kenneth M. Johnson, “Emerging Rural Settlement Patterns and the Geographic Redistribution of America’s New Immigrants,” *Rural Sociology* vol. 71 (2006): 109-131; and Katharine M. Donato, Charles Tolbert, Alfred Nucci, and Yukio Kawano, “Changing Faces, Changing Places: The Emergence of New, Nonmetropolitan Immigrant Gateways.” In *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, edited by Douglas S. Massey (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), pp. 75-98. The foreign-born population represents only 30 percent of the nonmetro Hispanic population, although a growing share of Hispanic migrants to rural areas appears to be arriving directly from Latin America. See William Kandel and John Cromartie, “New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America.” Rural Development Research Report no. 99 (Washington, DC: Economic Research Service, USDA, 2004).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> See Timothy W. Guinnane, Carolyn M. Moehling, and Cormac O’Grada, “The Fertility of the Irish in the United States in 1910,” *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 43, no. 3 (2006): 465-485. See also Jerry Wilcox, “Prolific Immigrants and Dwindling Natives? Fertility Patterns in Western Massachusetts, 1850 and 1880.” *Journal of Family History*, vol. 7, no. 3 (1982): 265-288.

<sup>7</sup> For data on the 1990s, see Kandel and Cromartie, *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement* (note 4 above).

<sup>8</sup> Donato et al., “Changing Faces, Changing Places” (note 4 above).

<sup>9</sup> Daniel T. Lichter, Domenico Parisi, Steven M. Grice, and Michael C. Taquino, “National Estimates of Racial Segregation in Rural and Small-Town America,” *Demography*, vol. 44 (2007): 563-581. See also John Iceland and Melissa Scopilliti, “Immigrant Residential Segregation in U.S. Metropolitan Areas, 1990-2000,” *Demography*, vol. 45 (2008): 79-94.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Leach and Frank D. Bean, “The Structure and Dynamics of Mexican Migration to New Destinations in the United States.” In *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*, edited by D. S. Massey (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2008), pp. 51-74.

<sup>11</sup> We focused here on Hispanic data on births and deaths through 2005. In a small number of counties, NCHS suppressed the number of Hispanic births and deaths for confidentiality purposes. We allocated these suppressed births and deaths to specific counties based on historical trends. This introduces a small but unknown degree of error in our estimates, but we are confident that at the level of aggregation at which we present our results, it has no material impact on our overall conclusions.

<sup>12</sup> We used a similar procedure to calculate the components of change for the Hispanic population, though it was not possible to disaggregate net migration into its domestic and immigration components.

<sup>13</sup> See Kenneth M. Johnson and Glenn V. Fuguitt, “Continuity and Change In Rural Migration Patterns, 1950-1995,” *Rural Sociology*, vol. 65 (2000): 27-49.

<sup>14</sup> A similar practice is used for counties that were metro prior to 2003 but reverted to nonmetro status under the current definition. The overall effect of our decision to use the 2003 classification is to significantly reduce the number of counties included in the nonmetro group when compared with research using prior metro definitions. Using a fixed definition of nonmetropolitan and metropolitan removes the effect of classification change from the calculation of longitudinal change.

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