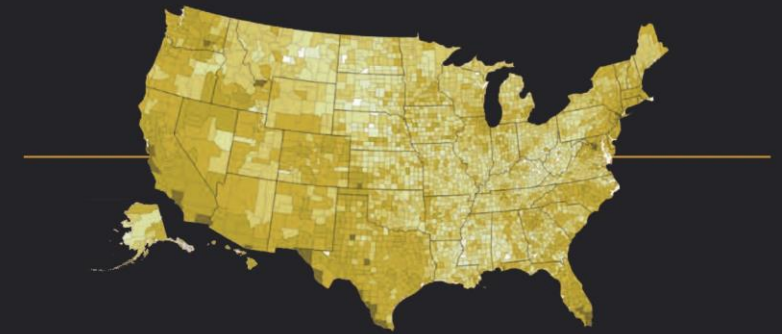


# Latin Neighborhoods in the United States

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY'S



ANNUAL LATINO PUBLIC AFFAIRS FORUM

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CENTER FOR  
LATIN AMERICAN  
& LATINO STUDIES  
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY | WASHINGTON, DC



SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
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POLICY CENTER**

# Abstract

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Inner-cities, African-American neighborhoods, Chinatowns and other abstract concepts of racialized spaces occupy important roles in social theory and policy, yet the concept of the Barrio, or Mexican-American neighborhood, has faded away since Oscar Lewis' work on "the culture of poverty."

Is there a policy or theoretical use to talking about U.S. Barrios in general or should the discussion of Mexican neighborhoods be place-specific?

The presentation compares two Latino neighborhoods: El Barrio/East Harlem, New York City, NY; and El Segundo Barrio, El Paso, TX.

# Levels of Analysis

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Demographers use Census data and large surveys

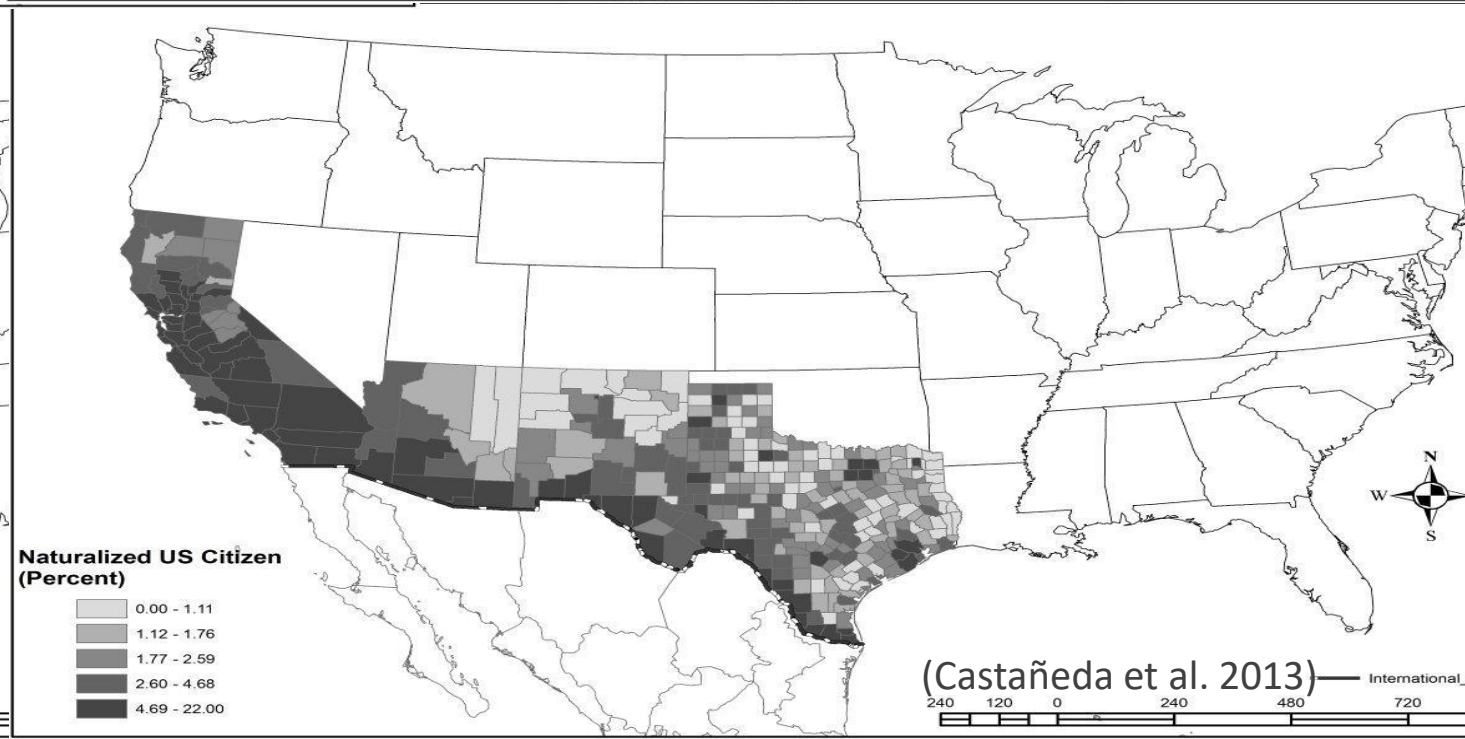
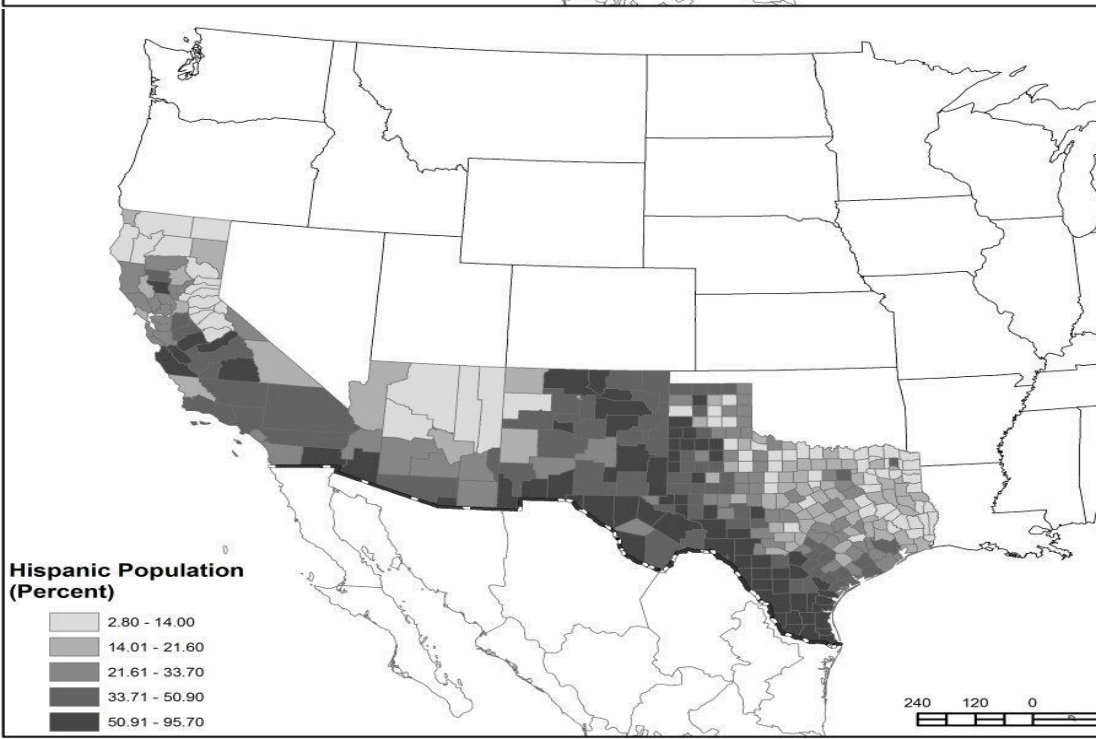
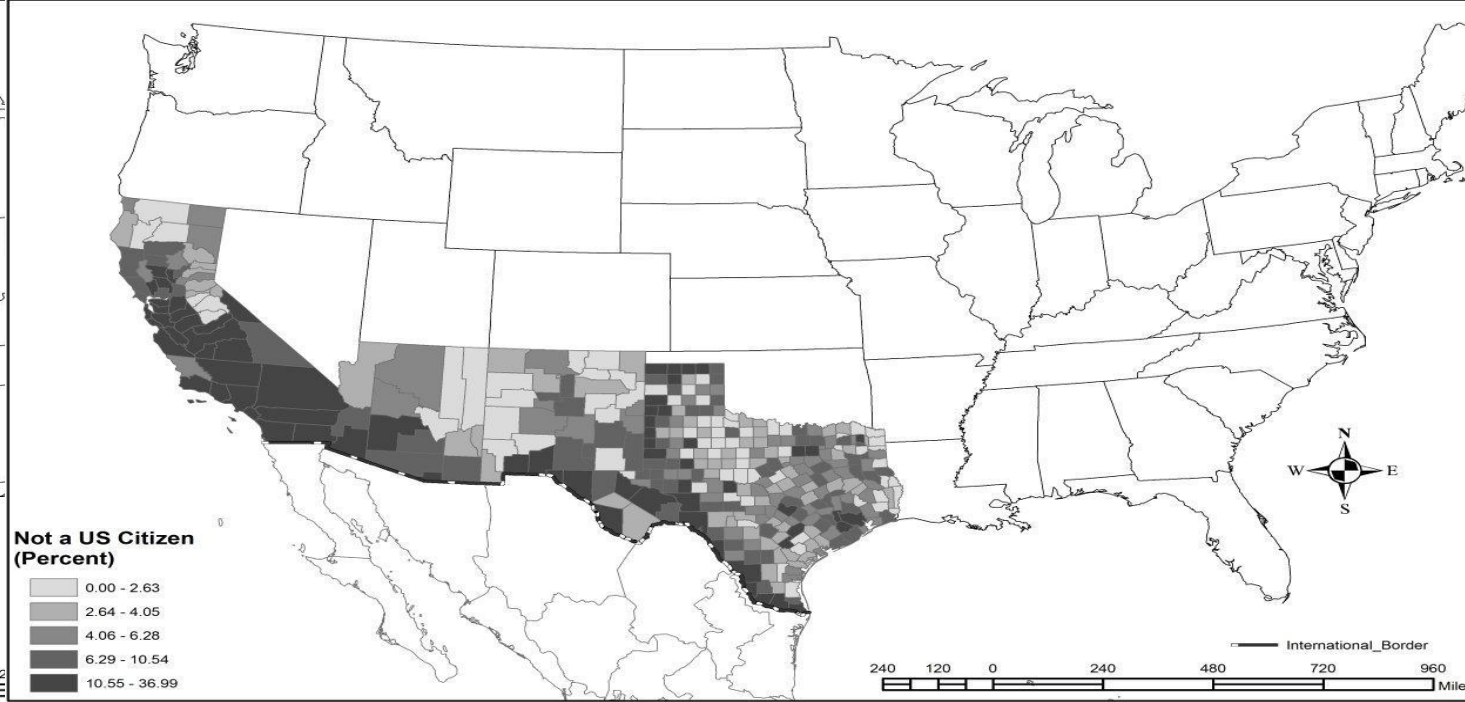
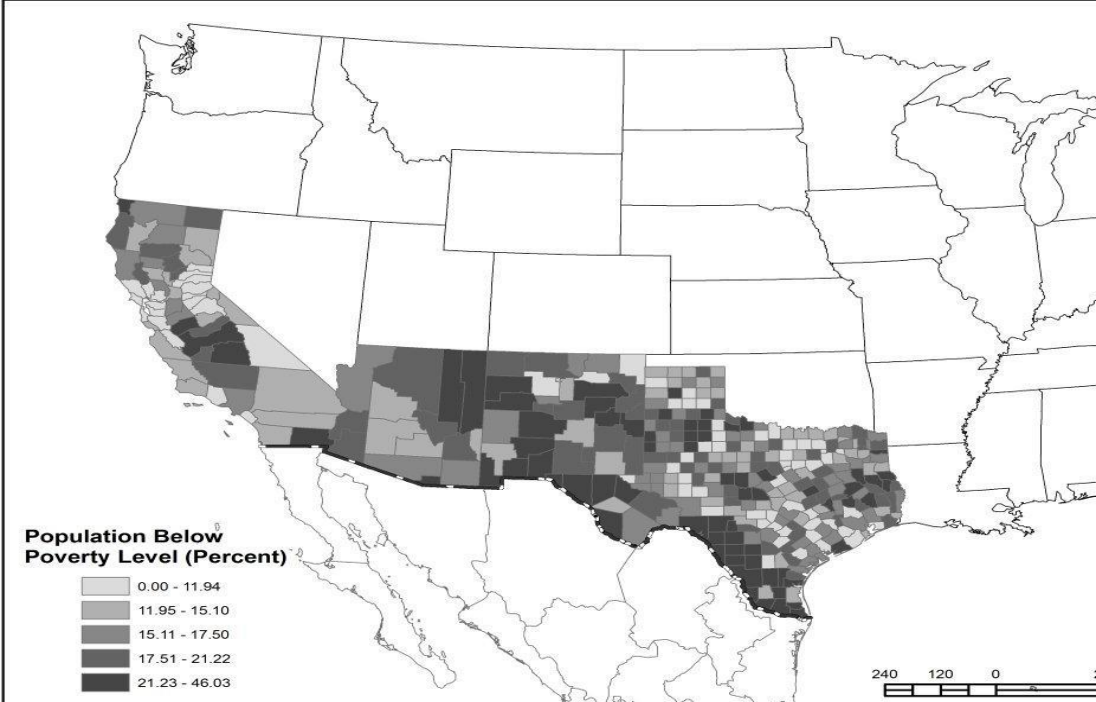
- Good to look at trends in the size of the Latino population
- Macro Level

Less common to look at ethnic groups beyond neighborhood boundaries and to compare between cities

- Good to look at particulars and generalizable processes
- Meso level

Community Studies – look at particular neighborhoods

- Good to discover processes and social dynamics
- Micro Level



# Chicago School

Studied immigrants as communities in bounded urban areas.



# Urban Communities

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A theoretical, tourist, and mental map fetish?

# Research Questions

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Does it make sense to talk about a general Latino experience across the U.S.?

Is there a policy or theoretical use to talking about U.S. Barrios in general or should the discussion of Mexican neighborhoods be place-specific?

How do local contexts and built environments affect inter-ethnic relations?

# Barrios

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- ❑ There is relatively small amount of academic work published about Barrios or Latino neighborhoods.
  - ❑ Exceptions
    - ❑ Alejandro Portes work on ethnic enclaves most relevant to Cubans in Miami
    - ❑ Arlene Davila's work on New York's Puerto Rican Barrio
    - ❑ Mario Small – Puerto Ricans in Boston
- ❑ But for the most part there has been little interest in Latino neighborhoods per se.
  - ❑ Exceptions
    - ❑ Urbanists David R. Diaz and Rodolfo D. Torres and authors in edited volume “Latino Urbanism” NYU Press 2012.
    - ❑ Richard Griswold del Castillo
    - ❑ Roberto Hernández
- ❑ Most of the existing work is around public health and social work concerns for interventions on pathological practices
  - ❑ Oscar Lewis' “Culture of Poverty,” Bourgois “In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio, Vigil's, Sánchez-Jankowski and others work on gangs
- ❑ **Why so little work on Latino spaces in Urban Studies?**



# Context of Reception

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Contextual factors foster or hinder the integration and social mobility of immigrants into a specific place.

Important factors include:

- Enforcement of asylum and immigration laws,
- government programs,
- employment opportunities,
- the tolerance of natives towards immigrants, and
- the density of non-governmental agencies that assist immigrants (Castañeda 2012)

For example, reception of Cubans vs. Mexicans (Portes and Rumbaut 2006; Portes and Stepick 1993).

Ernesto Castañeda  
A Place to Call Home  
Immigrant Exclusion  
and Urban Belonging  
in New York, Paris,  
and Barcelona



*A Place to Call Home*  
Stanford University Press  
May 2018

Ernesto Castañeda



# Comparative work on Barrios

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I will discuss three cases:

1. El Barrio in East Harlem, Manhattan, New York;
2. El Segundo Barrio in El Paso, Texas; and
3. Barrio Logan in San Diego, California.

While all these neighborhoods could be considered Hispanic Barrios there are important differences across these three sites.

# El Barrio – Spanish Harlem



# Mexicans in New York

While Mexican workers have gone to the U.S. for over 100 years, Mexican labor migration to New York intensified in the last 30 years.

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There were **319,263** Mexican-origin individuals living in New York City (US Census 2010).

Robert C. Smith calculates that when adding the undocumented population there were 450,000 Mexicans in New York's five boroughs (Smith 2013).

Using 2010 IPUMS data for all New York City boroughs, plus Long Island and Northeastern New Jersey, the count goes up to **607,503** (Bergad 2013).

Yet scholars with ground level data estimated the number of Mexicans in New York to be over **750,000** in 2008 (Hellman 2008).

According to the Mexican Consulate, there are around **1.2 million** Mexicans in New York City (Semple 2010). This estimate is partly based on applications for consular IDs or *matriculas consulares* (Massey, Rugh, and Pren 2010; Suro 2005).

Mexicans are the fastest growing ethnic group in New York due to migration and the high number of births (Bernstein 2007; Nuño 2013; Smith 2006).

Mexicans are projected to become the **largest Hispanic group in the city around 2025**, surpassing Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, and South Americans (Bergad 2013; Lobo and Salvo 2013).

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Demographic Overview of Huntington Station (Percents)

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| Race/ Ethnicity         | 2000     | 2010     |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|
| Hispanic                | 22.7     | 36.7     |
| White                   | 60.8     | 47.6     |
| Black                   | 11.6     | 10.9     |
| Asian                   | 3.1      | 3.5      |
| Median Household Income | \$61,760 | \$72,548 |
| Total Population        | 29,910   | 33,029   |

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Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Censuses

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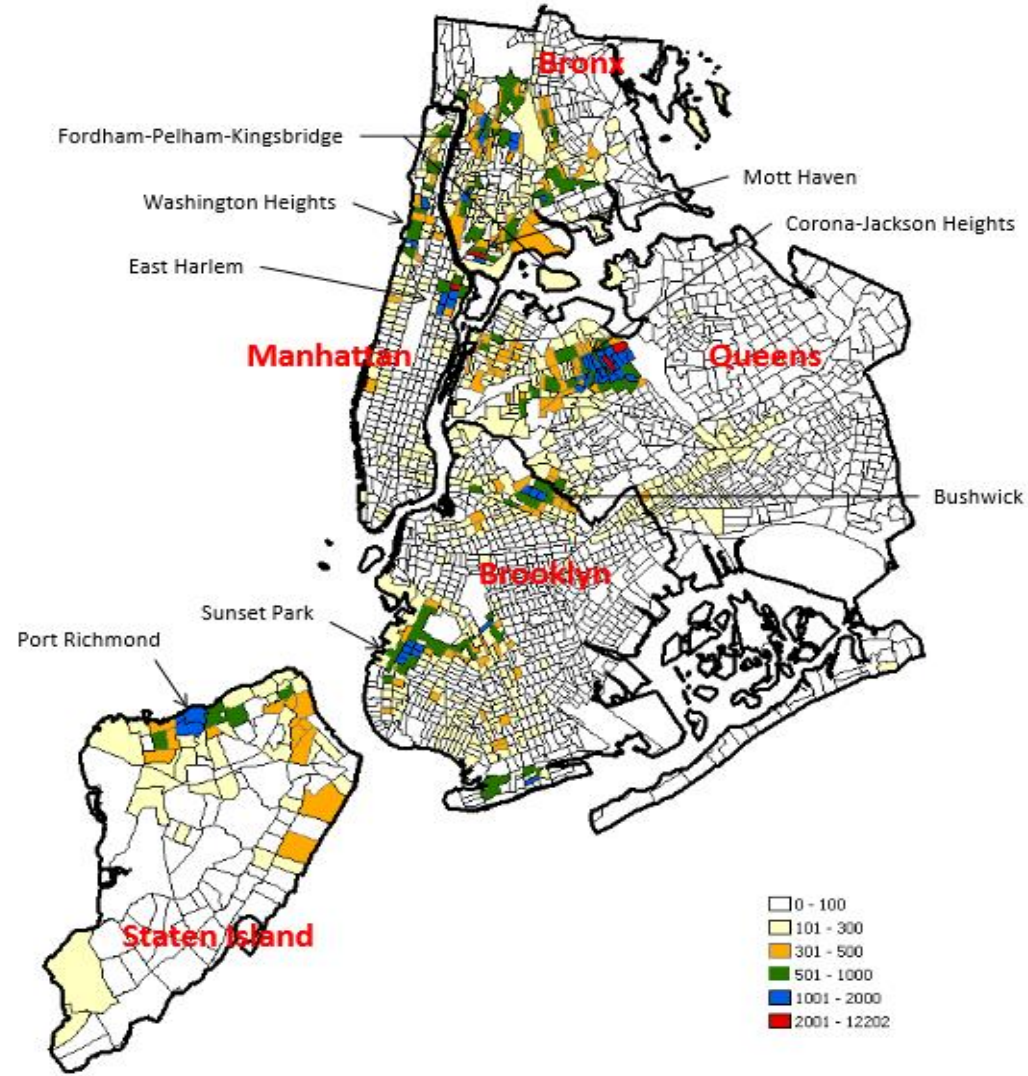
# Population of East Harlem by race, ethnicity, and nationality 2010

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| Population of East Harlem | Population | Total %    |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|
| Hispanic/Latino           | 61,164     | 49.8       |
| Puerto Rican              | 32,973     | 26.8       |
| <b>Mexican</b>            | 11,686     | <b>9.5</b> |
| Other Hispanic            | 16,505     | 13.5       |
| Black/African American    | 38,885     | 31.6       |
| White                     | 14,117     | 11.5       |
| Asian                     | 6,763      | 5.5        |
| Total Population          | 122,920    | 98.4       |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Census as reported in "Profile of Manhattan Community District 11" NYC Department of City Planning, 2011.

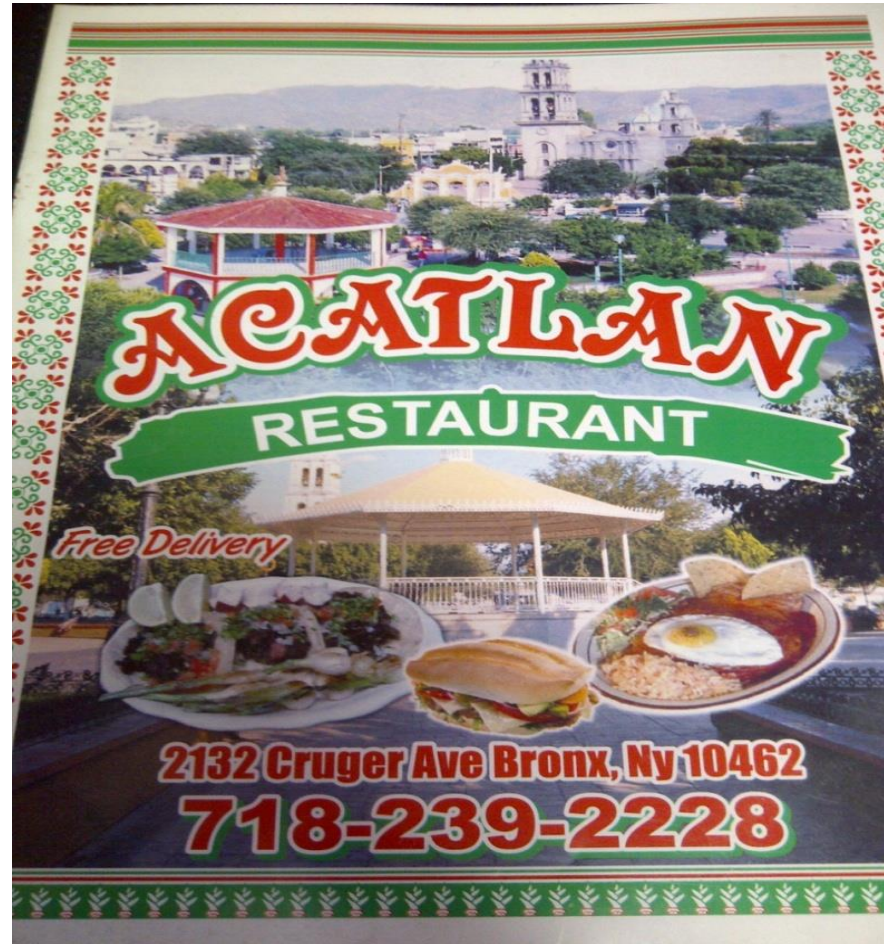
Map 2  
Mexican Population Concentrations in New York City, 2010





# Mexicans Live Throughout the NYC Metro Area

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# Hispanics in New York

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When outsiders think about New York City, or even about immigrants in New York, Mexican immigrants rarely come to mind.

Yet today, for people living in New York, it would be hard for them to deny that they know at least one Mexican person in New York.

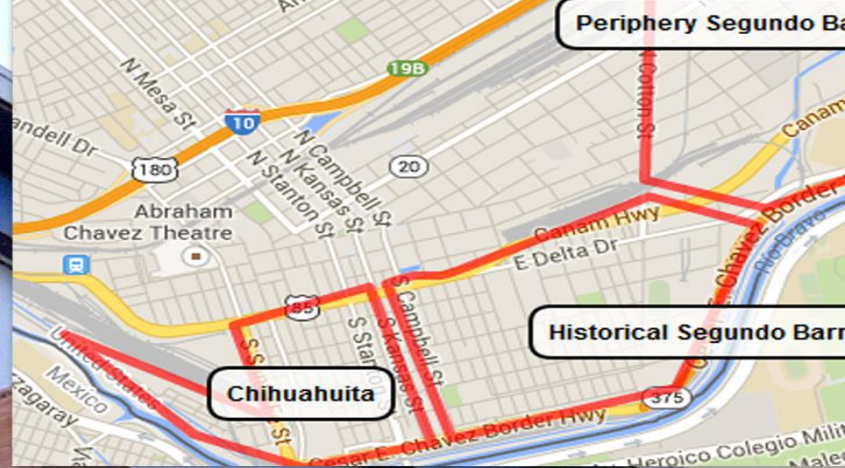


HISPANIC POPULATIONS IN THE US/MEXICO BORDER

# Chihuahuita, El Paso, Texas

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“The dense urban area of south El Paso straddle the US-Mexican border and have been witness to centuries of geopolitical changes. From land disputes that resulted from the river changing course, to a temporary base of operations for Pancho Villa during his exile from Mexico, and onto the birth place of the zoot-suited Pachuco, El Paso’s South side continues to play a crucial role for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans alike. There is a rich history in these two neighborhoods that has often been left out of the official history in both the United States and Mexico,” (Castaneda et al. 2015)



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Residents have low levels of education, live in poverty, and are chronically unemployed, underpaid, and partly rely on the informal economy. Many of the local men work as agricultural workers and daylaborers.

As of 2000 Segundo Barrio's population was around 8,000 with 96.2 percent of the population being Hispanic. According to the 2000 U. S. Census Segundo Barrio's median household income was \$10,240, with 62.1 percent of the population below the poverty level. Close to seventy-nine percent (79.3) of Segundo Barrio residents reported having no high school diploma (City of El Paso 2010).

# Barrio Logan

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# The Future of Logan

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“Whether Barrio Logan is destined for historic district status like the ‘Little Italy’ of San Diego or San Francisco that will thrive as a neighborhood with distinctly Mexican and Chicano identities, or will it become a touristic ‘Little Mexico’ like some Chinatowns, all this remains uncertain.”

**Castañeda, Ernesto**, et al.\* “Place, Poverty, Ethnicity, and Culture: Walking through Hispanic Neighborhoods in New York, San Diego and El Paso.” *Walking in Cities: Quotidian Mobility as Urban Theory, Method, and Practice*. Edited by Evrick Brown and Timothy Shortell. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

# Findings from comparing Barrios

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- All these Barrios provide a sense of community, collective pride, and relatively affordable housing to their residents. They act as important transition neighborhoods for new immigrants.
- Barrios in different American cities have different residential histories and resident compositions, some are forgotten and neglected, and others are threatened by gentrification.
- While these neighborhoods may seem as quintessentially Hispanic neighborhoods when one walks in them, they only host a relatively small number of Latino/as within their respective metropolitan areas.
- Hispanics do not **only** live in ethnic enclaves or in traditional destinations.
- They are stigmatized by outsiders as dangerous and dirty places (Castañeda 2012).
- Yet data on crime shows that they are objectively safe places, and their rundown condition is an effect of poverty, divestment, and government retrenchment. The conditions of the streets should not be seen as caused by the neighborhood inhabitants who, to the contrary, improve the physical conditions of the area through private home repairs, opening businesses, and cultural centers (Fuentes 2007; Serra del Pozo 2006; Thompson 2007)

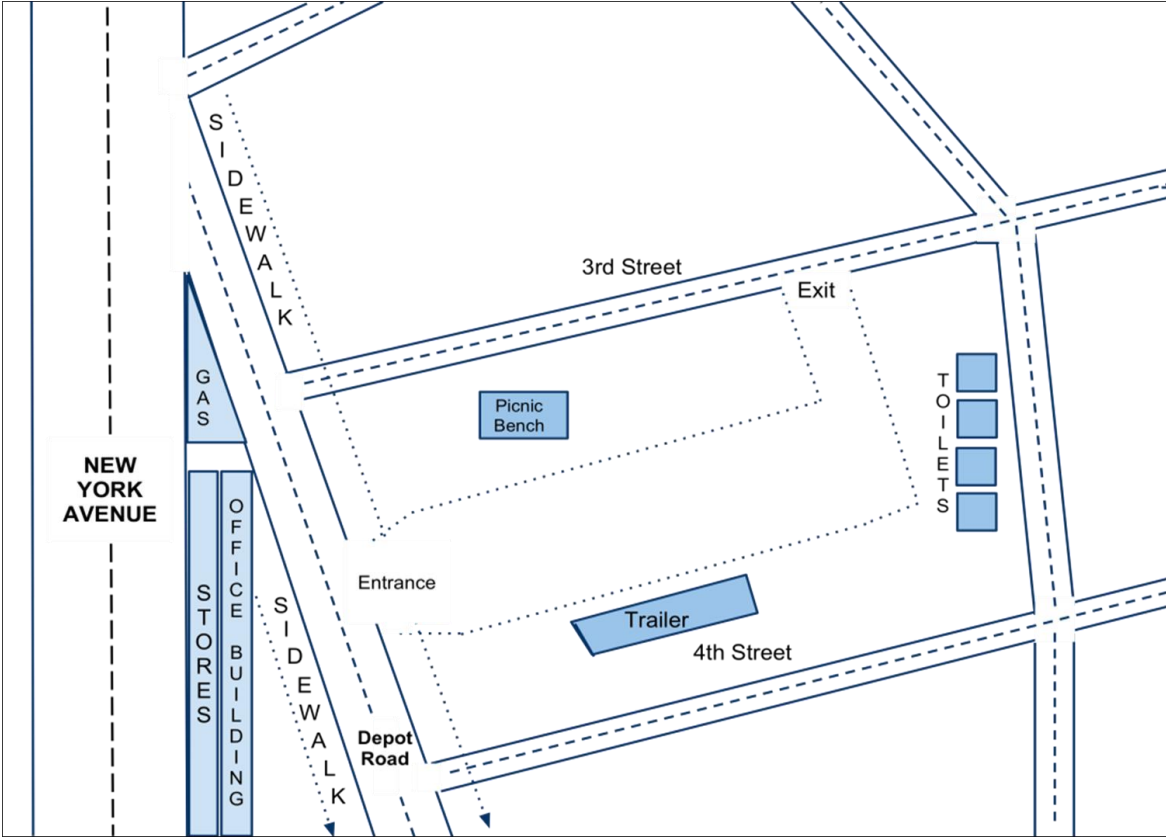
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- Findings point towards the diversity of the Latino/a experience in contemporary American cities.
  - Why does it matter?

Latinos live and work in ALL neighborhood types



# Policy recommendation

-Support day labor hiring sites.



# Ethnicity, Illegality, and Social Boundaries

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Castaneda and Beck 2018 discuss boundary-making practices that marginalize Latino day laborers in the communities where they work:

- the construction of day labor space as dangerous,
- the internalization of illegality
- wage theft
- ‘flash hirings’

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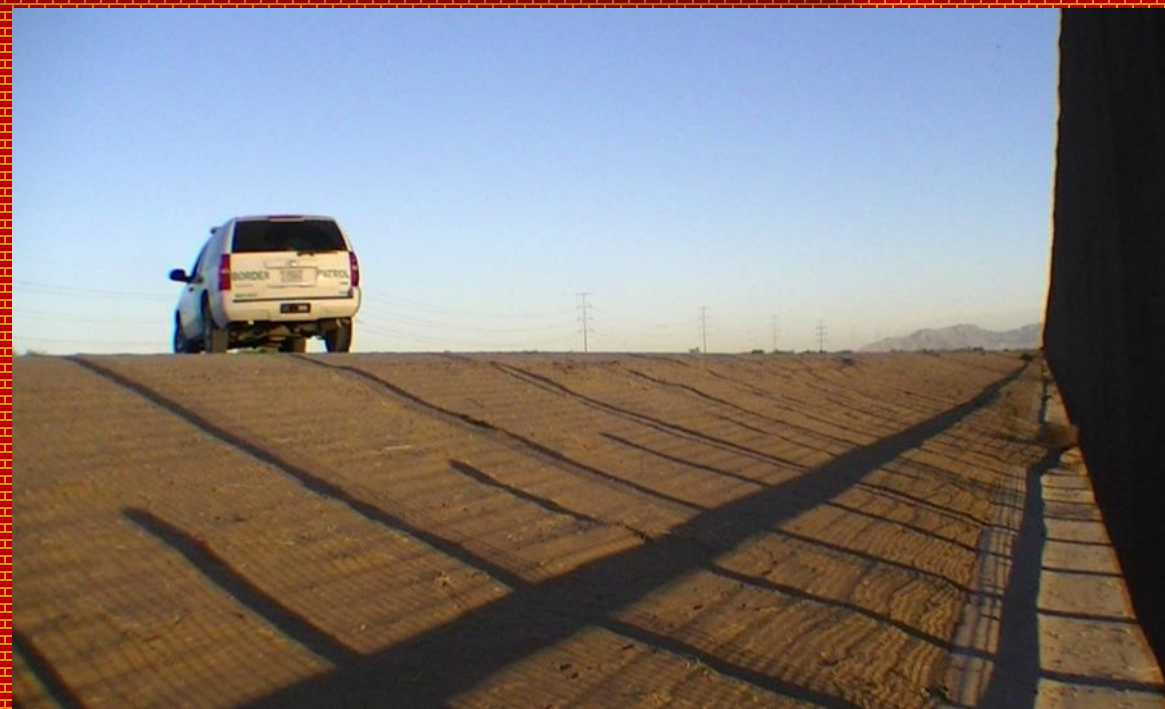
**Immigration and  
Categorical  
Inequality**

Migration to the City and the  
Birth of Race and Ethnicity

EDITED BY **ERNESTO CASTAÑEDA**

*Building Walls: Excluding Latin People in the United States.* Lexington

2019



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# Building Walls

## PART I CATEGORICAL THINKING

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About the Author

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# Thank you!

- Questions?
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