



CHARTS

Hispanic Segregation Is Declining in U.S. Metros

EMILY BADGER MAR 21, 2013 1 COMMENT

For 30 years now, data has suggested that Hispanics in America have made no progress integrating in U.S. cities. Measures of their residential segregation (relative to white populations) have remained unchanged, suggesting that as the country's largest minority group has continued to grow in size, it has stayed largely separated from other segments of society.

This data, though, may be misleading. A [new analysis](#) from Brown University including data from the 2010 census concludes that this "seeming stability masks important differences": In fact, every Hispanic group has seen substantial declines in segregation since 1990, with the lone exception of Mexicans.

Mexicans and Mexican-Americans make up 60 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population, meaning that the experiences of all Hispanics are often conflated with the patterns shown by their most dominant sub-group. Write authors John R. Logan and Richard N. Turner, from Brown's [US2010 Project](#): "We examine here the levels and trends in segregation for every Hispanic national origin group separately, and we find a very different picture."

This chart summarizes their findings (in national metropolitan averages) using the [index of dissimilarity](#) most commonly used to measure segregation (the closer the score is to 100, the more segregated the two groups in the comparison):

	D from whites		
	1990	2000	2010
Hispanic total	50.6	50.8	48.5
Mexican	51.6	51.6	50.1
Puerto Rican	64.9	55.9	50.8
Cuban	60.1	48.9	48.0
Dominican	80.3	74.2	69.5
Central American	66.2	59.8	58.5
South American	53.3	45.3	42.5

"Hispanics in the United States: Not Only Mexicans," by Logan and Turner

Back in 1990, all of the other groups identified were *more* segregated than Mexicans. Since then, segregation has dropped dramatically for Cubans and Dominicans, and that's been particularly true for Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in the New York metropolitan area. South Americans are spatially the most assimilated, and also among the most highly educated Hispanics. Dominicans, meanwhile, have remained particularly isolated.

Part of what's going on here is the dispersal of some immigrant groups from the cities with which they've long been associated. In 1990, the New York metropolitan area had more than a million Puerto Ricans. Now that number is about 900,000. New York was also home in 1990 to three-fourths of all Dominicans living in the country; now the area is home to only about half.

Now as Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Dominicans are among the fastest growing segments of the U.S. Hispanic population, it seems particularly important to recognize that "Hispanics" are hardly the monolithic group they've often been viewed as in the United States. As the authors conclude:

Except for South Americans the neighborhoods where Hispanics live remain much less advantaged than those of whites, and little progress is being made on that front. But there is one important positive sign here: the increasing residential integration with whites of every Hispanic national origin group except Mexicans. This is a phenomenon that has been submerged by analyses of Hispanics as a single large category, and recognizing it is an important payoff from looking more closely at Hispanics' diverse origins.

Top image: [Michael D. Brown/Shutterstock](#)

Keywords: Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, hispanics, Segregation, Immigration



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