



Mexicans in the U.S. have high levels of segregation amongst themselves while other Latino groups are quickly changing this. (John Lund/Getty Images)

Report: Mexicans only Latino group not leaving segregated neighborhoods

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4:33 pm on 03/20/2013

Conventional wisdom has held that all Latino groups are slow to desegregate themselves from predominantly Hispanic neighborhoods, but a new report says Mexicans are the only Latino group that really fits the bill.

[A report released by Brown University's US2010 project](#), says a variety of groups like South Americans, Puerto Ricans and Cubans are acclimating and diversifying themselves among different neighborhoods more readily than Mexican-Americans.

“Mexicans are not changing,” says [Brown sociologist John Logan](#), the co-author of the report. “Everybody else is changing. Dominicans were historically very segregated but that is changing. On a national level segregation has declined quite a lot.”

The report uses changes in major metropolitan cities to illustrate the larger overall trend. In Los Angeles/Long Beach, Mexicans were 80 percent of Hispanics in 1990 and 92 percent in Riverside-San Bernardino in 1990 and their shares remain the same in 2010.

“You have entire communities that are almost entirely Mexican in the Rio Grande Valley, and it’s not going to change soon,” says [Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino and Elected Officials](#).

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New York’s Puerto Rican population on the other hand used to account for 50 percent of the Hispanics in the area in 1990 but that number has plummeted to 31 percent.

In Houston, the main growth has been among Central Americans, especially Salvadorans who went from 8 percent to 13 percent. In Chicago, the Puerto Rican population has sharply declined going elsewhere and in Miami, the share of Cubans has gone down while the principal gain has been among South Americans.

[Mexican unemployment rates are a bit higher](#) than the national Hispanic average while some Central and South American countries have rates much lower than the national average. The lack of mobility and comparative success may lead to the assumption that there is something about Mexican-Americans which is hurting them in the U.S. but these differences can be attributed to the distance migrants have to travel to come to the United States.

“There are lots of poor people in Argentina,” said Jacob Vigdor, a [Duke University immigration scholar told the Wall Street Journal](#). “But to get here all the way from the cone of South America, you need to have a certain income level.”

This means South Americans are less likely to be economic migrants and are often in the country to further their education or to flee unrest, while Mexicans usually reach the U.S. by land.

“The immigration stream from South America is more middle class in its origin,” Brown’s Logan says. “It’s comparable to blacks from South Saharan Africa. It’s just so hard to get from Africa to the U.S. and it’s the same from deep in South America.”

Second and third generation Mexicans are likely to stay in the same neighborhoods, along with some other groups of Hispanics. While Logan is hesitant to pinpoint a reason, like the widely held belief that Latinos are more family oriented, he says it certainly could be a factor.

“Kinship networks are very important to where people live,” he says.

“They hold people in specific neighborhoods across generations.”

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