

Where Hispanics live in the US may change over time

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A study of residential patterns in America suggests that White and Black Hispanics born in the U.S. are more likely to share neighborhoods with native non-Hispanic Whites and African Americans, compared to foreign-born Hispanics -- a pattern consistent with immigrant assimilation. Hispanics from Mexico in particular integrate consistently with all ethnic groups over generations.

"Hispanics in 2003 became the largest minority group in the U.S.," said John Iceland, lead author and Penn State professor of sociology and demography. "We were interested in finding the role of race and nativity in their residential patterns."

Iceland argues that a better understanding of such patterns will not only shed light on the changing nature of racial and ethnic residential divisions, but also provide clues to what kinds of immigrant assimilation and racial divisions we may witness in the coming years.

While previous studies suggest that residential segregation between Hispanics and non-Hispanic Whites is lower than that between African Americans and non-Hispanic Whites, comparisons among Hispanic subgroups are hard to tease out.

Researchers point to the ambiguous nature of racial and ethnic identity among Hispanics as a problem.

Using data from the 2000 Census, Iceland and his colleague Kyle Anne

Nelson, doctoral student at the University of Maryland, were able to draw a much clearer picture of residential integration between Hispanics and U.S.-born non-Hispanic Whites, African Americans.

"We coded Hispanics born in Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories as foreign-born," Iceland said. "Although American citizens at birth, they share some of the same experiences of newcomers to the U.S." Findings of the study appear in this month's (October) issue of the *American Sociological Review*.

Statistical analyses of residential patterns among various racial and ethnic groups when contrasted with various socioeconomic factors such as home ownership and college education, suggest that White Hispanics are in general less segregated from non-Hispanic Whites than from African Americans, and Black Hispanics are considerably less segregated from African Americans than from non-Hispanic Whites.

"Our findings indicate that race still plays a salient role in shaping where people live," said Iceland.

The researchers also found that over generations, White Cubans and White Puerto Ricans are increasingly more likely to reside in neighborhoods with non-Hispanic Whites but not with other non-White Hispanics.

"But among Mexicans we saw a consistent pattern of generational assimilation with both native-born non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks," noted Iceland, whose work is funded by the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Census Bureau. "The reason for such a trend among Mexicans is still unclear," he added.

The Penn State researcher says the findings show a certain degree of generational integration of Hispanics (both Black and White) with native-

born non-Hispanic Whites and Blacks.

"Over time, we could see immigrants move out of ethnic enclaves and into a broader range of American neighborhoods," Iceland said. "In the long run, different groups will live in areas with several other ethnic groups and thus reduce the significance of various color lines in the metropolitan United States."

Source: Penn State

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