

**Title:**

**“Intra-Urban Mobility Patterns of Mexican Immigrants in Emerging Gateway Cities”**

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Note: Please consider the following abstract for a panel, an overflow panel, or a poster session:\

**Please consider the abstract for the following sessions:**

**604 Immigrant Adaptation (Alba)**

**607 New Patterns of Migrant and Immigrant Settlement**

**a) Short (150 word) abstract:**

*The 2000 U.S. Census identified the impact of immigration upon a number of ‘emerging’ gateway cities. Little is known about the intraurban mobility patterns of immigrants in these metropolitan areas: where they live at the outset, what governs their search behavior for employment, how far they mobilize social capital in the first few months, and about their medium- to long-term employment trajectories. Similarly little is known about their parallel residential trajectories, as they move from being sharers or renters upon arrival to later tenure housing arrangements as they become settled in the medium- to long-term. This paper addresses the current gap in the literature regarding the urban transitions undergoing these emerging gateway cities and the spatial mobility and work-seeking experiences of recently arrived immigrants. Based on a regression analysis of 1-percent Public-Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) files, this research studies*

*intraurban spatial mobility patterns in the metropolitan areas of Austin-San Marcos, Ft. Worth-Arlington, and Dallas, Texas.*

**b) An extended (2-4 page) abstract.**

The 2000 U.S. Census identified the impact of immigration upon a number of *emerging gateway cities*, which in Texas include the metropolitan areas of Austin-San Marcos, Ft. Worth-Arlington, and Dallas. Little is known, however, about the spatial mobility and work-seeking experiences of recent migrants and immigrants in these metropolitan centers. Specifically, where they live at the outset, what governs their search behavior for employment, how far they mobilize social capital in the first few months, and about their medium- to long-term employment trajectories. Similarly little is known about their parallel residential trajectories, as they move from being sharers or renters upon arrival to later tenure housing arrangements as they become settled in the medium- to long-term. Whereas considerable information is available about immigrants arriving to the United States and then traveling to and from Illinois or California, or between urban areas such as Chicago and Los Angeles, little is known about the intraurban migratory patterns of immigrants in Texas. This study addresses these remaining questions about how immigrants settle and adjust within metropolitan areas in terms of housing and economic mobility at different stages in their lives.

During the mid-1990s immigrants to the United States began to settle in areas outside of the traditional gateway cities of Los Angeles or Miami. In Austin, for example, the foreign-born population increased by over 175 percent during the decade. Immigrants were attracted to a strong growth economy based on established information technology firms, the growth in the services and construction industries, and a major state university. In the city of Dallas (not including surrounding areas such as Plano, Arlington, Irving, or Garland), the foreign-born population increased by over 130 percent, possibly attracted to a strong regional economy based on a wide range of industries, particularly in the services and construction sectors.

Much of the research on emerging gateway cities in the United States has been largely focused on documenting the numbers of immigrants and the unprecedented

population growth in metropolitan areas not considered traditional gateways, such as Austin and Dallas. A considerable gap in the literature still exists regarding the urban transitions undergoing these emerging gateway cities and the spatial mobility and work-seeking experiences of recently arrived immigrants in these new immigrant areas. With this in mind, the purpose of this research is to study two key issues: 1) What have been the patterns and experiences of immigrants in traditional gateway cities, and 2) what similarities or differences can be found in “emerging gateway cities”? Within this framework key research questions will also examine the relationships between the search for work behavior and the translation into spatial patterns of mobility and residence. This paper contributes both empirically and theoretically to the study of immigrant employment and residential search studies, and will serve as a resource for academicians and policymakers.

The proximity of Texas to Mexico also underscores the importance of this research. Texas has the longest border with Mexico than any of the other three U.S. states bordering Mexico, California, Arizona, or New Mexico. As one of the most dynamic regions in the world, the U.S.-Mexico border region extends 2,000 miles from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, 1,254 miles of which are along the Texas border. Decades before the passage of the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994, Mexican immigrants journeyed to Texas to work as temporary migrant agricultural laborers.<sup>1</sup> However, since the late 1980s the international trade flows between the United States and Mexico has increased not only the truck traffic at ports of entry but the entry of Mexican immigrants following the trail of commerce along Texas’s primary interstate highway, IH-35. The large metropolitan areas of Texas and other urban centers in the United States have become the new agricultural fields of immigrants. By the end of the 1990s, the population in the largest Texas counties and Mexican states along the Texas-Mexico border reached 13.6 million. According to Mexico’s census estimates, the population of the Mexican states bordering Texas—Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas—increased 22 percent, to almost 12 million, from 1990 to 2000, adding 2.2 million residents. On the U.S. side, the population

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<sup>1</sup> See David M. Reimers, *Still the Golden Door: The Third World Comes to America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981).

of El Paso, Webb, Hidalgo and Cameron counties increased by about 391,000 inhabitants, from 1.4 million in 1990 to 1.8 million in 1999—a 29 percent increase.<sup>2</sup>

This research extends naturally from existing work on remittances and migration behavior among Central and North Texas Mexican residents, and upon colonia-type housing developments both in the Texas-Mexico border and, more recently recognized, in the hinterland of emerging gateway cities. Peter Ward's work on the development of colonias in Texas has been centered in the Central Texas area. That research has proven expertise in the methods proposed here and will also build upon existing survey materials that are being gathered by several universities. To date this work has been carried out at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, the University of Texas at Austin, and embraces a consortium of universities within the University of Texas System and Texas A&M System as well as several other government and non-governmental organizations. During 2001-04 Southern Methodist University (SMU) and the University of Texas at Arlington received a National Science Foundation grant to conduct a study of four foreign-born ethnic communities in the emerging gateway area of Dallas-Fort Worth. This research considers the findings of the SMU study in its final conclusions.

### ***Background***

A recent review of immigration literature reveals a growing discussion of the importance of “emerging gateway cities” (Suro and Singer 2002; Singer 2003; Frey 1995, 2003). Much of the research taking place is based on the unprecedented growth of foreign-born populations in places which had not experienced any such notable growth before the 1990s. Recent policy studies from the Brookings Institution and the Center for Immigration Studies focus on the impact of immigration upon the urban population growth, urban and suburban development, housing, city services, and commuting. Within this background, this research studies changes taking place in metropolitan areas located in Texas which have attracted an unprecedented number of immigrants. It also provides a closer view of the impact of immigration and intra-urban migratory patterns of

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<sup>2</sup> David E. Lorey, ed. *United States-Mexico Border Statistics since 1990* (University of California, at Los Angeles, UCLA Latin American Center Publications, 1993), pp. 7-13 and pp. 25-38; and INEGI, “XII Censo General de Población y Vivienda, 2000,” December 2, 2000 (<http://www.inegi.gob.mx/difusion/>)

immigrants in metropolitan areas to further our understanding of the spatial transitions undergoing both immigrants and metropolitan areas. This research will contribute to the broader studies of gateway cities by applying empirical and theoretical approaches to the study of the spatial transitions occurring in emerging gateway cities in Texas, particularly in Austin and Dallas.

Generally speaking, *gateway cities* are those places where immigrants work and reside in the host country. Immigrants are attracted to gateway cities because of their resources, social networks, ethnic enclaves, industry mix, labor markets, and location. Historically, traditional gateway cities in the United States such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, San Francisco, Washington, and Miami have been large metropolitan areas of 1 million or more in population. These large metropolitan areas have attracted the majority of foreign-born immigrants to the United States, and still do. Since the 1950s, half of all Hispanic immigrants continue to be located in sixteen established Latino metros, including Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. During the period 1980-2000, the population of these established metros continued to account for over 50 percent of foreign-born Hispanics although the rate of population increase grew at a slower rate--from 20 percent in 1980 to 32 percent by 2000.<sup>3</sup> New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles increased their foreign-born population between 13 percent and 38 percent only. In fact, cities such as Los Angeles (13 percent) and Miami (0.80 percent) registered slower growth in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Moreover, William Frey estimates that whereas the nation's largest metropolitan areas gained the greatest number of immigrants, they also lost the largest number of domestic migrants. One-fifth of the leading 100 U.S. metropolitan areas, such as Dallas, Texas, recorded an overall population decline in the Anglo population. In this area and others, the influx of Latino immigrants has served to revitalize areas that were experiencing slow growth and boosted the population of these areas.<sup>4</sup>

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espanol/bvinegi/cpyv/indice.html) quoted in "State Functions at the Texas-Mexico Border and Cross-border Transportation," Texas Comptrollers' Office, January 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Roberto Suro and Audrey Singer, "Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations." Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution and the Pew Hispanic Center, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> William H. Frey, "Metropolitan Magnets for International and Domestic Migrants," Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy, The Brookings Institution, October 2003, 4.