

Newcomer and Receiving Communities' Perspectives on Latino Immigrant Acculturation in a Rural Midwest Community

Thank you!

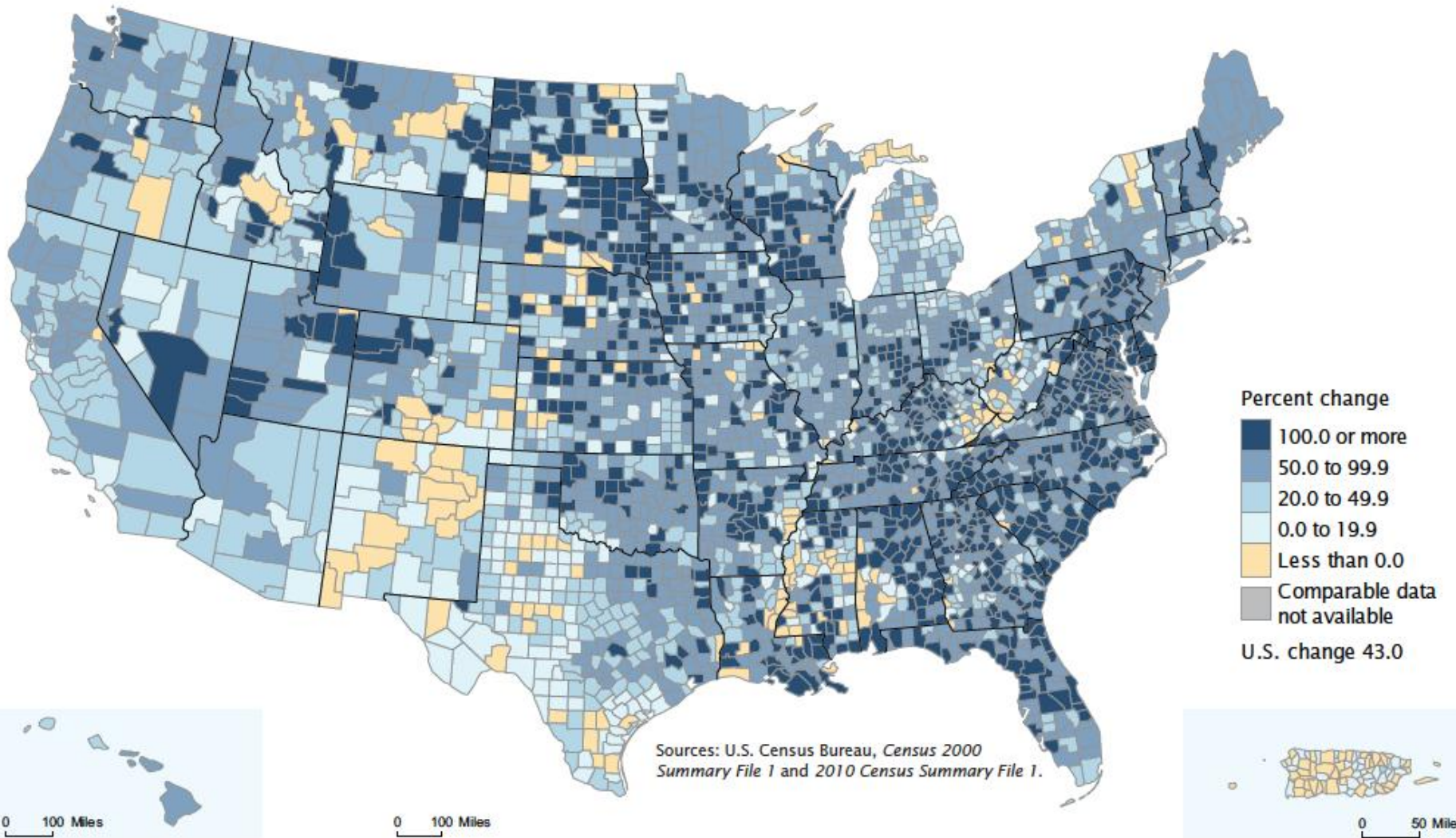
To all the people who helped organize this meeting and all the participants in the focus groups.

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Introduction

- Rapid growth of foreign-born population
- 11% of the U.S. population, most (53%) of whom come from Latin American countries
- Changing migration patterns
 - Secondary migration to the Midwest is shifting demographics in rural communities
 - Jobs and low cost of living are major pull factors



Percent Change in Hispanic or Latino Population by County: 2000 to 2010

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010

Introduction, cont'd

- Rural Midwestern communities facing challenges as a result of the shifting migration patterns
- Understanding the perceptions of members of the receiving community can provide valuable knowledge regarding integration efforts

Purpose of the Current Study

- To understand the perceptions of *both Latino newcomers and receiving community members* regarding the integration of Latino immigrants in rural communities in the Midwest.

Procedures

- Worked with trusted organizations (churches, community centers) and gatekeepers in the community to access both newcomers and long-time residents
- Focus groups for newcomers were conducted in Spanish; in English for long-term residents

Procedures

- Focus groups lasted from 1 hour – 1.5 hours
- Conducted 4 focus groups:
 - 2 receiving community
 - One for men, one for women
 - 2 newcomer community
 - One for men, one for women
- Interviews were transcribed
 - Newcomer focus group interviews were transcribed in Spanish and then translated in English
 - The English translated transcript was reviewed by a member of the team

Interview Protocol

- **Community**

- *How did you end up in this community?*
- *What is it like to live in this community?*
- *What would you like us to know about your community?*

- **Relationships**

- *Where do you find support?*
- *How are these relationships helpful to you?*
- *Tell us of opportunities you have had to interact with members of the receiving/newcomer community.*
- *How would you like to see relationships develop between receiving and newcomer communities here?*

Community

- Population of 21,387
- 9.3% Latino
- Manufacturing, retail trade, construction, accommodation and food services

Participants:

Receiving Community

- 15 participants (9 women, 6 men)
- **Women**
 - Average age: 51.3 years (range 38-75)
 - Average time in community: 33.6 years
 - 3 master's degree, 3 bachelor's degree, 2 associate's degree, 1 high school
 - Occupations: social services, education, librarian, administrators, cashier, arts, retired
- **Men**
 - Average age: 50.8 years (range 19-78)
 - Average time in community: 22.6 years
 - 3 bachelor's degree, 3 high school
 - Occupations: law enforcement, student, higher education, manufacturing, engineer, retired

Participants:

Newcomer Community

- 19 participants (10 women, 9 men)
- **Women**
 - Average age: 36 years (range 22-75)
 - Average time in community: 9.2 years
 - 2 6th grade, 1 9th grade, 5 high school diploma, 2 some college
 - Occupations: stay-at-home mom, secretary/receptionist, patient care coordinator, housekeeping
- **Men**
 - Average age: 39.6 years (range 22-57)
 - Average time in community: 8.5 years
 - 3 3rd-4th grade, 1 10th grade, 4 high school diploma, 1 some college
 - Occupations: manufacturing, appliance repair, dishwasher

Data Analysis

- Develop codes based on the data
- Themes were generated using the codes
 - Seeking themes or patterns that emerged from the data
- Representative quotes are provided to describe each theme

Themes

- Community Appeal
- Integration Attitudes
- Community Progress

Community Appeal: *Economic Opportunities*

- **Work opportunity for self or family member, better salaries, low cost of living**
- *Well, more than anything, [we came here] to look for a better life, better because we had lived in California some six or seven years, and life there is very expensive. So we moved here to see if we would earn a bit more here. [Newcomer, female]*
- *I think it has a lot to do with: first, the people, such as my husband's family. They had a brother already here, and they came mostly because it was cheaper. And you know how one person tells another, and the idea spreads: it is cheap. [Newcomer, female]*

Community Appeal: *Educational Opportunities*

- **Good educational system, safe schools, educational opportunities for children**
- *There is a strong focus on education here with the high school and the school district in general...and with partnerships with the community college here. [Receiving, male]*
- *Yes, I come from California and the fear that we didn't want our children to be in gangs. There is a big problem with shootings, even if you don't live in the areas with gangs, um... there are quite a lot of shootings. There I was very nervous that my children would enter a gang and lose his/her life or go down the wrong path. That was my greatest fear. I want them to study, and do the school [stuff]. [Newcomer, female]*

Community Appeal:

Small Town Atmosphere

- **Friendly people, people help one another, safe place to raise a family, not enough activities for youth, good location to major city, little violence**
- *On helping a Latino family affected by the tornado:...the church got involved, the neighborhood got involved...and that wouldn't have happened had it not been for the compassion of the people that are here. We've got good people. [Receiving, male]*
- *I think that Community C is like where I come from. Now that I'm a father, I can put myself in my parents' shoes. It is a calm town, it strikes me as calm. I can go out at any time. It feels good to me because there's no evilness, there aren't gangs so to speak. And that makes me feel good for my kids, so that they can go to school. That feels good to me. [Newcomer, male]*

Community Appeal: *Attachment to Place*

- **Returning to family roots, family or friends living in area**
- *I was born here. I left when the draft board was considering my health so that I could join the armed services. So I left here in '52 and came back here in '68.*
[Receiving, male]
- *...because my entire family was already here. So to follow —often we Hispanics are very attached to our family and being together—and that was the reason.*
[Newcomer, female]

Integration Attitudes:

Attitude toward Change

- **Thoughts and feelings related to increasing diversity in the community; perceptions of how the community has changed as a result of the increased diversity**
- ***Receiving: more open-mindedness; discomfort***
- ***Newcomers: less discrimination; better communication from schools to parents; more resources available for immigrants***

- *But it is an issue. If I'm standing in line and a couple of them are behind me or in front of me, and they're carrying on a personal conversation, uh, and my wife is with me, she thinks they're talking about her. And I doubt if they even know she's there. [Receiving, male]*

Integration Attitudes: *Attitude toward Change*

- *Now many of the organizations and places have their own interpreters and have their own people who can help them [Latinos]. In this case, it is good because it is coming directly from the people who are from the organization. [Newcomer, female]*

Integration Attitudes: *Perceptions of Immigration/Immigration Policy*

- **Misperceptions of immigrants and immigration policies; educate immigrants of their rights; provide opportunities for children who are here for education; educate receiving community about immigration policy**
- *But now there's a lot [of prejudice] against the Spanish population that's moving in. And I hear all kinds of stories. I got an email about Jose and Joe. You know. And Joe has to pay various kinds of taxes and Jose doesn't. That's not Jose, that's his employer who is cheating the government, you see. And Jose doesn't know it and doesn't care, what he knows is that he's got a job. And those other kinds of details, he's not really interested in, and doesn't know anything about them. But the email is talking about how bad it is for Joe to have to pay taxes and on and on and on like that. And they obviously don't know that ... I don't know what the classifications are, but some of the immigrant workers that are here have to pay more withholding tax than the others do. I'm not really sure why, except that it's a law. [Receiving, male]*

Integration Attitudes: *Perceptions of Immigration/Immigration Policy*

- *But for the children, we need to help enroll them in Medicaid, which is very important, especially for those who were born here. Since their parents don't have papers, sometimes they don't do it (enroll kids) out of fear, but they have rights.
[Newcomer, female]*
- *Sure, and we already are doing more than they are. What he is saying - sometimes we contribute even more than them. For instance, one can see that an American gets everything from the government and we don't. [Newcomer, male]*

Integration Attitudes

Perceived Barriers and Supports to Integration

- **Supports**: religious institutions have served as leaders
- **Barriers**: language; misconceptions held by receiving community of immigrants; lack of interactions & communication with one another; prejudice attitudes; self-segregation
- *Our churches have picked the ball up and really, really opened their arms and created avenues for our Hispanic population to come together to worship. I think that's been a very positive impact. When we began to be impacted by an influx of Latinos, our churches picked the ball up.*
[Receiving, male]
- *If you're a Hispanic and you're here, it's kinda tough to meld into the community because number one you don't speak the language, and you get to feeling that somebody is after my job and that's them [Latinos]. You know and there's that that division, and... unfortunately, you know that's something that there's not a whole lot of easy answers to either, but it's there.* [Receiving, male]

Integration Attitudes:

Perceptions of “Other” Community

- **RECEIVING:** increasing population in our community; hard workers; keep to themselves; coming for jobs; a lot of diversity among Latinos (e.g., education)
- *So, my experience was that, at least that crew, they were amazing. Their desire to work was just obvious. I’m not trying to say that I had any preconceived ideas but I just thought, I’ve had my house roofed a couple times in the period of time that I’ve owned, I’ve never seen a crew work as efficiently as these guys do. They were amazing. Very, very efficient. Hard working. [Receiving, male]*

Integration Attitudes:

Perceptions of “Other” Community

- **NEWCOMER: Friendly; good relations; superficial relations; helpful; take advantage of immigrants; indifferent towards immigrants; more acceptance of Latinos; schools support Latino students equally; perceived racism**
- *In my case, there are people who, they are Americans, and well, I feel good with them, truly. I like to connect with them, and I think they like to connect with me too, and they call me too, and well, there's communication. [Newcomer, female]*
- *There are many Americans that sure, they aren't against [us], but they also aren't taking us into account. There are those that don't know what to do, see. [Newcomer, male]*

Community Progress: *Ideas for Integration*

- **RECEIVING COMMUNITY:** Increase communication between groups; partner with religious institutions; leadership development in the Latino/Black communities; increase diversity among city employees; break down communication (language) barriers
- *I'd like to set up a panel and discussion, similar to what some folks up in Another Community in Missouri have got, in that the [racial composition] is not as homogenous as what I think it ought to be. There's a lot of sometimes tension. It's a quiet tension nobody talks about it, but it's still here, you know. And uh... the purpose in that get-together is just to get it on the table so we can discuss it and make some things go. [Receiving, male]*
- *You're right, there's a tremendous amount of available talent there, and it's like you say, you gotta find some leadership. It has to be homegrown. [Receiving, male]*

Community Progress: *Ideas for Integration*

- **NEWCOMER: provide English language learning programs; increase opportunities to communicate with one another; promote sporting activities; promote cross-cultural exchanges; hold cultural fairs in the community; develop strong leaders; educate receiving community about immigrants' contributions to society**
- *An activity where we all cooperated and everyone was united. In the disaster...there wasn't any kind of racism. We were all one family, you know? One family. Living together.*
[Newcomer, male]

Discussion

From what you have seen in this presentation, what was most relevant to you?

What did you find most challenging?

What are your overall impressions of what we've learned in the project so far?

What else would you like to learn about this issue?

Next Steps

- Photovoice (Start in January, second week)
- Survey / acculturation profile (January)
- Appreciate Inquiry process and community projects follow the Photovoice Activities

For More Information...

- The Integration Project: *Immigrant Integration & Sustainable Rural Development: Linking Receiving & Newcomer Communities*

<http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/Integration/>

- The Assets Project: *Asset Accumulation Strategies in 3 New Settlement Communities*

<http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/Assets/>

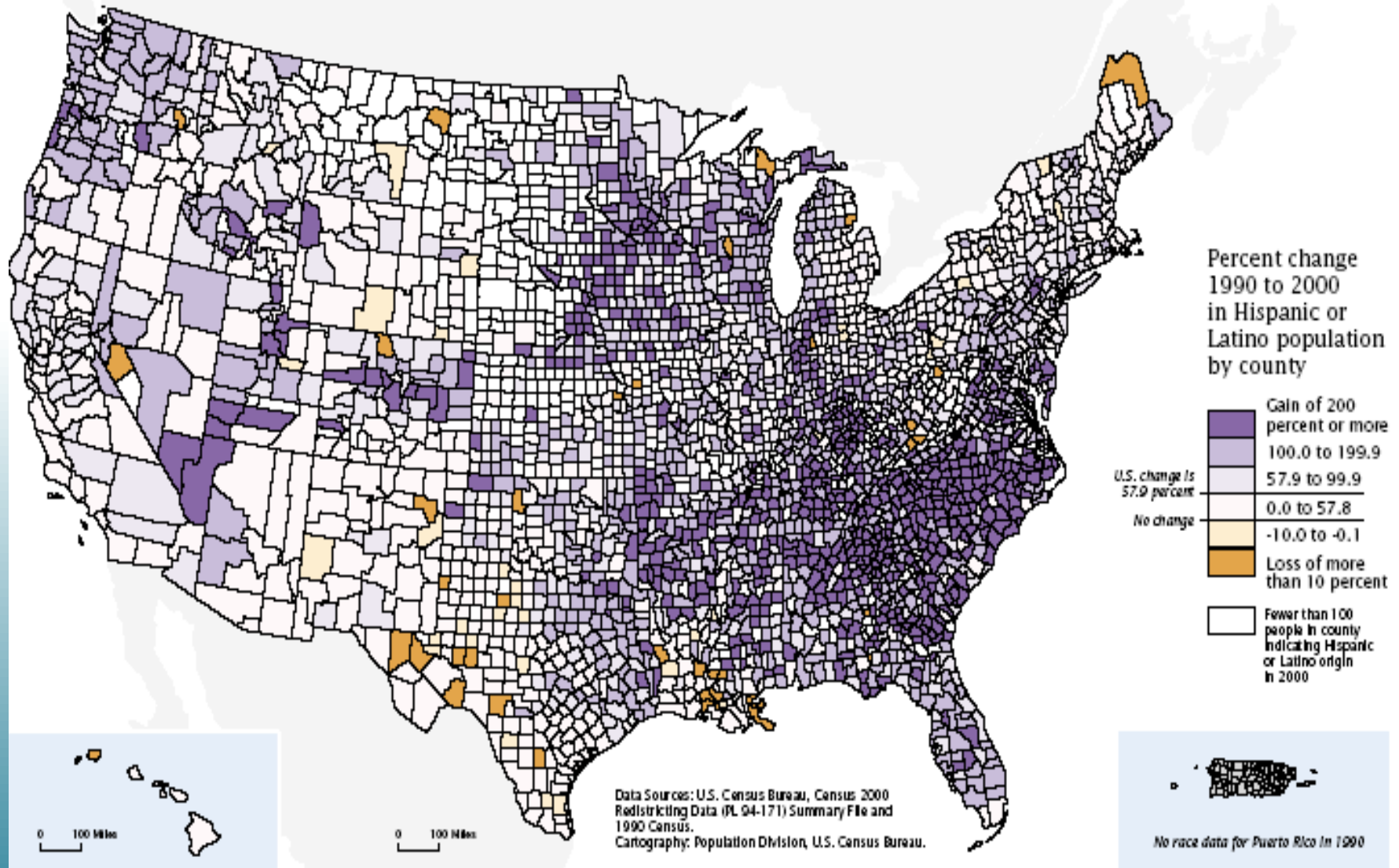
- University of Missouri Cambio Center

<http://www.cambio.missouri.edu/>



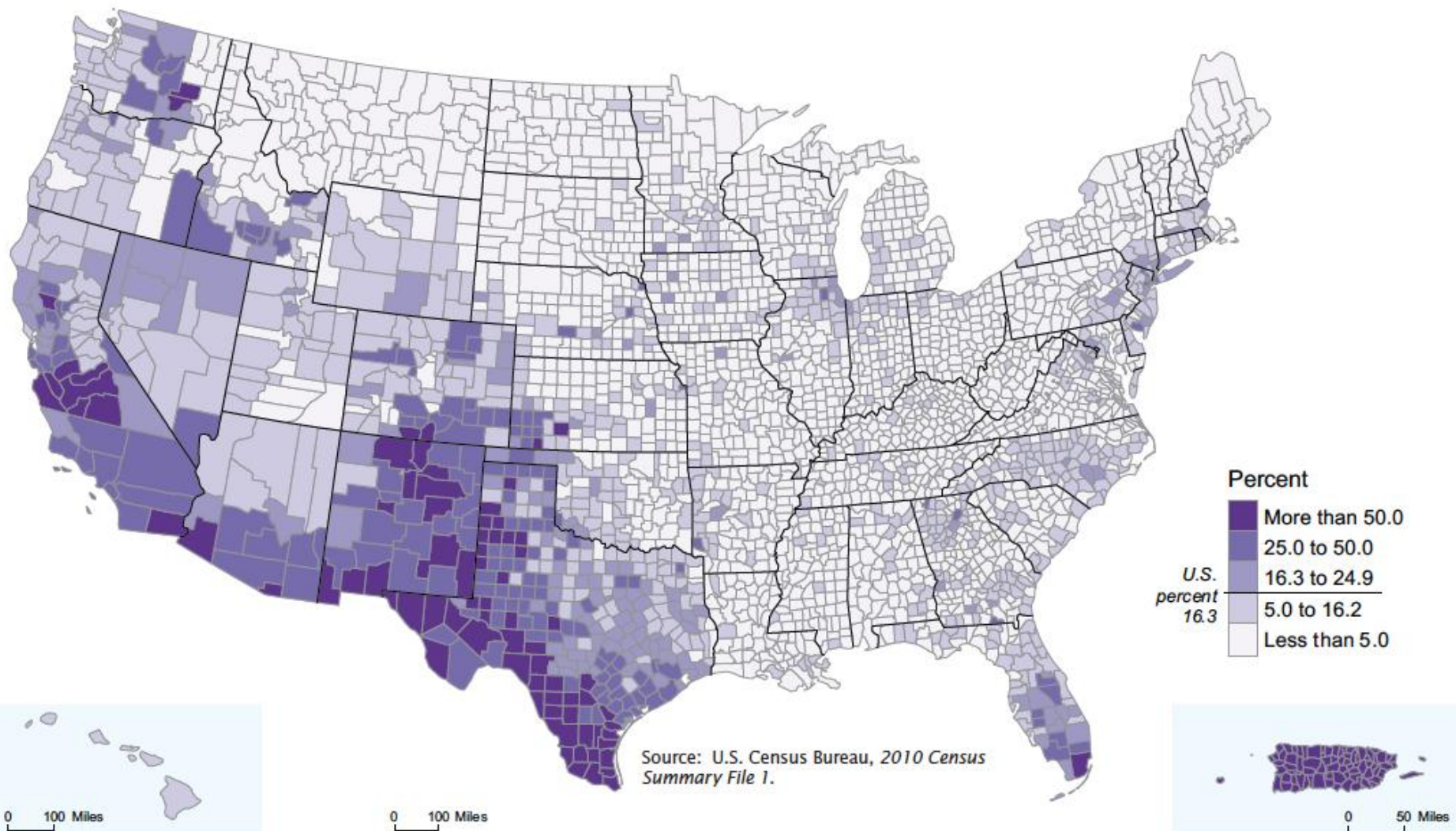
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Changes in Latino/a Population across the United States

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000



Hispanic or Latino Population as a Percent of Total Population by County: 2012

Source: US Census Bureau, 2010