

## **Gateway State, Not Gateway City: New Immigrants in the Hudson Valley**

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Studies of the post 1965 immigration have consistently revealed the importance of six gateway states: California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York and Texas. But for the most part, these are gateway states because of the gateway metropolitan areas within them: Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, New York and Houston (Frey, 2005, 2006; Gozdziaik and Martin, 2005; Singer, 2004; Portes and Rumbaut, 2006) and research has focused on the settlement of immigrants in those gateway metros. More recently though, these traditional settlement patterns have begun to change and Latin American immigrants have begun to diffuse and settle in other areas of the United States (Millard and Chapa, 2005). Beginning in the mid-1980's Latin American immigrants began settling in regions that had, up till then, been largely undisturbed by immigration (Kochhar et al., 2005). Overwhelmingly, these "new destinations" are in the South and Midwest of the United States, in states like Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Minnesota, and Iowa (Camarota and Keeley, 2001). An increasing number of studies have begun to examine immigrants located outside these gateway states (Gozdziaik and Martin, 2005; Millard and Chapa, 2004; Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon, 2005) but it is heavily concentrated on destinations in the Midwest and South of the United States. To date, little attention has been focused on new immigrants in gateway states, but outside the gateway metropolitan area. In states like Illinois and New York, this is a substantial oversight as 37 and 44 percent of the population lives outside the gateway metro areas of Chicago and New York. Though the percent of the foreign born population living outside the gateway metros is still low—in 2000 it was almost 7 percent in Illinois and almost 9 percent in New York, which translates into 103,080 and 331,547 people—these numbers are likely to increase if settlement patterns observed in the 2000 Census continue (Gozdziaik and Martin, 2005; Frey, 2006). While it may be argued that proximity to the gateway metropolitan area changes the means of immigrant integration, this is not known unless new immigrants in these areas are studied. In this paper we present some initial results from a new research project on new immigrants to two small cities in the Hudson Valley of New York State—places outside the gateway metropolitan area but within the gateway state.

Immigrants settling in places outside the gateway cities face a different set of challenges from those that settle in them. Unlike immigrants who have settled in traditional gateway metro areas, those settling in new destinations usually do not have access to the bilingual services and immigrant organizations as their counterparts in gateway cities (Waters and Jimenez, 2005). The lack of these institutional structures as well as the small number of immigrants in these new destinations is likely to make the immigrant incorporation experience different from that of immigrants settling in traditional gateway cities. Given the importance of social networks in immigration, there may be a couple of family members or friends that they know in the new area, but since these are new destinations, they cannot count on large numbers of co-ethnics and co-ethnic institutions there to help them in their initial adjustment, particularly in finding housing and jobs. Both the size of the total immigrant population as well as that of any particular national origin group is likely to be small in these non-gateway destinations. The occupational

distribution is also likely to be more constricted than that in the gateway metros, limiting their job options. At the same time, the places they settle are also challenged. They are smaller than the gateway metros, many have not received immigrants since the early 1900s and do not have social and organization structures in place to help the immigrants adapt to their new location. The immigrants will stand out in these places, and the places themselves may also face a history of declining populations, weakening industrial bases, and the economic problems accompanying them. The question, then, is how immigrants to these smaller places settle in and begin to make a new life for themselves.

The vast amount of research on the post-1965 immigrants (cf. Alba and Nee, 2003) may provide clues to the adaptation process in the smaller places but it also may not. If the latter, the tremendous increase in the immigrant population outside the main gateway cities and states poses theoretical and methodological challenges. To the extent that our knowledge of how immigrants adapt relies on the presence of these support mechanisms and the opportunity structures of large cities, it is not at all clear that that knowledge will be useful in explaining how immigrants “settle in” in smaller cities. Several questions seem most relevant to the initial settlement: first, how did the immigrants come to choose their non-gateway location? Related to this is the question of whether they moved to it from some other U.S. location, which would imply some knowledge of U.S. customs, or whether they went their directly from their foreign country of origin. Second, once they arrive, how do they go about finding a place to live? In what types of neighborhoods do they live? Other issues are also important but will not be emphasized in this paper, particularly employment. The types of jobs immigrants get is going to be a function of the immigrants’ human capital, their ability to make contacts in the labor market, as well as the overall structure of the labor market in the new place.

In this paper we examine Spanish-speaking immigrants to two small cities, Newburgh and Poughkeepsie, in the Hudson Valley of New York State. Located at the Northernmost edge of the Greater New York Consolidated Metropolitan area, these cities are small, 28,233 and 29,871 respectively according to Census 2000, and have not received many immigrants since the early decades of the twentieth century. In 2000, 20% of Newburgh’s population was foreign born and half had arrived since 1990, and in Poughkeepsie, 14 percent were immigrants and the majority had arrived in the last ten years. However, although the size of the Latin American immigrant population is small in absolute numbers they represent 18 percent of the total population in Newburgh and just under 10 percent in Poughkeepsie. The county where each city is located was a single county PMSA in 2000 and under the new metro area definitions they have been combined into the Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY Metro Area. Frey (2005) identifies these two counties as having recent Hispanic growth. Though the cities are too small to be identified on it as yet, the 2005 ACS data show continuing immigration to these counties: Dutchess county’s population is now 9.2 percent foreign born, and Orange is 10.3 percent foreign-born, up from 8.4 percent in 2000.

Data for the paper come primarily from in-depth interviews with fifty Latin American immigrants (25 in each city), supplemented with data from Census 2000 and the 2005 ACS. The in-depth interviews lasted approximately one hour and a half and covered topics such as migration history, household composition and residential settlement, social contacts with natives and other immigrants, labor-force integration, income and remittances, experiences with

discrimination and cultural issues. For purposes of this paper we will focus mainly on the migration history and residential settlement of the immigrants, and to a lesser extent their employment patterns. Participants in this study were chosen through respondent driven sampling, a technique that attempts to reduce bias through structured incentives (Heckathorn 1997). Our initial respondents were selected through contacts in various religious and community organizations that provide services to the immigrant population. This would ensure that different sectors of the immigrant population were represented in the sample. Our initial respondents or “seeds” in Heckathorn’s (1997) terminology, were given a small monetary reward when completing an interview. They were also given two coupons to give to potential respondents which promised an additional monetary incentive if referrals successfully completed an interview with us. The new respondents were given the same incentives as the “seeds” to bring in other respondents.

To provide a context for the analyses, the paper begins with an overview and brief history of the two cities and counties, using Census data from 1980 to 2000 and the 2005 ACS data. We conclude this section with information about the foreign born residents in each place, by country of origin, from the 2000 census. The history provides a context for the analysis and justifies our focus on the Spanish-speaking immigrants.

The next section of the paper examines the question of why the immigrants chose to locate in these two places, summarizing data from the interviews, and illustrating it with quotes from the immigrants themselves. Early results from our analyses of the interviews reveal that the majority of the respondents in our study have come to the Hudson Valley directly from their country of origin. Only a small number have relocated from other parts of the United States, mainly New York City. Immigrants interviewed have been in the United States for 10 years or less. They have their spouses and children with them in the Hudson Valley, and in most cases the children were born in the US. As happens in other immigrant destinations, immigrants in the Hudson Valley came to the area because they had relatives or friends who were already here, showing the importance of social networks as so much of the immigration literature has found. Since the sampling techniques was “respondent driven-sampling” we compare what the immigrants said to 2000 5% PUMS data for the PUMAs which include the cities to see where the foreign born resided in 1995 for each of these places. Whether the immigrants are coming to the new places from their home countries or from other places in the U.S. has the potential to affect their adaptation process because of their knowledge of U.S. customs.

The third part of the paper looks at the neighborhoods where the immigrants settle, using census tract data from 2000 as well as photos from fieldwork in 2005. Segregation indices for both the cities and their respective counties show that the foreign-born and the Latino population are primarily living in the cities, rather than the surrounding counties, and within the cities they are segregated from non-Hispanic whites, though less so from African Americans. From census data and fieldwork, it is clear that the immigrants are not settling in good neighborhoods. Immigrants tend to live in poor neighborhoods alongside blacks in housing that is in very bad condition. The cost of rent in these neighborhoods is very high. Overcrowding is also an issue, especially in Newburgh. Relations between the immigrants and the African American population are not good, and immigrants report more positive encounters with the non-Hispanic

white population. Rent levels from the census as well as what the immigrants report are also analyzed.

The final part of the paper provides an overview of the immigrants' jobs, as well as information about the organizations being founded in these cities to aid and accommodate the immigrants. Issues involved in the development of these organizations, and cross ethnic ties necessitated by the small numbers from particular groups, provide a clear example of the challenge of settling in new immigrant destinations.

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