



New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States

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Mexican immigration to the United States—the oldest and largest immigration movement to this country—is in the midst of a fundamental transformation. For decades, Mexican immigration was primarily a border phenomenon, confined to Southwestern states. But legal changes in the mid-1980s paved the way for Mexican migrants to settle in parts of America that had no previous exposure to people of Mexican heritage. In *New Destinations*, editors Víctor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León bring together an inter-disciplinary team of scholars to examine demographic, social, cultural, and political changes in areas where the incorporation of Mexican migrants has deeply changed the preexisting ethnic landscape.

New Destinations looks at several of the communities where Mexican migrants are beginning to settle, and documents how the latest arrivals are reshaping—and being reshaped by—these new areas of settlement. Contributors Jorge Durand, Douglas Massey, and Chiara Capoferro use census data to diagram the historical evolution of Mexican immigration to the United States, noting the demographic, economic, and legal factors that led recent immigrants to move to areas where few of their predecessors had settled. Looking at two towns in Southern Louisiana, contributors Katharine Donato, Melissa Stainback, and Carl Bankston III reach a surprising conclusion: that documented immigrant workers did a poorer job of integrating into the local culture than their undocumented peers. They attribute this counterintuitive finding to documentation policies, which helped intensify employer control over migrants and undercut the formation of a stable migrant community among documented workers. Brian Rich and Marta Miranda detail an ambivalent mixture of paternalism and xenophobia by local residents toward migrants in Lexington, Kentucky. The new arrivals were welcomed for their strong work ethic so long as they stayed in “invisible” spheres such as fieldwork, but were resented once they began to take part in more public activities like schools or town meetings. *New Destinations* also provides some hopeful examples of progress in community relations. Several chapters, including Mark Grey and Anne Woodrick’s examination of a small Iowa town, point to the importance of dialogue and mediation in establishing amicable relations between ethnic groups in newly multi-cultural settings.

New Destinations is the first scholarly assessment of Mexican migrants’ experience in the Midwest, Northeast, and deep South—the latest settlement points for America’s largest immigrant group. Enriched by perspectives from demographers, anthropologists, sociologists, folklorists, and political scientists, this volume is an essential starting point for scholarship on the new Mexican migration.

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