

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## LATINO POPULATION GROWTH IN U.S. SLOWS

Less immigration, reduced fertility lead to shift among Hispanics, as more are native-born

By Miriam Jordan  
September 8, 2016

The growth in the population of U.S. Latinos, who represent the nation's largest minority, has slowed substantially since the Great Recession and most Hispanics in the country are now born here, according to a new study.

Latino settlement across the country, which gave rise to Hispanic enclaves in the likes of North Carolina and Iowa in the 1990s and early 2000s, has also slowed since the onset of the recession in 2007, according to analysis of U.S. Census data by the Pew Research Center released Thursday.

Between 2007 and 2014, the U.S. Hispanic population grew about 2.8% annually, down from 4.4% between 2000 and 2007, and 5.8% annually in the 1990s.

"Lower fertility combined with less immigration has led to slower growth of Hispanics," said Mark Hugo Lopez, Pew's director of Hispanic Research and co-author of the report. "It has also led to a slowdown in their dispersion," he said.

These two trends point to the end of the U.S. demographic earthquake unleashed by rapid Latino population growth that began in the 1990s. That growth caused Latinos to surpass blacks and become the second-largest population group in the country, after whites.

"The demographic impact of Latinos that we have seen over the last 2.5 decades will continue into the future, but it is going to be a declining impact," said Mr. Lopez.

All told, the U.S. was home to 55.4 million Hispanics in 2014, out of a total population of around 319 million that year. U.S. Latinos, or Hispanics, are individuals born mainly in Mexico, Caribbean countries like Cuba and the Dominican Republic and Central American countries like Guatemala and El Salvador, as well as all Americans who trace their ancestry to those places.

Despite the slowdown, Latinos still represented 54% of the nation's population growth between 2000 and 2014, according to Pew.

Minorities could determine the outcome of the presidential election in November, and Latino electoral clout will continue to climb in coming years. That is in part because Hispanics in the U.S. are increasingly born here—and, thus, automatically eligible to vote.

Immigration, once the biggest driver of Hispanic population growth, has taken a back seat to U.S. births. Indeed, more people from Mexico, the biggest source of Latino immigrants, are now leaving than entering the U.S., according to Pew.

In most states, Hispanics born in the U.S. now outnumber their foreign-born brethren.

In California, the country's most populous state and home to the most Latinos, nearly two-thirds of Hispanics were U.S.-born in 2014. In Texas, which ranks second, 70% of Hispanics were born in the U.S. In Colorado, that figure was 76%.

Among the 15 metropolitan areas with the largest Hispanic population, only two are majority foreign-born. In Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, 61% of Latinos are foreign-born and in Washington, D.C. and adjacent Virginia and Maryland suburbs, 53% are immigrants.

The Hispanic fertility rate has fallen as the share of Hispanics who are immigrants has declined.

Throughout the early 2000s, the birthrate among Hispanic women of childbearing age was 95 births per 1,000 women, peaking at 98.3 in 2006. The Hispanic birthrate declined steadily, to 72.1 in 2014, and is unlikely to reverse.

Take Ana Villegas, one of six U.S.-born children to Mexican immigrants in California.

The 33-year-old executive assistant at a nonprofit in Los Angeles plans to have one or two children to "make sure I can offer them the best possible quality of life," she said.

Her sister, 35-year-old Gricelda, the oldest of the six children and the only one who is married, has two kids and doesn't want more, she said.

The Pew analysis found that Hispanics were more evenly distributed across U.S. counties in 2014 than previously, but that their dispersion has slowed since 2007.

The biggest increase in Latino population happened in North Dakota, where energy-related jobs due to expansion of the oil and natural-gas sectors also attracted other groups. The size of that state's Hispanic population doubled in the seven-year postrecession period, albeit to just 18,000.