



# The global rural: Gentrification and linked migration in the rural USA

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## Abstract

This article explores the possibility that US rural amenity destinations are affected by 'linked migration' streams similar to ones connecting the fate of high-wage professionals and low-wage immigrants in global cities. To date, the possibility of such a linkage has not been considered in the vast literature on migration and social transformation in rural America, a literature that has treated the arrival of these two groups (high-wage professionals and low-wage immigrants) in rural spaces as *separate* processes. We explore the possibility that these two groups, in a particular set of US rural amenity communities, are structurally linked. We focus on the theoretical implications of documenting such linkages, arguing that the presence of linked migration dynamics in rural areas would transform scholarly debates on: (1) Latino immigrants in the rural USA; (2) amenity migration and rural gentrification, not only in the USA but in a range of postindustrial economies; and (3) theories of globalization and mobility, as well as the place of the rural in globalization dynamics.

## Keywords

amenity migration, rural gentrification, Latino immigration, USA

## I Introduction

Saskia Sassen's groundbreaking work *The Mobility of Labor and Capital* (1988) recast fundamental assumptions about the emergence of global cities and the connections between globalized economic restructuring and transnational migration. Building on earlier scholarship that examined the extent to which the globalizing economy had produced strategic nodes of economic, intellectual, and political power within a network of global cities (Cohen, 1981; Hymer, 1972), Sassen argued that the expansion of high-wage professional positions in these cities was structurally linked to the arrival of low-

wage immigrants to these same destinations (see also Hamnett, 1991; Walker et al., 1992; Wright et al., 1997). As Sassen describes in a more recent book, 'the expansion of the high-income workforce in conjunction with the emergence of new cultural forms has led to a process of high-income gentrification that ultimately rests on the availability of a vast supply of low-wage workers' (Sassen, 2006: 86). From this

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perspective, the kind of urban economic restructuring ushered in by globalization accelerated urban gentrification and forged a structural link between an expanding class of high-wage professionals and the arrival of low-wage immigrant workers to globally integrated, post-industrial cities of the Global North.

This article explores the possibility that certain US rural communities are affected by 'linked migration' streams similar to ones connecting the fate of high-wage professionals and low-wage immigrants in global cities.<sup>1</sup> To date, the possibility of such a linkage has not been considered in the vast literature on migration and social transformation in rural America, a literature that has treated the arrival of these two groups (high-wage professionals and low-wage immigrants) in rural spaces as *separate* processes. In short, over the last several decades many communities in rural America have been gentrified by the arrival of relatively affluent, usually middle-aged and overwhelmingly white newcomers fleeing urban and suburban areas in search of a perceived higher quality of life in high-amenity rural spaces (see Frey and Liaw, 1998; Krannich and Smith, 1998; Nelson et al., 2004; Walker and Fortmann, 2003; Wilson, 1988). During the last two decades Latino immigrants have also been arriving in rural areas at high rates, in response to new employment opportunities emerging in rural labor markets (Broadway and Stull, 2006; Cantú, 1995; Cravey, 1997, 2003; Naples, 2000; Nelson, 2007; Torres et al., 2006). Both groups of scholars, however, have assumed that these two groups represent structurally distinct migration streams that arrive at distinct kinds of destinations: on the one hand amenity-rich places with golf courses, beautiful views and/or outdoor recreation opportunities, and on the other hand generally amenity-poor rural destinations that become the site for meatpacking plants and other 'undesirable' rural industries.

It is likely that in a growing number of rural destinations these groups not only overlap

spatially but are structurally linked in ways that would transform inquiry into migration and social change in the rural USA. This article begins by reviewing the two literatures introduced above, the first one examining domestic amenity migration and rural gentrification in the USA and the second exploring Latino immigrants in rural US places. We demonstrate that while each set of scholars examines different groups, they ask parallel questions about the causes and consequences of each flow – from structural causes to the impact on local or regional environmental politics and the changing nature of place and identity in rural places. Yet each has had a particular set of blinders that have prevented them from seeing the potential connections between the two types of migrants, as well as the theoretical implications of such linkages. On the one hand, rural gentrification scholars have generally missed Latinos in their midst, while on the other hand scholars examining Latino immigrants in rural America overwhelmingly sample sites affected by rural restructuring rather than looking more broadly at the multiple forces pulling Latino immigrants to a range of rural destinations.

After reviewing these literatures we discuss the theoretical reasons these streams may be linked, and share preliminary data suggesting that linked migration dynamics may be at work in a range of rural US places. We also speculate as to why these linkages have yet to be explored in the scholarly literature. Our central purpose in the latter half of the article is not to undertake a detailed empirical examination of these linkages, but to consider how the confirmation of linked migration in rural places would transform scholarly debates. In short, the presence of linked migration in US rural areas would recast scholarly debates in three ways. First, it would push scholars of Latino immigration to theorize a new set of 'pull factors' (beyond the 'meatpacking plant' kind) that are bringing Latino immigrants to a wide range of geographic locales across the rural USA. Second, it would

demand that scholars of amenity migration and rural gentrification, not only in the USA but across a range of postindustrial economies, rethink the impacts of amenity migration and rural gentrification to include subjects shaped not only by class (the key category of existing work) but also by race and 'legality'. This conceptual move would displace normalized whiteness within amenity migration/rural gentrification studies in the USA and other places. Third, it would displace the assumed *urban* nature of linked migration, a dynamic studied extensively in urban places and one considered a key characteristic of how globalization has transformed large cities (Sassen, 1988; Wright et al., 1997). In recasting the assumed urban nature of linked migration, this line of inquiry could shed new insights into debates about globalization and mobility, as well as the place of the rural in globalization dynamics.

## **II Urban to rural migration: Globalization, gentrification, and the rural idyll**

The last 30 years have brought dramatic changes to urban to rural migration patterns in the USA, a process reflected in other postindustrial 'Northern' economies such as Britain (Phillips et al., 2008), Australia (Burnley and Murphy, 2004; Gibson et al., 2005; Murphy, 2002), New Zealand (Freeman and Cheyne, 2008) and Spain (Solana-Solana, 2010). Middle- and upper-class urban dwellers, drawn by a desire to 'escape' the city and to connect to an idealized rural space, have become a key source of population growth for rural areas across these places. Globalization is recognized by most of these scholars as a key driver of this process. Wealthy urban professionals have been the primary beneficiaries of globalized capital accumulation, whether in the form of direct compensation, dividend income, or the rising value of their urban real estate, affording them the opportunity to relocate to high-amenity destinations (Nelson, 2005). New information

technologies (also associated with and constitutive of 'globalization') also facilitate this population shift by allowing some of these professionals to deterritorialize their work and relocate from an urban to a rural setting, long before retirement. What has emerged in a range of rural places (in the Global North) is a postproductive, consumption-oriented rural landscape 'produced through increasingly globalized forms and relationships' (McCarthy, 2008: 129).

While these urban to rural migration dynamics and ensuing gentrification are being explored in a range of 'advanced' postindustrial economies, we focus our review on US-based scholarship to more effectively compare and connect the research on amenity migration and rural gentrification to work on Latino immigrants in the rural USA.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, however, our discussion of linked migration dynamics in the rural USA has direct implications for research on places outside of the USA that are also shaped by what Gosnell and Abrams (2009) call 'the global phenomenon of amenity migration'. We return to these lessons at the end of the article.

In the US context, research on urban-rural migration reaches back to the late 1970s when scholars noticed that for the first time in more than a century, the growth of non-metropolitan regions was outpacing that of metropolitan counterparts (Beale, 1977; Fuguitt, 1985). Although some thought that this non-metropolitan growth of the 1970s was an aberration when population shifted back toward metropolitan destinations in the 1980s (Champion, 1988), the 1990s witnessed a second wave of resurgence of non-metropolitan migration, especially in the high-amenity regions of the Western USA (Fuguitt and Beale, 1996; Fulton et al., 1997).

These shifts in non-metropolitan migration dynamics attracted considerable scholarly attention, as geographers and others searched for explanations about the increasing volatility in what had traditionally been a fairly stable process of population concentration in urban areas in the

first half of the twentieth century. Scholars focused on the 'Rural Renaissance' of the 1970s in the USA identified a host of forces contributing to rural growth ranging from the completion of the Interstate Highway system to the Arab oil embargo and the search for new sources of energy (Frey, 1989; Johansen and Fuguitt, 1984). Others suggested that the surge of rural growth in the 1970s was fueled in part by counter-culturists rejecting the trappings of urban living and forming the back-to-the-land movement (Dillman, 1979). In contrast, explanations for the 'Rural Rebound' of the 1990s have been quite distinct and focused more on the rise of an information-based economy, telecommunications, and the pursuit of residences in areas with high natural amenities (Beyers and Lindahl, 1996; Johnson and Beale, 1994; Johnson and Fuguitt, 2000; Rasker, 1994, 2006; Shumway and Davis, 1996; Shumway and Otterstrom, 2001). Brown et al. (2005) argue that the growth of the 1990s can be explained by people acting on long-held preferences for rural living made possible by two factors: technological innovations that reduced the isolation for certain groups as well as economic restructuring that increased employment opportunities.

Both population surges, in the 1970s and 1990s, were driven by structural changes that signaled new global pressures impinging in new ways on rural spaces in the USA. In the case of the 1970s, the Oil Embargo doubled the price of oil and stimulated a wave of investment capital toward parts of the rural USA in an effort to find domestic energy sources. By the 1990s the structural causes of the rural rebound were not tied to a singular geopolitical event, but instead linked to broad forces of global economic restructuring, the rise of information-based industries, and the rapid development of information technologies. These transformations produced a significant amount of wealth among urban professionals, not only in terms of wage income but also in terms of the rising value of their urban real estate, which combined provided the wealth that

allowed members of this group to relocate (Nelson, 2005).

Scholarship on both population shifts highlights the power of a romanticized rural idyll in driving population changes, as wealthier domestic migrants seek an idealized rural space and to 'escape' the city (Bjelland et al., 2006; Bunce, 2003; Cloke et al., 1995; Ghose, 2004; Phillips, 1993). Bunce (2003), for example, argues that the marketed 'designer countryside' sold to wealthier in-migrants plays upon a nostalgia for a less complicated, pre-industrial understanding of home and 'pure' nature. Despite living most of their lives in suburbia, urban professionals (particularly those of the baby boom generation) have been bombarded by images of the rural idyll: from Laura Ingalls and her 'Little House on the Prairie' to the pages of the LL Bean Catalog, urban and suburban residents are marketed a constructed but appealing version of rurality (Bunce, 2003). Focusing on how professionals use information technologies to maintain their careers long distance, the respondents in Beyers and Lindahl's (1996: 5) study of rural producer service entrepreneurs describe their reasons for relocating in terms of 'the laid-back rural atmosphere', 'didn't like the big-city', 'slower pace/quality of life', and 'the peaceful rural setting' (see also Johnson and Rasker, 1995). It is this imagined rurality that creates an important factor explaining the arrival of middle- and upper-class migrants to a range of rural communities in the USA and other sites in the Global North.

In sum, many scholars of US amenity migration agree that social and environmental imaginaries tied to a rural idyll represent a key pull factor during all of these historical periods. They also argue that fundamental shifts in the nature of the global economy have created the conditions under which these migration streams were produced and maintained over time. Moreover, by all indications these migration streams will only deepen in the future as the overarching age-structure of the USA shifts and globalization

produces new geographies of accumulation. The oldest baby boomers will begin to turn 65 in 2011, and nearly 80 million will follow over the next 20 years. Never before in the history of the USA has such a large share of the population sat on the cusp of retirement, and with retirement comes an increasing propensity to make an urban to rural move (Wilson, 1988). Conservative estimates suggest that baby boomer migration into non-metropolitan destinations will add over 5 million more baby boomer in-migrants to rural populations by 2020 (Nelson and Cromartie, 2009).

Central to US-based amenity migration literature, however, is an interest not simply in the *causes* of urban to rural migration, but its social, economic, and political impacts on rural communities. Newly arriving migrants frequently differ from longer-term residents along several dimensions, transforming political, social, and ecological relationships within receiving communities. As explored in more detail below, class represents perhaps the most palpable fault-line along which ruptures in the rural idyll emerge as newcomers gentrify their rural destinations (for UK-based scholarship on this process see Cloke and Thrift, 1987; Cloke et al., 1995; Murdoch and Day, 1998; Phillips, 1993). Newcomers often have very different attitudes toward environmental preservation, understanding of 'community', and strategies for economic development. The arrival of such a large number of new rural residents in coming decades is likely to amplify pre-existing rural differences leading to further ruptures in contemporary 'conceived' and 'experienced' ruralities (Phillips, 2004).

In many gentrifying destination communities in the USA, domestic in-migration and ensuing economic transformations create a heightened sense of class distinction (Ghose, 2004; Nelson, 2001; Shumway and Otterstrom, 2001; Smith and Krannich, 2000). Research in Missoula, Montana, shows that in-migrants to Missoula tend to have college educations and work as

professionals in service industries, earning solidly middle- to upper-middle-class incomes, unlike the average longtime resident (Ghose, 2004). Nelson's (2001) research in Teton Valley similarly explores a growing sense of social and class differentiation in the wake of the arrival of wealthier, amenity-seeking newcomers. One 'local' in Teton Valley lamented 'Almost all the kids I went to school with were of the same level economically pretty much. In each class you had one or two kids that were not wealthy by world standards, but in terms of the people here they were a little better off than the rest of us . . . Now it's golden rule. He who has the gold rules' (Nelson, 2001: 405). These class dynamics in Missoula and Teton Valley are similar to well-documented processes taking place in Great Britain (Murdoch and Marsden, 1994; Phillips, 1993), Australia (Curry et al., 2001; Gibson et al., 2005), Spain (Solana-Solana, 2010), and New Zealand (Freeman and Cheyne, 2008).

Just as urban processes of gentrification bring more affluent residents into particular urban neighborhoods, rural residents often perceive that contemporary urban to rural migration dynamics are amplifying class distinctions in rural regions and transforming the actual lived experience for rural residents. Although many of the US case studies of rural gentrification and amenity migration draw from research in the West, a growing number of scholars are looking at these dynamics in other regions, from Appalachia (Jones et al., 2003) to South Carolina (Hurley and Halfacre, 2009). Taken together, these contributions demonstrate how wealthier domestic migrants and ensuing gentrification processes can transform more 'traditional' rural values and identities.

Rising class distinctions are most visible in the built environment. The arrival of middle- and upper-class rural gentrifiers dramatically transforms local housing markets through both renovation and new construction. Ghose (2004) reports a more than threefold escalation in the average sales price of homes in Missoula during

the 1990s. In 1999, a 'house of good construction and quality and boasting a good location' (p. 537) sold for around \$300,000, nearly six times the average sale price in 1989. 'Ranchettes', gated communities, and private property enclosures have come to characterize this shift in the residential landscape in many of the rapidly growing rural communities. Theobald et al. (1996) confirm this trend by showing a growing share of land in rural Colorado is contained in 30–45 acre parcels – parcels too small for viable agricultural activity but ideal for a ranchette. The construction of such 'ranchettes' is further illustrative of newcomers transforming their rural destinations to match their image of what rural living should entail. It is irrelevant that these new forms of residential construction are not economically viable for actual agricultural production. What is more important is the imagined landscape aesthetic that these new residential forms construct, a landscape consistent with that marketed to white upper-middle-class newcomers.

As these 'ranchettes' and other new types of rural residences become a key positional good signifying upper middle-class status they often bring different values and preferences for certain rural landscape aesthetics (Theobald, 1996; Walker and Fortmann, 2003; in the UK, see Mormont, 1990; Phillips, 1993). Walker and Fortmann's (2003) work in the Sierra Nevada of California examines how newcomers reshape local environmental politics and discourse, while Jones et al. (2003) look at similar transformations in areas of Appalachia that are also attracting urban to rural amenity migrants. Phrases like 'historic' or 'natural preservation' enter the rural planning discourse, challenging traditional land uses and environmental imaginaries. Similarly, Larsen et al. (2007) report that groups defined in terms of length of residence in a rural Colorado community value distinctly different elements in the local landscape.

Hamnett (1991) describes gentrification in cities as a complex process involving physical,

social, and economic changes within neighborhoods as well as rising preferences for urban living. In a similar fashion, lured by the rural idyll, wealthy in-migrants transform local housing markets, introduce new forms of class distinction, and demonstrate new cultural attitudes towards and preferences for rural living and rural landscapes. More critically, rural gentrification often fractures the rural idyll along socioeconomic and – as we will argue – ethnic lines, producing multiple ruralities for a variety of constituent groups.

### III Latino immigrants in rural America

While most Latino immigrants in the USA continue to settle in cities, a growing number are ending up in rural areas, either directly from abroad or after secondary migrations within the USA. The growth in Latino residents of non-metropolitan counties across the USA, charted in the work of Kandel and Cromartie (2004), includes not only 'new destinations' that did not previously receive a substantial number of Latin American-born migrants (eg, the Midwest and US South – outside of Florida and Texas), but also places historically dependent on migratory Latino laborers that witnessed a transition to increasingly permanent settlement of Latino workers during the 1990s and beyond (eg, Washington, Oregon, and California). A burgeoning literature on 'new' Latino immigrants in rural America has examined the political and economic drivers of these migration streams, as well as their social, cultural, and political impacts on receiving communities.

Geographers and other scholars exploring the rural dimensions of recent Latino immigrant settlement patterns generally focus on two interrelated issues. First, many emphasize the changing nature of rural labor markets that either shift temporary employment of a migratory Latino workforce to year-round demand (Allensworth and Rochín, 1999; Jarosz and Qazi, 2000;

Nelson, 2007) or pull immigrants to non-traditional destinations – directly from abroad or from other primary US origins (Cantú, 1995; Cravey, 1997, 2003). Second, they explore the challenges of social integration and community formation resulting from the arrival of low-wage, racialized, and often undocumented immigrants to rural and small-town America. This second group includes research in historically relatively homogenous – often overwhelmingly white – areas of the West and Midwest (Allensworth and Rochin, 1998a; Cantú, 1995; Dalla et al., 2004; Dozi and Valdivia, 2005; Fennelly and Leitner, 2002; Naples, 2000; Nelson, 2008) and work done in the rural South, where immigrants disrupt a black-white racial binary (Cravey, 1997; Murphy et al., 2001; Selby et al., 2001; Stuesse, 2003).

Two early pieces examining new rural and small-town destinations were sociologist Lionel Cantú's 'The peripheralization of rural America: A case study of Latino migrants in America's heartland' (1995) and geographer Altha Cravey's 'Latino labor and poultry production in rural North Carolina' (1997). Together, these two articles charted the key dynamics of a rural demographic transformation that did not get picked up by most scholars for several more years. Cantú and Cravey, respectively, explore the impacts on local communities of the expansion of agribusiness in Iowa and North Carolina – both 'right to work' states – and the active recruitment of immigrant workers by these industries during the late 1980s and beyond. Cantú's research traces the 'contested ideas of community membership, citizenship' in a small Iowa town (1995: 399). Using qualitative data, he examines questions of surveillance, marginalization, and racialization among Latinos in the community – whether documented, undocumented, or US-born citizens. Cravey, in contrast, focuses on the racialized division of labor produced by North Carolina's expanding poultry operations during the 1980s and beyond. In charting these new divisions of labor, she also raises questions about socio-economic, linguistic,

and cultural marginalization of immigrant communities.

While the 1990s witnessed some additional work on these issues (see, for example, Amato, 1996; Martin et al., 1996), scholarly interest in the growing presence of Latino immigrants in new rural destinations did not take off until after the release of the 2000 census, which showed these dramatic changes most clearly (for an overview of Latinos in new destinations as revealed in the 2000 Census, see Kandel and Cromartie, 2004). One important volume in this burgeoning scholarship (although not focused solely on rural places) is Victor Zúñiga and Rubén Hernández-León's *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States* (2005). Framed in terms of new destinations, rural and urban, the volume examines the 'new geography of Mexican immigration' and provides a statistical overview of new national settlement patterns before presenting a series of case studies. Despite the volume's lack of engagement with geographical theory or the work of geographers, it represents an important contribution for comprehensively bringing together research within a range of recent rural destinations at a time when the research on the subject was still in its infancy. For example, the volume *New Destinations* helped articulate an important thesis for explaining the geographical dispersal of Mexican immigrants during the 1990s: Zúñiga and León argue that the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which legalized approximately 2.3 million undocumented immigrants, allowed these workers to engage in secondary migration within the USA. Under this scenario, legalization allowed a significant number of workers to freely seek out better wages outside of traditional gateway cities and regions, leading to new geographies of Latino immigrant settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Heather Smith and Owen Furueth's *Latinos in the New South* (2006) represents another important contribution to understanding the shifting geography of Latino immigrants, with

three chapters focused specifically on rural areas of Kentucky, North Carolina, and Mississippi (see also Gozdziaik and Bump, 2004). Perhaps most significantly, the chapter 'The South's silent bargain: Rural restructuring, Latino labor and the ambiguities of migrant experiences', by Rebecca Torres, Jeffrey Popke and Holly Hapke, draws on survey research conducted in the central coastal plain of North Carolina to articulate important new insights into the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of Latino immigrants in rural and small towns. Most importantly, their work questions the assumption that legalization from the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) was the primary driver of the geographic dispersal of immigrants in the USA since the late 1980s. Only 7% of their respondents had been in the USA at the time of IRCA, and more than half had come directly from Mexico (Smith and Furuseth, 2006: 43). While their findings do not indicate the IRCA thesis should be laid to rest, they point to the need for further research on the specific political economic dynamics at the local and regional scales that bring immigrants to these destinations, including efforts by some rural industries to recruit workers directly from Mexico and other parts of Latin America (for an early example of rural recruiting strategies, see Fink, 1998).

Debates about IRCA notwithstanding, for our argument the most salient characteristic of this literature is that nearly all research examining new rural destinations for Latino immigrants focuses on communities impacted by rural industrial restructuring. Fennelly and Leitner (2002) examine the challenges of 'new diversity' for rural Minnesotan communities as a result of new and expanding food-processing industries. Naples (2000) undertakes a fine-grained analysis of social interaction and race in a small Iowa town transformed demographically as a result of the arrival of Latino immigrants to work in expanding food-processing plants. Stuesse (2003) explores the expansion

of poultry production in Mississippi and the consequent arrival of Latino immigrants and their interaction with low-wage African American residents, particularly in terms of efforts by local organizers to break down cultural and racialized barriers and build worker solidarity and organizing capacity. It is unsurprising that a number of scholars interested in Latino immigrants have gravitated to rural industrial sites, as these sites tend to be quite visible in terms of the scale and rapidity of their demographic transformation.

One exception to the general focus on rural industrial restructuring sites is Nancy Hiemstra's research in Leadville, Colorado (Hiemstra, 2008; Nelson and Hiemstra, 2008). Hiemstra's work in Leadville raises important questions relevant to our inquiry, particularly how working-class, racialized, and perceptually if not actually 'illegal' subjects are reshaping social, cultural, and political landscapes in rural amenity destinations and their satellite bedroom communities. Her findings about the spatial and temporal separation of immigrant and non-immigrant bodies in Leadville's social landscapes is particularly interesting. We extend Hiemstra's work on new (rural) immigrant destinations by situating these dynamics not only in political economic changes occurring as part of the 'New West' phenomenon, but in relation to amenity migration and rural gentrification processes operating across the USA and the Global North more generally.

Beyond work on decidedly 'new' destinations in the US Midwest and South, a number of scholars have examined the transition to permanent Latino rural workers and residents in areas historically reliant on significant numbers of *migratory* Latino rural workers, from California to Florida. While in some respects these are 'old' destinations, the dynamics in these communities over the last decade or two are decidedly new. They have undergone significant transformation as Latino workers shift from being temporary and less visible residents (often living in migrant camps) to permanent residents usually living in

town. Elaine Allensworth and Refugio Rochín (1995) began charting these dynamics quantitatively in their report on demographic transformation in rural California. Noting that Latino immigrants were concentrating in about 100 rural Californian towns with a significant percentage of agricultural jobs, their report focused on eight case-study communities in the San Joaquin Valley. Their report charted changing demographic trends and comparative indicators of well-being in each community, including educational attainment, poverty rates, and occupational structure. An article drawn from the same project published a few years later argued that California's 'rural areas are beginning to resemble inner-city areas segregated by ethnicity and extremes of poverty and wealth' (Allensworth and Rochin, 1998b: 139).

Examining similar demographic landscapes in Washington State, Lucy Jarosz and Joan Qazi (2000) situate the increasing settlement of Latino immigrants in rural Eastern Washington in relation to the emergence of the 'world apple'. A region historically reliant on seasonal agricultural labors, Jarosz and Qazi explore the extent to which restructuring of the apple industry in the context of globalization shifted local labor demand and encouraged the settlement of workers leaving the ravages of Mexico's debt crisis and neoliberal restructuring beginning in the 1980s and beyond. Finally, Nelson (2008) examines political struggles over identity, belonging, and urban space in Woodburn, Oregon, in the wake of a significant increase in the resident Latino immigrant population in the 1980s, a shift tied to rural industrial restructuring. An area dependent since the 1940s on migratory workers that had been less visible and spatially contained in labor camps, many of Woodburn's white residents and leaders strongly resisted treating Latino farmworkers and residents as belonging in the community, as having a right to live in city limits and therefore within reach of needed services and the infrastructure for family life.

The scholarship on Latino immigrants in rural America is diverse in the sense that it includes a range of theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary approaches in both old and new destinations. Some researchers emphasize shifting labor markets, while others focus on the politics of race, marginality, and belonging. Yet what ties these contributions together is the assumption that rural industrial restructuring – from food and meat processing to Christmas-tree production – represents the key pull factor bringing Latino immigrants to rural destinations across the USA. The importance of these kinds of destinations notwithstanding, there is growing evidence of a distinct kind of rural destination for Latino immigrants in the USA, destinations not marked by rural industrial restructuring (the production of food products and other non-durable manufacturing) but by rural gentrification, which stimulates demand for low-wage service workers and echoes the kinds of linkages that are well documented in a range of global cities.

#### **IV Evidence of linked migration in rural America: Changing the debate**

As theorized by Sassen and others in urban contexts, gentrification creates not only displacement, class stratification, and cultural transformation, but a rapid increase in low-wage immigrants settling in globally integrated cities. If the growth of a wealthy and globally linked professional class expanded the demand for migrant, low-wage workers in global cities, we should consider whether the arrival of members of this same group to rural amenity locations might be having a similar impact. The expansion of service employment in these rural gentrifying locations – from restaurants to landscaping and care of rural estates – may be drawing in low-wage immigrant workers to these same communities.<sup>4</sup> This is not to argue that there is no difference in how gentrification and linked migration processes operate in urban

versus rural areas. Instead it is to contend that scholars are missing something when they theorize linked migration – a hallmark of globalization and new patterns of transnational mobility (see Sassen, 1988; Wright et al., 1997) – as exclusively an urban phenomenon.

The empirical evidence of a potential connection between these two groups in rural areas of the USA is just emerging. Kandel and Cromartie's 2004 study *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America* still represents the most comprehensive national-scale quantitative analysis of the new patterns of Latino settlement.<sup>5</sup> Most relevant to our discussion, Kandel and Cromartie report that non-metropolitan counties with the most rapid rate of Latino population growth also experienced the most rapid expansion of non-Latino populations during the 1990s. At first glance this appears to be a strange finding: most large agricultural processing facilities attracting Latino immigrant workers are located in regions with declining white populations, such as western Kansas, eastern Colorado, rural Iowa, or rural Nebraska (Bodvarsson and Van Den Berg, 2003; Broadway, 1994; Naples, 1994). Many of these industries are in fact attracted to isolated and low-amenity sites that are not only located closer to their supply of cattle etc, but ones that often (in their desperation for job creation) place fewer restrictions on the size and nature of their operations. Thus the convergence of these two migration streams does not make sense, at first glance, until the importance of gentrification and its impacts are considered.

Our own initial quantitative analysis indicates that 3% of non-metro counties are affected by these linked migration streams. While a small percentage of the total, they represent 12% of the growth of Latino immigrants in non-metro rural counties, indicating their disproportionate impact on Latino immigrant rural settlement patterns (Nelson et al., 2009). Although these national numbers are not (yet) dramatic, the significance is clearer when examining them at the

local scale. In Missoula, Montana, an amenity location studied by Ghose (2004), the Latino population increased by 60.4% between 1990 and 2000 and again by 47.05% between 2000 and 2005 (from 962 in 1990 to 2269 in 2005). Teton Valley, an area studied by a number of rural gentrification scholars (Hansen et al., 2002; Smith and Krannich, 2000), experienced a 378.48% increase in Latino population between 1990 and 2000 (numbers that combine Teton County, Idaho, and Teton County, Wyoming).

What is interesting in both of these cases, Missoula and Teton Valley, is that neither Ghose (2004), Hansen et al. (2002), nor Smith and Krannich (2000) mention the presence of Latinos or immigrants in their work even though all three articles are exploring different aspects of demographic change, rural gentrification, and changing environmental values and aesthetics in these areas. Smith and Krannich (2000: 397) describe their research as exploring the ways that rural communities in the Rocky Mountain West are 'currently undergoing some of the most significant demographic, economic, and sociocultural transformations in their history', yet no mention of Latinos is made in the entire piece. This is not to take away from the important contributions presented in these pieces, but it certainly represents a lacuna in their analyses.

Why have Latino immigrants been largely invisible in the work of rural gentrification scholars working in the USA? One reason may have to do with the low visibility of Latino immigrants as both workers and residents in and around amenity destinations. Given the high price of housing and land in these areas, low-wage Latino workers would likely live some distance away from the gentrifying locale. Research on non-immigrant working-class residents of these gentrifying rural communities indicates that lower-income workers are often housed within marginal spaces (ie, trailer parks) or at great distances from pristine 'destinations' (a situation that leads to longer-distance commuting and further spatial fracturing of rural communities – see Cloke, 2003; Gober

et al., 1993; Smutny, 2002).<sup>6</sup> The deeper invisibility of Latino immigrants (versus low-wage non-immigrant workers) is likely exacerbated by the tendency for undocumented immigrants to lie low due to fear of deportation. Moreover, immigrants are not working in a centralized, factory setting such as those found in rural meatpacking plants, but are likely employed in spatially dispersed sectors including construction, landscape services, back room restaurant work, and cleaning services. With their housing and employment dispersed, Latino immigrant residents are not necessarily visible to many residents, visitors, or visiting researchers. These factors also make it unlikely that Latino immigrant residents would become involved in formal political struggles over land use, environmental conservation, and/or place identity – topics that serve as the focus for much of the scholarship in this area.<sup>7</sup>

A second reason for their invisibility in this literature is more conceptual in nature. Latino immigrants might not be very visible to researchers who from the beginning frame their questions in terms of interaction between domestic amenity migrants and longtime (usually white) residents. This reflects a tendency within this literature, particularly that based in the US West, to reproduce rural spaces as ‘white’ spaces and to avoid the question of race. Scholars examining domestic amenity migration generally treat migration flows to rural destinations as unraced (normalizing whiteness), ignoring racially diverse newcomers to rural areas. For example, in a recent volume containing 19 chapters exploring amenity-related migration and development in the USA, Canada, and Europe, not a single author raises questions of race (Green et al., 2006). Gosnell and Abram’s (2009) excellent review of amenity migration literature does not include ‘race’, ‘ethnicity’, ‘immigrant’, or ‘low-wage worker’ as categories through which the range of scholars they review are understanding amenity migration in sites across the Global North. This omission within the literature reflects, we

think, the normalized exclusion of racialized ‘others’ from idealized rural landscapes, rendering their presence invisible (Abram, 2003; Cloke, 2006).

Further research examining the structural linkage between wealthier, and mostly white, domestic migrants and low-wage Latino immigrants in gentrifying US rural areas would transform the categories of power and difference through which local and regional transformations in these places – whether cultural, political, or environmental – are understood and analyzed. While class has been at the center of work on rural gentrification, a confirmation of linked migration dynamics in these kinds of destinations would require that scholars of rural gentrification consider other kinds of differences and power dynamics, ones that included race, ethnicity, nationality, and/or legal status. This conceptual shift would change the way these scholars chart the social, environmental, and political impacts of domestic amenity migration, since all of the research to date on these questions has concentrated exclusively on the interactions between (wealthy, white) newcomers and longtime residents (who in most of the cases explored in the literature thus far are also white). If middle- and upper-class amenity migrants arriving to rural settings across America create the labor demand that attracts Latino immigrants, and if both groups of newcomers are intersecting with longtime residents, then questions of social interaction and community change that lie at the heart of this scholarship become more complex. If amenity migrants are creating a demand for new services in rural communities, it could be that immigrants and some longtime residents are competing for similar jobs, or working side by side. If the residential geographies between these groups are fragmented and far-flung, given the geography of land and housing prices in these gentrifying locales (see Nelson et al., 2009), this would pose particular challenges to social interaction between different groups.

A confirmation of linked migration in rural US amenity destinations, the focus of this review and intervention, would have conceptual ripple effects on research in places outside of the USA, largely in the Global North, affected by similar amenity migration streams and rural gentrification processes (for example, Curry et al., 2001; Freeman and Cheyne, 2008; Gibson et al., 2005; Solana-Solana, 2010). Most importantly, if linked migration – as argued by a range of global cities scholars – is a *structural* dimension of contemporary globalization processes, then scholars of amenity migration globally should consider whether linked migration dynamics are emerging in ‘their’ study areas. How linked migration might play out in different sites would depend on specific historical and geographical contexts and thus would not operate the same everywhere. But the idea of linked migration suggests that low-wage and otherwise marginalized workers (marginalized in terms of race, legal status, gender, etc) might also be newcomers to these amenity communities, providing a key source of labor to ‘service’ high-wage professional ‘gentrifiers’. In Spain, studied by Solana-Solana (2010), these workers might be Latin American or North African immigrants. In Australia (Curry et al., 2001; Murphy, 2002) this kind of low-wage service labor demand in amenity destinations might be fulfilled by immigrants from various parts of Asia. There may also be a number of places where this labor niche is *not* filled by immigrants at all, but by other kinds of workers. The key issue is that seeing the theoretical possibility of linked migration in rural amenity destinations opens up a new set of a issues for scholarship on this global phenomenon.

We now turn to the second group of scholars reviewed above – those interested in new rural destinations for Latino immigrants in the USA. This group of researchers has also generally missed these connections and the kinds of destinations not directly impacted by rural industrial restructuring. Again, we think this has to do with questions of visibility and invisibility, although

for very different reasons compared to the reasons why Latino immigrants have been invisible within the literature on rural gentrification. In short, scholars of Latino immigrants in rural America have been drawn almost exclusively to rural communities *visibly* and dramatically transformed by the arrival of Latino immigrants, usually caused by rural industrial restructuring or the production of niche agricultural commodities. Broadway and Stull (2006), for example, examine the demographic impacts of two meat-packing plants in Garden City, Kansas, a town that shifted from being 16% Latino in 1980 (mostly Mexican American) to 44% Latino by 2000 (most of whom were foreign-born residents). Gozdzik and Bump (2004) similarly explore questions of social integration and interaction in the Shenandoah Valley, particularly the towns of Winchester and Harrisonburg that between 1990 and 2000 experienced an increase in the Latino population of 600% and 650%, respectively, due to the expansion of poultry processing and the intensification of apple production.

The importance of studying these kinds of destinations, impacted by industrial restructuring, cannot be understated. However, it is problematic if such destinations are taken as the *paradigmatic* case of what is happening with immigrants across rural spaces in the USA. This assumption is often reproduced implicitly and explicitly in much of this literature, without empirical verification. For example, Gozdzik and Bump (2004) write:

The relocation and consolidation of the poultry industry has been paralleled – both *nationwide* and in the Shenandoah Valley – by a new settlement pattern of immigrants in the rural areas where the processing plants are located. (Gozdzik and Bump, 2004: 149, emphasis added)

Their only concession to another kind of pull factor in rural spaces is the ‘Latinization’ of agriculture. They write (p. 151) ‘[o]utside of food processing and manufacturing, new

settlement areas are found in agriculture, particularly in specialized niches'. In Zúñiga and Hernández-León's *New Destinations* volume, Mark Grey and Anne Woodrick (2005: 134) write 'the experience of Marshalltown *parallels that of many US communities* because the main draw for Latinos has been the availability of jobs in a large meatpacking plant' (emphasis added). The assumption that rural industrial restructuring (the meatpacking plant or other rural industry) is the key pull factor for Latinos throughout rural America may be blinding scholars to less visible yet important processes.<sup>8</sup>

Verifying structural linkages between (wealthier, white) domestic migrants and low-wage Latino immigrant workers in rural amenity destinations would generate more complex understanding of the kinds of economic changes that have pulled Latino immigrants to a wider range of rural locales across the USA. New kinds of questions and theoretical issues would need to be raised by scholars interested in Latinos in rural US places since the presence of Latino immigrants in rural amenity destinations raises a distinct set of issues as compared to communities shaped primarily by rural industrial restructuring. If, given the land and property values in amenity destinations, immigrants are forced to live far from their place of employment, what impact does this have on immigrants' sense of community and belonging, on family life and on the existence of non-governmental or other civic organizations that might support immigrant residents and their families? Moreover, because research thus far has been conducted in rural industrial restructuring areas, most scholars have framed their analyses of community change in terms of Latino immigrants and longtime residents. While this is appropriate in areas impacted by rural industrial restructuring, it would be important to ask different questions in linked migration areas, such as how the presence of another set of newcomers – white and comparatively wealthy immigrants – shift questions of social interaction

and integration. Are the longtime, working-class residents competing with Latinos for jobs? How does each group perceive the other? There also may be a range of rural communities that are affected by both rural industrial restructuring and the impacts of rural gentrification, raising a host of new questions and approaches.

In a recent *Progress* piece, Michael Woods (2007: 492) examines an array of literature on the 'global countryside', a term he uses to speak to the 'condition of the global interconnectivity and interdependency of rural localities'. Woods explicitly connects his discussion to the global cities literature with the intention of finding 'opportunities for translation into a rural context', a process that might bring to rural places the 'nuanced reading of spatial difference and spatial process that work on the global city has produced in an urban context' (p. 491). One of the hallmarks of the global cities literature has been the concept of linked migration – or the idea that domestic and international migration are structurally linked. Further evidence of these linkages would change how scholars approach rural gentrification in the US context and shift how those interested in Latino immigrants in rural places conceptualize the causes and consequences of that dynamic.

## V The global rural

Finally, we return to the question of globalization and how thinking about the global rural shifts our urban-centric theories of globalization. A quote from Paul Knox (2002) exemplifies this urban focus:

Today's world cities are both cause and effect of economic, political, and cultural globalization ... [their] corollary is the 'slow world' of catatonic rural settings, declining manufacturing regions and disadvantaged world slums, all of which are increasingly disengaged from the culture and lifestyles of world cities. (Knox, 2002: 339)

As reflected in Knox's work, global cities as crucial 'nodes' in a globally networked economy

have been the privileged site through which to theorize globalization (see also Corbridge et al., 1994; Sassen, 2001). Cities are also the premier site through which globalization and migration have been theorized. A number of scholars see global cities, and global cities networks, as fundamental to new geographies of transnational mobility and the contemporary reconfiguration of global citizenship and belonging (Harvey, 2000; Isin, 2000; Sassen, 1988). Yet the privileging of global cities is often built on a problematic dichotomy between urban and rural in which the rural is assumed to be 'unglobal' and stagnant, or 'catatonic' in the words of Knox quoted above. Although not all global cities scholars are as explicit in their dismissal of the rural, it is an assumption that haunts the work of many global cities and globalization scholars for whom the big city equals dynamism (economic, cultural, political) and cosmopolitanism.

Rural places, while perhaps not equal to urban contexts in their complexity, are increasingly implicated in global economic and cultural processes (see also McCarthy, 2008; Woods, 2007). Further research on the emergence of linked migration streams in the rural USA – a hallmark of the classic 'global city' – would deepen our recognition of a global rural and further Michael Woods' call for bringing to rural spaces nuanced readings of spatial difference and spatial process characteristic of approaches to urban transformation. Seen through the lens of globalization as it operates across scale, the history and fate of wealthier, mostly white amenity migrants and Latino immigrants are intertwined. Each group plays an integral and interrelated part in the social and economic dynamics associated with globalization.

At the same time, explorations of the global rural can provide a unique contribution to studies and theories of globalization, as the rural has its particular challenges and opportunities. Thus we do not argue for a wholesale transfer of urban dynamics to rural spaces. We expect, for example, that the linked migration flows arriving in

rural destinations will be more visibly transformative on these receiving communities. Most empirical and theoretical work on immigration, social integration, and community change is grounded in urban settings because most immigrants still elect to settle in gateway cities. This includes work framed in terms of assimilation (Alba and Nee, 2003; Allen and Turner, 1996; Hiebert and Ley, 2003) and research that theorizes these dynamics in terms of citizenship and belonging in an era of globalization (De Genova, 2005; Friedman and Randeria, 2004; Isin, 2000). While this urban focus is both logical and appropriate, the scale, complexity, and diversity of urban landscapes often makes it difficult for scholars to unpack or isolate the ways in which immigration affects enactments of social belonging. For example, it is difficult if not impossible to assess the impact of immigration on communities in New York City given the size of the metropolitan region (20+ million residents) and the simultaneous effects of deindustrialization, suburbanization, gentrification, and other processes of economic restructuring. Furthermore, in sprawling metropolitan areas, immigrants are more apt to form social and economic enclaves limiting their interaction with other social groups within the same city. In contrast, the smaller size of rural places allows scholars an important view into processes of community change. Although groups (defined in terms of class and/or race) can be segregated in rural areas, there are often spaces where they must see each other, if not interact, given the size of the community – there may only be one or two grocery stores or one high school, for example. Rural communities offer an important geographical context through which to examine the nature of globalization and mobility, and expanding our theories of linked migration is an excellent starting point.

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## Notes

1. This is not to argue that linked migration, or globalization for that matter, operates the *same* in cities as it does in rural places. However, we follow other scholars (Woods, 2007) who argue that rural geography could benefit from an engagement with theories and concepts arising from urban-based theories of globalization. We return to this point near the end of the article.
2. Our review of the amenity migration and rural gentrification literature, while primarily oriented towards US-based research, also draws on work in the UK. The research in the UK and the USA has a longer history (see Cloke and Thrift, 1987; Frey, 1989; Johanson and Fuguitt, 1984) and established the key categories and approaches used in more recent studies in Australia, New Zealand, and Spain.
3. The thesis that the Immigration Reform and Control Act stimulated a new geography of Latino immigrant settlement was also substantiated by an extensive analysis of survey data presented by Massey et al. (2002).
4. It is likely that low-wage immigrant workers attracted to these areas are not exclusively Latino, but we expect that to be the largest group given recent census numbers. It remains a question of further research to determine the different origins of immigrant groups in rural amenity locations.
5. Although their category 'Hispanic' encompasses both immigrant and non-immigrant populations, it is likely that the overwhelming majority of Latinos in new rural destinations are immigrants – either ones arriving from another primary destination in the USA, or directly from abroad. We should also note that Kandel and Cromartie (2004) use the term 'Hispanic', as does the census data of 2000. We choose to substitute the category 'Latino' in this article, as a number of scholars

argue that Latino is more inclusive to those claiming it as an ethnic identity (see Rodríguez, 2000).

6. Nancy Hiemstra's research in Leadville, Colorado, indicates that a similar pattern of social fracturing might be found in a range of amenity destinations, and their bedroom communities, where immigrant workers have settled (Hiemstra, 2008; Nelson and Hiemstra, 2008).
7. We do not intend to imply or assume that Latino immigrant residents do not impact formal politics, but they might do so in a way that is much less visible given their social positioning in terms of class, race, and legal status. Of course Latino communities that might be forming in these destinations would be developing their *own* sense of community and belonging, but these activities (churches, community celebrations, etc) would likely be spatially removed from the gentrifying locale (if immigrants are living in lower-cost housing) and less apparent to scholars focused on the activities of amenity migrants and longtime residents.
8. They are less visible because the kinds of changes brought by the establishment of a meatpacking plant are rather dramatic in comparison to a more dispersed geography of immigrant labor demand in sectors providing services to wealthy urban refugees.

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