ABSTRACT

WILLIAMS, JENNIFER SNEAD. Newly Immigrated Hispanics in North Carolina: Experiences with Housing and Neighbor Relations. (Under the direction of Jeffrey Leiter.)

The state of North Carolina has proven to be a popular destination for Hispanic immigrants, especially in the 1990s. The 2000 Census indicates a rapid increase in Hispanic population nationwide, with North Carolina among the top ten states for increase from 1990 to 2000. While previous studies have focused on the effects of such immigration on employment, little research has been done in the area of housing. This thesis is a first step toward describing and evaluating the experiences in housing from the vantage points of both newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents. My main research goal is to examine what conflict, if any, exists over housing between newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents. The study utilizes qualitative interview data collected in 1999 in Duplin and Cabarrus Counties in North Carolina, both of which had experienced an influx of Hispanic immigration during the prior eight years, along with other information about the increasing number of Hispanics in the state. By utilizing newspaper articles, economic studies, and histories of immigration processes, along with the interview data, this analysis highlights the interface between fact and perception regarding stereotypes and conflict surrounding issues of housing.

The practical goal of this study is to better understand the complexities of inter-ethnic relations surrounding issues of housing, in order to lessen tensions between long-term residents and newly immigrated Hispanics and to promote community solidarity. Newly immigrated Hispanics have much to offer a community. If their determination and work ethic were combined with long-term residents’ best traits, everyone could benefit.
Community benefit might include the following areas that interviewees of all ethnicities have identified as important: security, neighborhood relations, language education – Spanish and English, schools, health care, workers’ rights, housing issues, property values, and violence, crime and drugs. If both long-term residents and new immigrants come to recognize that they hold these community desires in common, the breaking of stereotypes will have begun. Frequent and meaningful interaction between the communities’ ethnic groups is a major key to success. Residents of all ethnicities/races will need to push past stereotypes and allow personal experiences to speak for themselves, as they work together to accomplish common community desires. As increasing numbers of Hispanic individuals and families settle permanently in North Carolina, frequent and meaningful interaction with long-term residents will be a major key to community success.

In this thesis, I uncover stereotypes and complaints affecting inter-ethnic community interaction, “humanize” newly immigrated Hispanics by highlighting commonalties between them and long-term residents, address community benefits of inter-ethnic cooperation in neighborhoods and communities, and suggest ways for improving communities through increased interaction resulting from integration in housing. Improving communities involves both bettering neighbor relations through increased personal contact such as borrowing from/lending to neighbors, visiting with neighbors, and giving/receiving help from neighbors. Improvement also involves neighbors working together on shared community problems such as littered streets, drugs, and/or violence. Inter-ethnic contact can greatly change what people think about “others.” Stereotypes abound at the stages leading up to community integration, yet physical
integration alone doesn’t change the stereotypes. Rather, it is frequent and meaningful interaction toward shared rewards that results in the breaking of stereotypes, and in turn leads to further increases in interaction. My main finding is that the rate of conflict seems to diminish with increased interaction between long-term residents and newly immigrated Hispanics. As interaction increases, negative stereotypes decrease and residents rely more on experience than on prior assumptions.
NEWLY IMMIGRATED HISPANICS IN NORTH CAROLINA: EXPERIENCES WITH HOUSING AND NEIGHBOR RELATIONS

by

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APPROVED BY:

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Jeffrey Leiter, Chair of Advisory Committee
BIOGRAPHY

Born and raised in Augusta, Georgia, I am the third of six children. My early years are filled with good memories of family, friends, school, drama, and sports. In high school I began to develop an interest in world geography and cross-cultural experience. A scholarship contest during my junior year of high school resulted in my first experience abroad. I spent six weeks in Japan, living with a host family, studying the Japanese education system, and learning about cross-cultural communication in general. In college I decided to enlarge my international experience. I made Spanish one of my majors and prepared myself for a semester in Spain, where I studied at the University of Salamanca. During college, I also traveled on scholarship to Costa Rica and worked in a community college and orphanage for one summer. As a capstone requirement for my certificate in Latin American Studies, I created a software program, “Grassroots Organizations in Latin America.” Graduating Phi Beta Kappa from Wofford College, with departmental awards in Spanish and sociology, I headed back to Japan, this time to teach English to high school students in a rural prefecture on the main island. Upon return to the United States, I worked in the “real world” of management for two years before returning to the life of a student at North Carolina State University. Here I have earned my Masters degree in sociology with a minor in anthropology, while working as a research and teaching assistant. During this time, I finally married my best friend of 10 years, and fought with him an on-going battle against cancer and other illness. Together we look forward to challenges and happiness that await us. In the future, I hope to work as a Cultural Relations Specialist and to have the opportunity to travel around the world.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the members of my thesis committee for their assistance: Michael Schulman, Anne Schiller, and Jeffrey Leiter. In addition to serving as the chair of my committee, Jeff provided on-going, detailed advice regarding the interview data, collected for a study for which he and Donald Tomaskovic-Devey were the primary investigators. Among the Anthropology faculty, I would like to thank Tim Wallace, who provided an open door to my original inquiries in the field, and Anne Schiller, who assisted me in meeting class requirements for a minor in anthropology. A staff member who was integral to my degree completion was Penny Lewter, graduate secretary. Penny provided me with personal encouragement as well as institutional support during the time I had to withdraw from the University to be with my ill husband. With regard to family and friends, I would like to acknowledge both my and my husband’s families for their assistance over many years. Finally I want to thank Brian for his support, always boosting my confidence, and his kindness, putting me first whenever he is able.
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INTRODUCTION

If you are a long-term resident of North Carolina, have you noticed an increase in the Hispanic population in your community? Would you feel uncomfortable if newly immigrated Hispanics moved into the house/apartment next door? Do immigrated Hispanics seem to have different desires and values regarding housing from your own? Do you feel threatened by the increase in Hispanic immigration? If you are a newly immigrated Hispanic, do you feel unwanted or mistreated in your communities? Do you find yourself understanding English when you want to, but telling your neighbor, “No speak English”? This study considers these questions. It examines the attitudes, perceptions, and barriers to community improvement in two counties of North Carolina. In it, I explore the effects of Hispanic immigration on housing, communities, and neighbor relations.

The state of North Carolina has proven to be a popular destination for Hispanic immigrants, especially in the 1990s. The 2000 Census indicates a rapid increase in Hispanic population nationwide, with North Carolina among the top ten states for increase from 1990 to 2000. While previous studies have focused on the effects of such immigration on employment, little research has been done in the area of housing. In addition, “little is known about the ways in which newcomers and established residents interact” (Bach 1993:155). The literature does suggest, however, that even in situations where jobs are plentiful and immigration has had little effect on employment opportunities of long-term residents, the competition and frustration in housing may

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1 Throughout this work, community refers to the spatial location of housing and neighbors. Community is used to represent a grouping more inclusive than one street, and more specific than an area. Community may be defined as the spatial grouping of housing within walking distance from one’s own home. It is a
remain fierce (Oliver and Johnson 1984). This thesis is a first step toward describing and
evaluating the experiences in housing from the vantage points of both newly immigrated
Hispanics and long-term residents. My main research goal is to examine what conflict, if
any, exists over housing between newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents.
The study utilizes qualitative interview data collected in 1999 in two counties of North
Carolina that had experienced an influx of Hispanic immigration during the prior eight
years, along with other information about the increasing number of Hispanics in the state.
By utilizing newspaper articles, economic studies, and histories of immigration
processes, along with the interview data, this analysis highlights the interface between
fact and perception regarding stereotypes and conflict surrounding issues of housing.

Specifically, this study seeks to understand: what newly immigrated Hispanics
desire for their homes and neighborhoods; whether newly immigrated Hispanics perceive
their housing and neighborhoods to be adequate and affordable; what problems newly
immigrated Hispanics face in regards to housing and neighborhood relations; whether
long-term residents feel threatened by newly immigrated Hispanics moving into their
neighborhoods, and in what ways; what specific experiences long-term residents report
with regard to living with newly immigrated Hispanics in their neighborhoods and
communities and how they characterize these experiences; and whether and what kinds of
tensions exist between newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents in
neighborhoods and communities. These specific research questions revolve around
stereotypes and/or problems that community leaders and respondents have described to

concept that changes slightly according to individual understanding, as each person considers with whom
they might need to cooperate in order to improve the locality in which they live.
interviewers. For example, combating the image of Hispanic immigrants’ desires for housing and neighborhoods being different from long-term resident desires may serve to unite the community. Whether based in reality or in perception (such as many of the stereotypes), problems related to adequate housing and neighbor relations need to be addressed. The ultimate goal in better understanding these issues is to be able to propose and implement strategies to lessen tensions and frustrations and to improve housing. In addition, as Hispanics continue migrating to new areas of the United States, it would be helpful to determine: 1) what communities can expect from newly immigrated Hispanics; 2) what communities need to offer newly immigrated Hispanics; and 3) what resources communities need in order to alleviate tensions and promote understanding between long-term residents and newly-arrived Hispanics.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

U.S. inter-ethnic conflict surrounding settlement and issues of housing likely began with the first European settlers to the United States, as they encroached upon Native American territory (see Jacobson 1998 or Takaki 1993 for an overview). Since that time, immigrant groups have found themselves welcomed to this country in varying degrees, and have become ethnically/racially intermixed to varying degrees. From large port cities such as New York and Los Angeles to smaller cities and non-metropolitan areas, housing remains very segregated by ethnicity/race (Denton and Massey 1989; Rosenbaum 1996). New immigrants who voluntarily choose ethnically segregated housing do gain some initial benefits in the area of psychological and economical adjustment. Sharing some common language and customs, other immigrants “can offer
them guidance in how to maneuver in this new society” (Ellen 2000:437). In addition, the combining of several income earners into one household is a survival strategy common among immigrants and low-income groups, as they reduce living costs such as rent, food, and utilities (Rodriguez and Hagan 1997). Ethnically segregated housing may prove *transitionally* useful, but continued segregation and discrimination is harmful to immigrants and to the society at large. Within this study, I rely on interview evidence not from immigrant port cities and major ethnic enclaves, but from smaller and more rural areas of North Carolina. This is important new research; as immigrants continue moving into these smaller scale areas of the United States, they will come into residential contact with long-term residents. Community members will need to deter conflict, promote understanding, and realize that inter-ethnic integration is key to community success.

Officially, “housing discrimination, and the subsequent segregation of neighborhoods, constitutes a violation of civil rights” (Tobin 1987:8), yet researchers continue to find evidence of ethnic/racial discrimination in housing (Oswald 2001; Turner and Wienk 1993). In one study, Black and Hispanic households are found to pay an average of $4,000 in “discrimination taxes” every time they search for housing (Yinger 1997). The consequences of ethnic/racial discrimination include unequal access to housing, overall lower quality housing, and the confining of non-whites to less desirable locations, resulting in poorer communities and less inter-ethnic interaction (Peach, Robinson and Smith 1981; Yinger 1997).

Blacks/African-Americans have faced the most institutional and individual discrimination of any ethnicity/race and remain particularly segregated in housing (Farley 1993; Massey and Denton 1993). Further supporting the claim that skin color shapes
access, non-white Hispanics have been found to be less successful than white Hispanics in their efforts to settle into predominantly white housing areas (Alba and Logan 1993; Rosenbaum 1996). Controlling for socio-economic status, differences in preferences, and length of U.S. residence, scholars continue to find skin color to be a determining factor in ethnic/racial residential segregation (Farley 1995; Denton and Massey 1989; Massey and Denton 1993).

In a study of urban U.S. settlement between 1869 and 1993, Shanahan and Olzak (1999) find that ethnic/racial conflict emerged and continued to grow as different sectors of the population began competing for available resources. And conflict surrounding inter-ethnic housing is not unique to the United States. From Korea to Israel to Ireland, housing policies, government action, and community response toward ethnic segregation are under attack. While some researchers point to inevitable conflict and unhealthy competition around immigration and ethnic desegregation, others argue that dialogue and interaction can diminish such conflict and competition. A study in Vienna found that younger and more well educated people have increased interactions with immigrants and are more willing to live in inter-ethnic housing areas (Kohlbacher 2000). Robert Bach (1993) contends that little research has focused on long-term resident relations with immigrants. He argues that while the media play up conflict and competition, new immigrants and long-term residents make daily efforts to break past dividing lines and connect through similar interests such as neighborhood clean-up, youth sports clubs, and expansion of community libraries. Though opinions and study findings vary, I agree that “... segregation is not a neutral expression of cultural preference. It is, rather, the fulcrum of racial inequality--in the labour market, in the housing system and,
consequently, in access to a wide range of opportunities and life chances” (Smith 1989:18). My argument is not for assimilation (see Feagin and Feagin 1996) or mere residential intermixing, but for increased interaction among neighbors and community members.

Some may question why housing is so important. Following Massey and Denton (1999), I argue that “where one lives – especially, where one grows up – exerts a profound effect on one’s life chance” (p. 317). Those sectors of the U.S. population that are confined to disadvantaged neighborhoods and communities do not have equal opportunities for socioeconomic success. What is important is not only the concrete structure one lives in, but also the opportunities and resources that come with a neighborhood and community. “In a very real way, therefore, barriers to spatial mobility are barriers to social mobility, and where one lives determines a variety of salient factors that affect individual well-being, the quality of schooling, the value of housing, exposure to crime, the quality of public services, and the character of children’s peers” (Massey and Denton 1999:317.) When an individual or a family buys a house, they not only place their economic security in the property value’s appreciation, but they also make a stake in the community. Furthermore, owning a home “marks the realization of the American Dream” (Meyer 2000:2).

Due to high birth rates and rapid immigration, Hispanics have now replaced African Americans as the largest minority in the United States. Census 2000 reports that 12.5 percent of the U.S. population is Hispanic, compared to 12.3 percent African American. These estimates for the Hispanic proportion are likely lower than the actual
numbers, primarily due to the undercounting of undocumented Hispanics (Massey et al. 1994). The Census Bureau has a record of undercounting groups such as African-Americans, rural residents, Hispanics, migrant laborers, and undocumented aliens (Johnson, Johnson-Webb, and Farrell 1999; Johnson Webb 1999).

In considering the data regarding our Hispanic population, one should examine how this category of people is defined. The term “Hispanic” did not appear until the late 1970s to 1980 with the emergence of the Latino middle-class. While convenient for research today, both race and ethnicity are social constructions, the definitions and characteristics of which are historically and culturally situated, changing from one society to the next and over time (Hall and du Gay 1996; Omi and Winant 1996). With unstable definitions, race and ethnicity can be (and have been) manipulated to assure the domination, wealth, and success of the most powerful in any society (Gallagher 1999). In spite of divergent languages, cultures, religions, and geographies, racial and ethnic categories (such as African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic) have been ascribed to peoples thought to have a common identity (Lewis 2001; Olzak and Nagel 1986).

The category “Hispanic” lumps together whites, blacks, and indigenous peoples native to Spain and 26 countries in Latin America. “Under the same label, we find individuals whose ancestors lived in the country since at least the time of independence and others who arrived last year; substantial numbers of professionals and entrepreneurs along with humble farm laborers and unskilled factory workers; whites, blacks, mulattoes, and mestizos; full-fledged citizens and unauthorized aliens...” (Portes 1998:114). The category “Hispanic,” finally understood by the U.S. Census Bureau to be an ethnicity rather than a race, includes people of various skin colors, national politics,
religions, education levels, historical backgrounds, and languages. In Latin America racial categories are less rigidly defined than in the United States (Omi and Winant 1996). Marvin Harris (1964) notes that in Brazil, it is not uncommon for parents and children and even siblings to “be accepted as representatives of quite opposite racial types” (p. 57). Such parent/child or sibling categorization into differing races occurs infrequently in the United States.

While recognizing that “race” is an “unstable and ‘decentered’ complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle” (Omi and Winant 1996:15), researchers continue to make use of U.S. Census categories of race and ethnicity. In my thesis, I defer to these categories and I utilize Census statistics on several occasions.

Thus, one should review U.S. Census definition for race:

a self-identification data item in which respondents choose the race or races with which they most closely identify. In 1997, after a lengthy analysis and public comment period, the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) revised the standards for how the Federal government would collect and present data on race and ethnicity. The new guidelines reflect "the increasing diversity of our Nation’s population, stemming from growth in interracial marriages and immigration." These new guidelines revised some of the racial categories used in 1990 and preceding censuses and allowed respondents to report as many race categories as were necessary to identify themselves on the Census 2000 questionnaire.

With regard to Hispanic origin, Census 2000 designates 28 Hispanic/Latino categories for “Spanish/Hispanic/Latino” people, who may be of any race.

Spanish/Hispanic/Latino is a self-designated classification for people whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Caribbean, or those identifying themselves generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, etc. Origin can be viewed as ancestry, nationality, or country of birth of the person or person’s parents
or ancestors prior to their arrival in the United States.

I elaborate on interviewee race and ethnicity in the chapters entitled “Data” and “Analytic Method.”

While the Hispanic population in the past has centered in a few key states in the Southwest, migration patterns into and within the United States have been changing (U.S. Census Bureau). Since the 1990s, immigrants have been seeking destinations in non-traditional parts of the United States; many bypass the major metropolitan areas and head for southeastern states, such as North Carolina (Johnson et al. 1999; Johnson-Webb 1999; Rochin 1995). Ample employment opportunities in these southeastern states attract ever-increasing numbers of Latinos (Torres 2000). Analysts refer to North Carolina as a “newly emerging magnet for Hispanics” (Johnson et al. 1999:2). North Carolina Census statistics record 378,963 Hispanics living in the state, a growth of 394 percent during the 1990-2000 period. Again, these are conservative estimates of the actual Hispanic population. During a 1996 rubella outbreak, the Division of Women and Children’s Health estimated the state’s Hispanic population to be a whopping 54 percent greater than Census Bureau estimates at the time (Johnson-Webb 1999:9). More recently, the January/February 2002 issue of HispanicMagazine.com stated, “Experts at Faith Action estimate the Hispanic population in 2001 to have climbed 28 percent from the 2000 Census figures” (Kitchen 2002). Using data from the North Carolina Center for Health Statistics and the National Center for Health Statistics, FaithAction estimated the Hispanic population in North Carolina to be 487,718 for 2001 (FaithAction and the International House 2002).
Not only have Hispanic immigrant destinations been changing, but in many instances, the stereotypical lone male Hispanic working to send money home has been replaced with entire Hispanic families staking out their long-term futures in this country (Johnson-Webb 1999). Studies in the 1970s indicated that Mexican migrants (Hispanics of Mexican origin constituted 58 percent of the U.S. Hispanic population in 2000) were generally temporary visitors to the United States, working to earn wages and return home (Bustamante 1978; Cornelius 1978). Since that time, further studies suggest that permanent settlement has become more appealing. In one such study, Douglas Massey (1986) notes that Mexican migrants form social and economic ties in the United States, and over time, bring family members to join them. He concludes that the numbers of permanent Mexican settlers in the United States will continue to increase. In North Carolina, statistics reveal that previously mobile Hispanic workers are now settling down permanently (Glascock 1999). “The dramatic increase in Hispanic births statewide suggests that many Hispanic newcomers belong to families that have ostensibly come to North Carolina to stay” (Johnson-Webb 1999:9).

Before the 1980s, most Hispanic immigrants to North Carolina were solo males working in seasonal agriculture (Johnson et al. 1999; Torres 2000). With rural areas lacking available housing, tents and mobile homes were the most common form of housing for seasonal workers in agricultural areas (Rural Migration News 1997). During the 1980s solo male Hispanic immigrants continued working in North Carolina agriculture, only on a more permanent basis. Solo migrant males who lived in company-owned housing in rural areas were not highly visible to the majority of the state’s population. Yet this company housing was sometimes crowded and substandard, without
running water and electricity. In addition, company-owned housing put the workers in a more vulnerable position; when one was hurt on the job or decided to strike, the company could evict the worker from his/her home (Rural Migration News 1997).

North Carolina’s booming 1990s economy created a labor shortage, and Hispanic workers continued to fill essential jobs that insufficient numbers of others in our society would take (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2002). Today, North Carolina employers continue to recruit Hispanics to work in agriculture. For example, the North Carolina Growers Association, which provides 10,000 H-2A workers for 1,000 growers, is the largest US importer of H-2A workers (Rural Migration News 2002). However, one also finds increasing numbers of Hispanics in the hospitality industry, construction, landscaping, meat processing, and other manufacturing jobs around the state (Johnson-Webb 1999). While many newly immigrated Hispanics continue to be drawn to North Carolina for seasonal farm work, they quickly discover year-round, non-farm jobs paying equal or higher wages (Rural Migration News 1997). Thus, their locations, housing requirements, and housing options have expanded. No longer do the majority of North Carolina’s Hispanics live in company-owned housing in rural areas; they now come into contact with long-term residents on a frequent basis. Even the migrant agricultural workers who were once out of sight, living on farms, are becoming more visible as they move to more urban areas. This happens when federal and state housing regulations aimed at improving company/farm housing are set forth, and company/farm owners choose to destroy the on-site housing rather than putting up the necessary expenses to meet the new regulations (Rural Migration News 1997). For these various reasons, the growing Hispanic population in North Carolina has put pressure on the existing stock of housing.
North Carolina and many U.S. states rely on immigrant labor; meanwhile, economic opportunities lure immigrants. In both cases, the motive for immigration is jobs. Yet, laborers bring with them needs for housing and other services. Given the shortage of low cost housing in many labor-needy areas, an increase in people may create problems regardless of ethnicity. When the newly arrived laborers happen to be of other ethnicities, problems surrounding housing shortages may be disguised as inter-ethnic conflict. One of the problems resulting from housing shortage in rural areas is that many workers must resort to long commutes between work and the housing they find in nearby towns. Laborers wind up paying 25 to 30 percent of wages on transportation, the number of automobile accidents goes up, and the nearby towns become mere bedroom communities for the laborers (Rural Migration News, 1996). Thus, the move to more populated areas has no positive effect on inter-ethnic interaction. Within this study, I argue that inter-ethnic interaction is key to community success.

The effects of Hispanic migration to North Carolina are becoming evident in political, social, and economic arenas. Governor Jim Hunt formally recognized the increasing number of Hispanics to the state by assembling the Governor’s Advisory Council on Hispanic/Latino Affairs. Local politicians and U.S. Senate candidates, including Elizabeth Dole, greeted a recent statewide gathering of 500 Hispanic leaders during a two-day event in Durham, North Carolina. Yet, some researchers note that an ethnic group’s rise in political influence may parallel (either stemming from or promoting) increased cultural separatism, with an emphasis on ethnic group over community concerns (Clark and Morrison, 1992; Schlesinger 1992). “The combination of
legal and political forces in the United States seems to emphasize cultural separatism rather than a united society” (Clark 1996:98).

In addition to Hispanics’ rising political clout, North Carolina has seen increases in the number of Hispanic newspapers, stores, and restaurants, as well as the inclusion of Hispanic speakers in all major areas of service. Last September, El Pueblo’s “La Fiesta,” the seventh annual statewide celebration of Hispanic culture, attracted 45,000 participants. Furthermore, immigrant Hispanics fill jobs in North Carolina that Americans often do not want, contributing to the state’s economic success. One recent study of Eastern North Carolina counties estimates the direct annual economic impact of 106,000 Hispanics to be between $772 million and $1.39 billion in goods and services annually (range of impact is due to varying figures for disposable income as the researchers took into account 10 to 50 percent of wages being sent back to native countries) (East Carolina University Regional Development Institute 1999:12). As the total Hispanic population of the state is approximately four times as large, the total economic impact is accordingly much greater.

Hispanics’ rising political clout, expanding social and cultural opportunities, and their increasing economic impact all suggest that Hispanics in North Carolina are gaining ground. Therefore, one might expect newly immigrated Hispanics to be well integrated with long-term residents and to be accepted within their communities. One might expect that Hispanics are satisfied with housing and neighbor relations. Yet, studies suggest that long-term residents fear neighborhood integration. For example, a 1992 study in New York found that both Whites and African-Americans dislike Hispanic integration into their neighborhoods (Clark 1992). Gateway communities for Hispanic immigrants to the
United States have repeatedly reported tensions and conflicts over jobs, housing, schools, and other goods and services (Oliver and Johnson 1984; Johnson et al. 1999). Evidence from studies in North Carolina suggests that there is considerable long-term resident opposition to the influx of Hispanics in this state as well (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2002). Questions from the 1996 Carolina Poll found that the majority of North Carolinians harbor negative feelings toward Hispanic immigrants. “Nearly half (42 percent) stated that they were uncomfortable with the increasing presence of Hispanics, about two-thirds (67 percent) said that they thought their neighbors would not approve of Hispanics moving into their neighborhood, and more than half (55 percent) said that they did not feel comfortable around people who do not speak English” (Johnson et al. 1999:6).

Critics of immigration often claim that immigrant laborers displace long-term residents in the workplace. Yet, studies have shown that immigrants generally work in low-rung jobs that long-term residents no longer desire (Borjas 1998; Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2001; Piore 1979). Similarly, a recent North Carolina study found that Hispanic migrants to the state have replaced, rather than displaced, African-American and white workers, the long-term residents having moved up to better employment opportunities (Skaggs, Tomaskovic-Devey, and Leiter 2000). The researchers do note the context of a vibrant 1990s economy; rising ethnic tensions related to labor might follow a tightening of the economy. Even during the booming economy of the 1990s, however, a study found that 60 percent of unemployed persons expressed negative attitudes toward Hispanic immigration versus 36 percent of employed persons (Johnson et al. 1999:8). While noting these negative perceptions and the stress Hispanic immigrant individuals and families
often place on the available supplies of housing, education, health care, and social
services, one must acknowledge the labor shortage they fill. A study in Eastern North
Carolina finds that Latino workers have revived labor-intensive businesses such as
tobacco and vegetable farming, and food processing in crab houses and poultry plants
(East Carolina University Regional Development Institute 1999). While the present study
focuses on housing and neighbor relations alone, it is important to keep in mind that
experiences with newly immigrated Hispanics in one’s workplace, school, medical
center, post office, and grocery store (to name a few locations), affect attitudes and action
toward Hispanic neighbors and/or would-be neighbors.

In addition to criticism related to employment, other long-term resident
complaints surround payment of federal, state, and local taxes. However, Hispanic
immigrants pay all of these; furthermore, some Hispanics make significant contributions
to long-term residents’ Social Security and Medicare funds, as those operating under
false identity can never collect on this assistance (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2002).
Regarding legal status, a study of North Carolina Hispanics from 1985 to 1990 found that
82 percent were presumably U.S. citizens (either born in the United States or its
territories, or born abroad to American parents, or naturalized citizens) (Johnson et al.
1999). The remaining 18 percent, often termed “illegals,” contribute to a productive force
of immigrant workers, at the same time facing a very negative characterization in our
society. The negative stereotypes surrounding undocumented Hispanic immigrants may
be generalized to all immigrants, and the stereotypes are not confined to employment
situations; long-term residents carry these ill feelings into their homes. Thus, the negative
characterization of Hispanic immigrants as “illegal” affects housing and neighbor

relations. It is no stretch to assume that accurate labels such as “undocumented” versus “illegal aliens,” coupled with an understanding that Hispanic immigrants fill a void in the workforce, could improve long-term residents’ perceptions of newly immigrated Hispanics and could increase long-term residents’ willingness to accept them into their communities.

According to some researchers, the majority of North Carolina’s “undocumented” Hispanic immigrants have actually arrived with proper temporary papers, but have stayed beyond the length of their visas (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2002). In order to obtain permanent status, there are fees to pay and often one needs an immigration attorney. Due to the expense and changing laws regarding U.S. visas, Hispanic immigrants may have valid social security numbers, own homes, pay taxes, lead middle-class lifestyles, and have worked with an attorney for years, yet continue to go “undocumented.” These new immigrants cannot wait to acquire sufficient income and cannot wait on visa laws to change before they settle into housing and neighborhoods.

While some long-term residents may take a negative view of Hispanic immigrants, in reality the new residents have much to offer a community. Hispanic immigrants fill a void in the workforce; they are highly motivated and determined to succeed; they offer opportunities for expanded cultural learning and Spanish-language improvement; and they have the same community desires as long-term residents regarding youth improvement, neighbor relations and eradication of drugs and crime. It is to the benefit of the entire community that we try to understand the challenges these individuals and families present and the challenges they face. Heightened tensions and conflicts between immigrants and long-term residents are detrimental to the community.
at large. Residential segregation “undermines the social and economic well-being of individuals” (Massey and Denton 1999:318). Working in collaboration with long-term residents, however, Hispanic immigrants’ motivation and skills may be useful for improving newly integrated communities. After all, immigrant desires are common to us all: decent jobs, decent homes, safe neighborhoods, education, and opportunity. Furthermore, on the statewide level, improved relations between Hispanic immigrants and long-term residents would “enhance North Carolina’s image as a world-class community and its competitiveness in the global marketplace (Johnson et al. 1999:9).

The lessons gathered from experiences revealed in these data may serve to lessen tensions as Hispanics move into new areas of the United States. State and local policy makers fear unbridled competition over scarce opportunities within the working class (Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 1998). One key to better community relations is meaningful personal contact resulting in shared rewards. This contact might involve borrowing from/lending to neighbors, visiting with neighbors, giving/receiving help from neighbors, and working together on community problems such as littered streets, drugs, or violence (Ahlbrandt 1984). “Inter-ethnic contact can greatly change what people think and feel about, expect of, and therefore, how they act toward members of other ethnic groups” (Hyde and Leiter 2000:18). The practical goals of this study are: to uncover stereotypes and complaints affecting inter-ethnic community interaction; to “humanize” newly immigrated Hispanics by highlighting commonalities between them and long-term residents; to address community benefits of inter-ethnic cooperation in neighborhoods and communities; and to suggest ways for improving communities through integration in
housing. This study will prove informative for newly immigrated residents, long-term residents, and community development leaders.

SETTING

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in two counties of North Carolina: Duplin and Cabarrus. Duplin County’s population increased 22.7 percent during 1990-2000, with a 2000 Census report of 49,063 persons (see Table 1). Duplin County reported a 15.1 percent Hispanic population in the 2000 Census, the highest Hispanic proportion amongst all counties in the state. The Duplin County municipality with the highest proportion of Hispanics was Magnolia, with 25.1% Hispanic. The county’s Black/African-American population makes up 29 percent of the total population. The 1999 unemployment rate for the county was 6.2 percent and a high 15.3 percent of families fell below poverty level.

Cabarrus County population was over two and one-half times larger than Duplin in 2000, with 131,063 total population, a 32.5 percent increase over 10 years. The population density of Cabarrus is 360 persons per square mile, six times that of Duplin County. Cabarrus County reported 5.1 percent Hispanic population, about one-third the proportion Hispanic in Duplin County. The percent Hispanic population varied from a low of 1.5 percent to a high 13.1 percent among the six wards of Concord (the largest city within Cabarrus County). Out of the Hispanic population in Cabarrus, 78 percent is Mexican, whereas 63 percent of Duplin’s Hispanic population is of Mexican descent. Black/African-American residents make up just 12.2 percent of Cabarrus County, well under half that of Duplin. The 1999 unemployment rate in Cabarrus was under 2 percent,
significantly lower than in Duplin. Cabarrus County 1999 poverty status included only 4.8 percent of families, under one-third the percent in Duplin County.

Table 1: Census Statistics by County

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duplin</td>
<td>49,063</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabarrus</td>
<td>131,063</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>&lt;2</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
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The home ownership rates and the average number of persons per household are the same for the two counties; 75 percent and 2.6 persons, respectively. The percent of vacant housing units (owner-occupied and renter-occupied combined) in Duplin County is almost double (11.0 percent) that of Cabarrus County (6.3 percent). Duplin County reports that 33.3 percent of all housing units are mobile homes, whereas Cabarrus County reports less than half that percentage at 12.4 percent mobile homes. With newly immigrated Hispanics often living in mobile homes, the above statistic may be significant. As the initial research project focused on differences in inter-ethnic relations based on the level of worker powerlessness, the two counties were chosen for their contrast in employment concentration, wage level, unemployment, and union presence, all thought to influence worker powerlessness. Duplin County employers “seek out Hispanics as a new low-wage, cooperative labor force” (Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 1998:2). Workers in Cabarrus County have more options among different employers, with a stronger union presence, lower unemployment, and higher average weekly wage.
DATA

The initial field research involved informal interviews with approximately 50 community members: county health service workers, social service providers, teachers and principals, community organizers, real estate agents, and police officers. I had access to field notes from this initial phase. Following a pre-test, the researchers gathered interviews from 27 individual workers in the two counties, including 10 Hispanics (6 Duplin County and 4 Cabarrus County), 11 African Americans (4 Duplin County and 7 Cabarrus County), and 6 whites (2 Duplin County and 4 Cabarrus County). Of the 10 Hispanic interviewees, 9 were newly immigrated Hispanics and 1 a long term resident Hispanic. In total, 11 were male and 16 female; within the newly immigrated Hispanic category, there were 3 female and 6 male. Two professors and two doctoral students in the North Carolina State University (NCSU) Department of Sociology and Anthropology conducted 18 interviews in English. One NCSU bilingual Spanish professor, one bilingual anthropology professor from University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, and one native Spanish speaker, a community college instructor, completed nine interviews in Spanish.

The interviews were semi-structured, with three general areas of conversation: homes and neighborhoods, schools, and jobs. The interviewer guidelines contained 37 questions focusing on these topics, and suggested many additional probes (see Appendix A). Interviews lasted an average of approximately one-hour, though the average interview in Spanish was briefer. The interviews were subsequently transcribed (those in Spanish translated into English), and I utilized both audio and transcript versions in the analysis. In addition, the researchers compiled field notes after each interview, noting
demographic information as well signs of socio-economic status, problem areas in the interview, non-verbal suggestions, and overall interviewer impressions. As the researchers did not design this portion of the research as a random sample, these interview data are not representative of any universe or population. Rather, the intent has been to uncover common processes involved in immigration, as well as concerns, stereotypes, barriers, and conflicts in these communities of rapid Hispanic migration.

**ANALYTIC METHOD**

Robert Weiss (1994) identified a four-stage analysis process for issue-focused interview research in *Learning from Strangers* that I followed in crafting the analysis presented here. Coding is the first stage, during which I made an effort to capture and begin to organize the interview material. Making marginal notes, I related topics covered to preconceived categories of interest (see below), adding and revising categories as I grapple with the data. Category revision was necessary, as I allowed new material to enrich original codings based on only a portion of the entire data. During this coding stage and subsequent stages, I compiled memos on general topics and patterns that I began finding. Continuing with stage two, I excerpted and sorted pieces of the interviews into like files. These excerpt files are collections by topic on issues that recur across several (or all) interviews. Third, for local integration, I assembled closely related topics and interpreted and elaborated on the main point of each topic/category as well as the variants. During this stage, I began formulating minitheories regarding the causes of similarity and variation among respondents. Weiss (1994) defines these minitheories as “hypotheses whose aim is to make sense of material dealing with specific issues or
material within a particular sector” (p. 159). Finally, the fourth stage involves the overall analytic framework. “Inclusive integration knits into a single coherent story the otherwise isolated areas of analysis that result from local integration” (Weiss 1994:160). For the inclusive integration, I organized the topics into a chronological sequence, which I had preliminarily outlined in the four categories below. Thus, the four stages accumulate into a full analysis that I believe leads to a thoughtful, evidence-based argument.

I began by coding the interviews, looking for categories and concepts related to my main research question: what, if any, housing conflict exists between newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents? This methodology is issue-focused and generalized [according to Weiss’ (1994) categories, and in opposition to a case-focused, concrete analysis which follow one individual’s or a few individuals’ experiences]. My generalized, issue-focused analysis involves 27 interviewees’ experiences. The various sections of my analysis are supported by interviewee responses and most sections can stand alone as a brief report. While acknowledging that my “sample [is] not representative of any meaningful universe,” I occasionally report proportions to “suggest the strength with which the sample supports generalizations” and to give “the reader reason for confidence in the probity of the analysis” (Weiss 1994:165).

The first step of the analytic process involved linking what the respondent had said to categories of my study. I proposed the following sequential categories, which stemmed from anticipations of what the interview data contained based on initial review:

1) Newly immigrated Hispanics look for housing/(re)action from long-term residents
2) Newly immigrated Hispanics enter housing/(re)action from long-term residents
3) Integration into community and problems for newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents

4) Movement up/out and change

These overall categories were further broken down into the following, sometimes overlapping subcategories:

1) Newly immigrated Hispanics look for housing/(re)action from long-term residents
   a. stereotypes
   b. location and types of housing available to Hispanics and other newcomers
   c. comparisons of methods newly immigrated Hispanics use to find low-cost housing versus methods used by long-term residents
   d. any evidence of competition for adequate and affordable housing
   e. comparison of newly immigrated Hispanic desires in housing, neighbors, and neighborhoods with the desires of long-term residents
   f. impacts of other actors (landlord, real estate agent, local housing officials)
   g. basics: rent/own; house/apartment/trailer; size; number of occupants; length of stay
   h. why newly immigrated Hispanics come to the area and community
   i. problems and fears unique to newly immigrated Hispanics
   j. other subcategories not yet determined

2) Newly immigrated Hispanics entering housing/(re)action from long-term residents
   a. stereotypes
   b. perception of threat from Hispanics (or others) moving into neighborhood
   c. specific housing/neighborhood complaints from newly immigrated Hispanics and from long-term residents
   d. comparison of newly immigrated Hispanic desires in housing, neighbors, and neighborhoods with the desires of long-term residents
   e. impacts of other actors (landlord, neighborhood groups, local housing officials)
   f. other subcategories not yet determined

3) Integration into community and problems for newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents
   a. stereotypes
   b. specific housing/neighborhood complaints from newly immigrated Hispanics and from long-term residents
   c. ethnic/racial character of neighborhood
   d. how neighborhoods are changing
   e. working together towards desires in housing, neighbors, and neighborhoods
4) Movement up/out and change
   a. stereotypes
   b. how neighborhoods are changing
   c. outside actors
   d. what causes change and movement; reasons people leave
   e. difference in attitude depending on whether person is mobile or “stuck”
   f. other subcategories not yet determined

In the first stage, when newly immigrated Hispanics are looking for housing, I expect their stereotypes and those of the long-term residents to be based mainly on rumor and overgeneralization, not on experience. At this stage of virtually no experience, there is little action and reaction; stereotypes have little immediate consequence in daily life. In the second stage, when newly immigrated Hispanics begin entering housing/communities, there is much more action. Here, stereotypes are based on relatively few experiences, which are generalized to “the rest” of the group and to multiple situations. In the third stage of integration into community, stereotypes (which could now be called judgements) are less generalized, based on ever-increasing amounts of experience. Stereotypes and expectations affect daily life and contribute to neighborhood tranquility or problems, and changes. The fourth stage involves change and movement out and (generally) upward. While newly immigrated Hispanic desires for housing, neighbors, and neighborhoods probably match those of long-term residents, I expect the cycle of change and movement to vary slightly by ethnicity. After all, newly immigrated Hispanics often arrive to extremely poor, often crowded housing and make several moves within a few years time as their incomes increase. In addition, as solo
males become more financially stable, family members often join them. Thus these males branch out from crowded trailers of solo working males into higher-priced family units in more established neighborhoods. The process of upward progression for long-term residents takes place more slowly, and desires and expectations may be greater overall. Having lived in a prosperous nation for a much longer time (often, all their lives) long-term residents may expect and feel entitled to better living conditions than newly arrived immigrants. Finally, I anticipate that the fourth stage of change and movement will cycle back into the first stage of looking for new housing.

Intermittently, while coding, I composed memos on these topics, as well as memos on more general categories (such as county effects, other inter-ethnic conflicts that might relate to housing, perceptions by ethnicity, effects of socio-economic status, etc.) As Lofland and Lofland (1995) recommend in Analyzing Social Settings, I discussed my emerging findings with other researchers in the field and wrote about the many and varied issues that intrigued me, for seemingly disconnected and/or unrelated memos often may connect after further analysis. In regards to the four stages identified above, I assessed ways in which prior stages shaped subsequent ones. Several of the interviews provided a means for analysis of people moving from one housing unit/neighborhood to another and continuing the cyclical process of looking, finding, integrating, and moving on.

In regards to the general vision of the research question, and on advice from Lofland and Lofland (1995), I considered comparisons and analogies in thinking through problems presented in the interview data. Where appropriate, I used ethnicity, gender, county, social location, length of residence, and general goals for comparisons.
elaborated upon certain interviewees’ unique viewpoints, such as one anomalous interviewee, a long-term resident, U.S. born Hispanic. In some ways, I found him to be an omniscient narrator due to his unique point of view and location within both categories: long-term resident and Hispanic. Adapted from Anselm Strauss’ (1987) suggestions in *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, I aimed to remain sensitive to the generic themes of: 1) conditions/context; 2) interactions among actors; 3) strategies and tactics/purpose of action; and 4) results/consequences. In so doing, I continually considered these four, quite inclusive mega-themes as I coded and composed memos. By conditioning myself to look for all four mega-themes, I attempted to include a broad range of central sociological considerations in my account.

Information from several other sources augments these interview data: newspaper and magazine articles, organizational reports, government publications, the Internet, and some scholarly journals and books. For the most part, scholarly research and publications have not caught up with the fast-emerging Hispanic upsurge in North Carolina. The data, inferences, and conclusions in these various non-scholarly sources must be utilized with special caution in the absence of peer review.

For the purposes of this study, I have abbreviated the Census 2000 categories for the various populations considered within: Hispanic/Latino is identified as Hispanic, Black/African-American as African-American, and White as is. In actuality, all the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees in this study are Latinos: four Mexicans in Cabarrus County and five Hondurans in Duplin County. They are identified as newly immigrated Hispanics as they have been living in North Carolina from four months to four years (in the United States from four months to eleven years). In addition, one interviewee is a
Hispanic, born of Mexican parents in Texas; he has lived in the United States all his life and is identified as a long-term resident Hispanic. In most instances, however, I have found it most useful to differentiate only between long-term residents and newly immigrated Hispanics for this analysis.

The quotations within the analysis section are identified by interviewee number, followed by transcript page number/s. I took a standardized approach in editing quotations, in order to make them more readable. Robert Weiss (1994) explains the problem with the opposing, preservationist approach: “A too faithful rendering of respondent dialect, instead of enriching a quotation, may strike the reader as mannered and annoying. Almost surely the reader will have to puzzle out the respondent’s meaning instead of being able to understand it immediately” (p. 193). In order to help the quote flow more smoothly, I eliminated non-meaningful utterances such as “you know,” and repetitions. I also eliminated interviewer probes when I felt they only broke up the interviewees’ speech. In addition, I standardized colloquial speech and grammatical errors, for example, changing “them’s good people” into “they’re good people.” In these modifications, I was careful not to change the meaning of any words, nor did I supply any words. When a word was needed to connect ideas or clarify an interviewee’s response, I provided such in brackets. For example, “They pretty nice. I got one that lives next door” became “[Hispanics] are pretty nice. One [Hispanic] lives next door.” Finally, in my effort to present interviewee responses compactly, I occasionally utilized ellipsis points to omit non-relevant words and sentences. Overall, I took very slight liberty with the interview materials. In editing quotations, I agree with Robert Weiss (1994), who writes, “While I strongly believe that if the words aren’t the respondent’s, they shouldn’t be
attributed to the respondent, I also believe that absolutely literal transcription of a respondent’s words can interfere with understanding them” (p. 195).

ANALYSIS

Why Hispanics Immigrate to the United States

These interviews support the general finding that Hispanics come to the United States primarily for one reason, to earn decent wages through hard work. Where they plan to spend (or send) the wages varies. Some seek to make a better future for themselves and their families here in the United States; others send wages back to family members in their country of origin, with the goal of returning home. Still others (oftentimes, single men) plan their futures here, while sending partial wages to relatives (often parents or siblings) in their home countries. Their desires regarding where they ultimately settle often determine, and at the same time may be determined by, whether the male comes alone to the United States, or whether he has brought his wife, children, and/or other relatives. When questioned about bringing their families to the United States, most solo male interviewees raised concerns of risk and finances. Illegally bringing family members across borders is dangerous. As one male interviewee states, “…my children are not [going to come here] because they are too little and one suffers too much to get here” (7.7). In pursuit of a less risky route, one encounters burdening expenses: “I wanted to bring one [of my children here] now, but no. My salary is not enough…” (9.8). Another explains, “I have my family, my children in Honduras. I can not bring them here…now in my country they are asking for a savings account of 50,000 lempiras [over 3000 U.S. dollars] and property to get a visa” (8.10). This man plans instead to earn
enough money in the United States to return to Honduras, start a business, and generate jobs, thus helping himself and others.

In cases in which the migrant was accompanied by his spouse, all of the Hispanic females interviewed suggested that they will stay in the United States indefinitely. When asked how long she plans to live in the area, one interviewee responded, “Until they kick me out. I like it here” (5.5). Often those Hispanics who migrate to the United States to earn money to send back home believe, as do many Americans, that all other Hispanic immigrants are just like themselves. States one such male interviewee sending money back to Honduras, “[Hispanics] are coming here looking for the same goal – to make some money so they can return to their country” (7.20). However, studies of migration patterns reveal that a significant number of solo males who come to the United States are busy preparing the way for family to join them (Glascock 1999; Johnson-Webb 1999; Massey 1986). For example, one of the female interviewees explained how her husband began crossing the border to work in California. Eventually, he brought his wife and children with him to California, and after some time, they moved to North Carolina, seeking lower living expenses and higher wages (1.3). This interviewee, a Mexican immigrant, fits the pattern of settlement that Douglas Massey (1986) has found in previous studies. He finds that over time, Mexican migrants cement their social and economic ties to the United States as they bring additional family members, establish networks of American friends, and gain stability and financial independence through employment opportunities.
Immigration to North Carolina and Evolving Housing Requirements

While all are seeking opportunity, the Hispanic interviewees cited various reasons for coming specifically to communities in North Carolina. Some come directly from their home countries to North Carolina because they have friends or family members here. Several newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees cited instances of family and friends helping them to get situated and then themselves helping other Hispanics get settled. Even those in crowded housing suggested that they had often opened the door to another newly immigrated Hispanic friend or couple who were down on their luck. For example, one male interviewee living with six other adults in a three-room trailer explained that he had moved to a new trailer for more space, but then he encountered two fellow Mexicans who needed a place to stay. “As you know sometimes when someone first gets here, they need help. People that did not have a place to stay came and we helped them out. They just arrived [from Mexico] and did not have money for rent…sometimes things like this happen…and one has to help…” (6.4).

Many newly immigrated Hispanics had heard in their home countries that there is ample opportunity for hard work and decent wages in North Carolina. One male interviewee who came straight from Honduras said, “There are jobs [here] in factories, fields, construction, everything. From other people we know that they pay better [here] than in other places” (6.8). Others come to North Carolina after hearing about opportunity while living in another U.S. state. A female interviewee reported, “Before I used to live in Florida, [but] the work was too hard…there are better jobs here and they pay better. There are more factories here” (1.1). Still others suggest that immigration officials are less stringent in North Carolina than in other areas of the U.S., so the area is
less dangerous for Hispanics without sufficient paperwork. One newly immigrated Hispanic male spoke of some Hispanic friends who invited him to join them in moving to Florida to pick oranges. He responded, “‘You [have been] …here longer. You already have something in your country and I don’t have anything yet. The immigration there is hot. If they get me they will send me back’…there is almost no immigration here” (9.11).

Not only has the number of Hispanic immigrants to North Carolina increased over the past ten years, but the working destinations have also brought more newly immigrated Hispanics into regular contact with long-term residents. Initially, Hispanic immigrants were brought into North Carolina as agricultural laborers. They worked in rural areas, lived in barrack-style company housing units, and came into contact with local residents only on the weekends, when they boarded buses to visit the area grocery stores and Wal-mart. According to one long-term resident “Bus loads of ‘em come in up here at the Food Lion to get their groceries…they come up in there in buses” (27.31). While long-term residents found their weekly presence at such stores to be intrusive, the migrants were avoidable. “…[O]n Sundays, there’s probably an average of 500 Mexicans come into [Wal-mart and Food Lion]…You can’t even get in the store…they bus ‘em in…[this occurs] about mid-day Sunday – two or three o’clock” (28.7).

As Hispanic immigrants began moving from migrant field labor to work in plants and factories, they physically moved from isolated, outskirt areas into the centers of communities. Newly immigrated Hispanics continued to branch out in terms of employment and housing, some moving into company-owned units, others into non-company-owned, Hispanic-only trailer parks, and still others into ethnically integrated neighborhoods. According to newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents alike,
the company-owned housing is often substandard. A long-term resident speaks about Hispanics living in a company-owned area: “They live right across the street from [the company.] You ought to see how they live. That’s a shame though how they got ‘em living like that …It’s not up to standard…and they got little young’uns out there too” (24.82-3). Another long-term resident describes the crowding: “[The company] set trailers up for the Hispanics…and if [the trailer has] four bedrooms, four families gonna live in that poor trailer. And they’ll just deduct it from their check” (23.14). Often the non-company owned Hispanic trailer parks are also substandard and crowded. Yet some newly immigrated Hispanics are advancing out of such areas, as others, newly arrived, take their places. In regards to employment, newly immigrated Hispanics today fulfill more than seasonal jobs; now many are carving out futures in their U.S. communities. Thus, both the housing requirements and community involvement of newly immigrated Hispanics, especially those with families, has expanded.

**Finding Housing**

Most of the newly immigrated Hispanics interviewed stated that they relied on friends and family to help them find housing. Both those who came straight from their home countries and those who came via other states often landed first in the homes of friends or family members. One male interviewee in Cabarrus County first arrived in Phoenix from his home country, Mexico. “In Phoenix, we arrived in some friends’ house. They helped us because when you arrive, it’s difficult to get adjusted. And since we could not find work there, we came here to North Carolina where we had some friends. We arrived at their house and they also helped us” (2.2). In other instances, family
members in North Carolina helped their newly immigrated relatives find housing. One female interviewee, who arrived in North Carolina from California with her husband and four children, found it difficult to locate housing until her sister-in-law introduced her to the owner of an apartment complex. “That made it easier for us to rent there…before that we were looking for a place for a while” (3.4). As friends and family have helped them, some newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees also spoke in detail about their attempts to help others, offering to share their small quarters with those newly arrived. One such Honduran interviewee explains how he offered a Mexican couple a place to stay: “I told them to move in with us…they said that they didn’t have money for the rent. I told them not to worry because today I have money and tomorrow I might not have it, and [then they] can help me” (9.3).

Whereas newly immigrated Hispanics might be offered assistance in terms of living with a friend or family member, long-term residents receive family assistance in other ways. For example, some long-term resident interviewees acquired their housing as it was passed down through generations or between family members. One such woman explains that after her grandfather died, she and her family moved into his old house, which is actually owned by her uncle (4). Long-term residents are more likely to have social connections to homeowners and realtors. One male interviewee explains, “A good friend of mine owns the house…the rent is pretty cheap, I would say. I feel like I’m getting a good deal” (26.2). Another male states, “My wife had a friend who was a realtor…she helped to find the house. [My wife] told her what we wanted in this area” (17.13). While long-term residents sometimes credit family and friends with helping
them find housing, they seem more often than newly immigrated Hispanics to use newspaper clippings, general realtors, and “For Rent” signs.

Newly immigrated Hispanics not only lack these social connections to realtors and home owners, but their housing demands are often lower priorities when they first arrive. Having come to North Carolina seeking work, the main concern is initially work and wages. After becoming adjusted to a new life, newly immigrated Hispanics’ housing desires gradually become more important. The Duplin County Hispanic interview data, all from male respondents, reveal the early stages of a pattern of movement from the desire for a mere roof over one’s head to greater desires for space and comfort. One such interviewee came straight from Honduras to live with a brother and some friends in a trailer: “We all slept in a room about [4x6 feet] in one bed. I was not comfortable” (7.2). From there he moved into a trailer with another brother and his wife, where he found more living space. Another male interviewee first moved into a cramped trailer with some friends, then found a tiny room for himself in another friend’s house, and finally looked for a trailer with more space (9). He found a trailer with more space, just four people in three bedrooms. Yet, at the time of the interview, he had recently invited two friends without housing to stay with him. Thus, he was living among six people in a three-bedroom trailer, a situation that most long-term residents would not call “spacious.” He noted that together he and his roommates were looking for “a trailer with a better road and better shape and all of us can move in together” (9.3). All these Duplin County, newly immigrated, solo Hispanic males were living in trailers at the time of interview, with an average of four additional housemates. Of these five Duplin interviewees, three were still living in Magnolia (a municipality with 25.1 percent Hispanic population) in a
dilapidated trailer park area, even though they had bettered their housing since arrival. Several complained about the conditions of the trailer, the lack of drinkable water, the poor roads, and bad relations with the owner. Yet most said it is relatively easy to find such trailers.

On the other hand, there are the four house-dwelling interviewees in Cabarrus County, all of whom have moved up from smaller and less desirable housing. Like the Duplin County Hispanic interviewees, their housing has improved. Moreover, the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees’ housing is generally superior to that of Duplin solo Hispanic males. It is important to keep in mind that the Duplin County Hispanic interviewees had lived in the United States an average of two years, whereas the average for Cabarrus Hispanic interviewees was five years. The additional years result in increased opportunity to gain financial stability and move out of poorer conditions. Furthermore, we must not forget the differences in priority - supporting family here (Cabarrus interviewees) versus supporting family in home country (Duplin County interviewees). Finally, county differences regarding employment and housing opportunities may also be worth exploring.

At the time of interview, Cabarrus County population was two and one-half times larger than Duplin, with a population density six times that of Duplin. In 2000 Cabarrus County reported a 5.1 percent Hispanic population, about one-third the proportion of Duplin County Hispanic population. The ward of Concord (the most populous city within Cabarrus County) with the highest proportion of Hispanics in 2000 had 13.1 percent Hispanic. Whereas Duplin County is not as densely populated, Hispanics constitute a larger proportion of the population, ranging up to 25.1 percent of the population in one
municipality. The housing in Duplin County includes a greater percentage of mobile homes than Cabarrus (33.3 percent and 12.4 percent, respectively), many of which house the Hispanic population. Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanics appear to be more segregated from long-term residents than do Cabarrus County newly immigrated Hispanics. Therefore, it appears that Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanics have less opportunity for community interaction. Also, the proportion of Hispanics in Duplin County may be affecting long-term residents’ reactions to them. For example, studies have shown that an area may accept a handful of “others,” while larger numbers of “others” will instill fears of “taking over” and encourage flight by long-term residents (Oswald 2001; Parrillo 1996). This phenomenon has long been documented in exclusively White areas and is referred to as “white flight” (Frey 1994; Massey and Denton 1993; Teague 1999). The larger proportion of Hispanics in Duplin County may have resulted in similar fears and have caused communities to steer newly immigrated Hispanics into certain Hispanic-only housing areas.

Thus, as Duplin County reports fewer employment opportunities, a lower union presence, and lower weekly wage average than Cabarrus, newly immigrated Hispanics in Duplin may be expected to live in Hispanic-only trailer areas, while they provide a low-wage, cooperative labor force. In Cabarrus County, employment opportunities, wage level, and union presence are stronger. Fewer housing units in Cabarrus than in Duplin are mobile homes and the number of families below poverty level is lower than in Duplin County. Therefore, it follows that newly immigrated Hispanic workers in Cabarrus may become more upwardly mobile, finding themselves financially stable enough to move...
from poor, Hispanic-immigrant areas into more integrated, upper lower-class or even middle class areas.

The Cabarrus County interviewees expressed fewer desires (or perhaps needs) to live among other Hispanics; some even voiced stereotypes against others of their own ethnicity. Yet I did not find this sentiment within the Duplin County Hispanic interviewees. On the contrary, one newly immigrated Hispanic male expressed his view that things were getting better because more Spanish-speaking people were moving into the trailer park areas (10). These comparisons between Cabarrus and Duplin Counties’ newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees, however, must be treated with some caution. As noted previously, the interviews do not constitute a random sample. While Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees were generally more financially stable than their Duplin County counterparts and more integrated with long-term residents, I found three distinctly Hispanic housing areas (two trailer parks and one apartment community), all in poor condition while touring the city of Concord in Cabarrus County with the Director of Human Relations. Therefore, I conclude that while more opportunity for ethnically integrated housing may be available in Cabarrus County, it is still limited.

In addition to the differences noted above, the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees in Cabarrus County all stated that it is getting more difficult to find housing in their areas. To some degree, this may reflect differing percentages of vacant housing units, as Cabarrus County reports only 6.3 percent to Duplin County’s 11.0 percent vacant. One Cabarrus County Hispanic mentioned that it is rare to see “For Rent” signs (3.5). Most also spoke of increasing requirements, noting that one needs a stable job, good credit, and time to find a house. Furthermore, suggestions of racism/ethnicism
include, “Sometimes they don’t want us to fill [out] an application” (5.3). When asked about finding housing, a newly immigrated Hispanic male stated, “Each day is more difficult because…we are not legal here, we do not have papers” (2.3). In comparison, Duplin County Hispanics were divided over the question of whether it is becoming easier or more difficult to find housing. While several replied that it is the same or becoming easier, one interviewee said, “Now it is difficult to find [a place] to live because we [immigrated Hispanics] are so many here already. The trailers and apartments are all taken” (6.7).

Impacts of Other Actors

In looking for and moving into housing, none of the Hispanic interviewees spoke of housing officials, neighborhood organization involvement, or impacts of other actors outside of Hispanic friends. For example, a newly immigrated Hispanic male interviewee states, “If one needs a trailer another person [Hispanic] would help out by telling where one is” (9.7). Although long-term residents generally didn’t speak of housing officials or neighborhood organization involvement in their searches for housing either, one African-American in Cabarrus County did credit a housing authority with helping her find a home. She says, “CDC was a big help to me. It was a little counseling and it showed me that I deserved better than what I had. It gave me self-esteem…It’s dealing with the Housing Authority…they were having a meeting on how to become a home owner…they had some bankers there and she gave me a card and told me if I was interested in it, to give her a call” (11.6-7). While this particular long-term resident was the only one to speak of such assistance, may others mentioned family assistance unlike that which the
newly immigrated Hispanics receive. These long-term residents spoke of housing, the ownership of which was passed down to them from other family members or that other family members sold them. Long-term resident interviewees, therefore, were more likely to be owners and inheritors of housing.

While no interviewees spoke of official housing assistance, several of the Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees did complain about landlord relations. It appears that some landlords have taken advantage of the fact that newly immigrated Hispanics seem to tolerate poor conditions more than long-term residents would. One African-American interview in Cabarrus County speaks about “a certain landlord that [Hispanics] are renting from.” He doesn’t rent to many African Americans, because “[they] do not like the condition of the houses that he rents and they don’t care to deal with him” (15.11). Newly immigrated Hispanics, especially undocumented ones, have a very weak bargaining position with landlords. Playing on new immigrants’ fears and lack of information, landlords may avoid maintenance, refuse to make repairs, and even charge higher rents for poorer conditions (Castells 1983). Similar evidence from rural California suggests that landlords pack 10-20 summer workers from Mexico into two and three-bedroom apartments, charging each worker and generating two to four times the normal rent (Rural Migration News 1996).

Some of the newly immigrated Hispanics’ complaints revolved around physical problems with the trailers and with the roads leading to the trailers, problems that the landlords refused to fix. “The problem is the carpets…they are extremely dirty. [The landlord] does not want to change them. [Another] problem is the water…it has a very bad taste so we buy water in the store…It is [the landlord’s] responsibility to change and
fix what goes wrong in the trailer, but he doesn’t do it. We’ve talked to him, but he says that he doesn’t have the money” (6.2-3). When asked to describe the area where he lives, another newly immigrated Hispanic interviewee’s prevailing thoughts concern the poor road: “I don’t like the street because the road is very bad…I told [the owner] to fix it, but they don’t” (9.1). He also describes the bad water, bad carpet, and “areas where you stand and feel as if you’re going to fall through the floor” (9.3).

Additional complaints dealt with landlord-imposed regulations regarding visitors, cars, and equipment. One Hispanic male interviewee says the landlord has told him not to have friends over: “That is why we prefer to go to our friends house.” In addition, the landlord “is not a very nice person…he doesn’t allow anything…and he doesn’t fix a lot. But since it is his trailer he can take his time. Also he doesn’t like us to have our cars there. I park my car at my brother’s house” (7.5). These regulations sometimes force the interviewees out of their housing. Speaking about his previous housing in another trailer park, one newly immigrated Hispanic man explains, “When I had the job in the ditches, [the landlord] didn’t like it. He didn’t like for me to take all my equipment in the trailer.” So this interviewee would wash his suit and equipment and hang it outside, but the landlord told him “not to put it there outside. I explained to him…but he still did not want it. That’s why I left” (9.7). Another newly immigrated Hispanic interviewee explains that the landlord is friends with American tenants, but is unaccommodating toward him and his trailer-mates, who want to move to another area because of the situation. “I think the landlord is racist. [When we ask him to fix things, he says] if you don’t like it you can move” (7.9). Overall, the conditions of much of the newly immigrated Hispanics’ housing are extremely poor.
Newly Immigrated Hispanics’ Desires

Newly immigrated Hispanics’ dreams and desires for life in general do not vary much from those of long-term residents. The most commonly stated life desires from the Hispanic interviews are: a good job with decent wage, opportunity to improve self and the life of family, education, security, health, and “good papers” so as not to live in fear of immigration officials. Long-term resident interviewees identify the same dreams, except for the last, a desire for “good papers”.

In regards to housing, neighbors, and neighborhoods, we also find that newly immigrated Hispanics desire many of the same features as long-term residents. Interviewees said they most want comfortable and well-kept homes, tranquil surroundings, spacious living area, a yard for children to play in, and security, with affordable housing payments. Newly immigrated Hispanics generally voiced upward mobility desires related to their current situations: those in cramped housing expressed desires for more space; those in trailers generally said they would prefer a house; those who were renting had dreams of owning.

Most long-term residents identify the same housing desires: comfort, tranquility in the neighborhood, room for children to play, and security. Fewer long-term residents than Hispanics state intent for housing and neighborhood change, however. In this regard, long-term residents more often seem to be fulfilled with or at least accepting of their current housing situations. By nature, long-term residents have had a longer time to achieve their housing goals. In addition, more long-term residents than newly immigrated Hispanics are housing owners, some expressing desires to finish mortgage payments. For
example, one long-term resident states that a major goal for her is making the final ten payments on her trailer home (22.33).

Among the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees, there is some variation in the priority of housing desires. Solo males who are working to send money back home, with the goal of returning to the home country, seem to put up with cramped living in trailers if it means saving some money. One such man spoke repeatedly about an unaccommodating landlord who refused to make repairs to his trailer, refused to clean the carpets, and would not allow more than one car in the driveway. Yet, when asked about the “most important thing in a house,” this respondent replied, “For me it’s to not pay too much rent” (7.8). While he desires comfortable housing, this man’s priority is not to live well here and now, but to earn enough money to support his five children and wife in Honduras. The majority of the newly immigrated Hispanic male interviewees indeed were living in rented trailers, while the Hispanic females interviewed were all living in rented houses. Their housing desires reflect their current family situation, and probably their financial situation, as well. Understandably, if one is not sending money outside the country, he/she has more disposable income to meet housing desires. Likewise, a migrant male will personally put up with worse living conditions than those that he would offer to his spouse and children. Thus, it seems that in regards to housing, desires are likely to vary by ultimate goal and the location of family members needing support.

It is important to keep in mind that the trend of Hispanic immigrants as male solo workers has given way to new patterns of Hispanic family migration. Most newly immigrated Hispanic families are young and their dream is to own (not rent) a comfortable and spacious home in a quiet area with a backyard in which their children
can play safely. Asked about her desires, a newly immigrated Hispanic female interviewee with four children states that she wants to live where it is “quiet and pretty,” where “there is not much traffic” and where “my children each have their own room… and a bigger backyard” to play in (3.1-2).

**Newly Immigrated Hispanics’ Fears and Problems**

Although the desires of the Hispanic families making their futures here in the United States often resemble those of long-term residents, nearly all the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees (both those with short and those with long-term plans for a future in the United States) place greater emphasis on security and address more aspects of security than do long-term residents. When long-term residents occasionally speak of security, they generally mention fears about drugs entering the neighborhood. Older interviewees sometimes allude to drugs and lack of respect as problems that the youth culture has brought into neighborhoods. Newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees regularly express security concerns not in terms of neighborhood problems, but on a more personal level. For most newly immigrated Hispanics in the United States, security is both a desire and, due mainly to circumstances of improper documentation, a daily fear. A Hispanic male interviewee summarizes, “We [Latinos] do not have papers and are afraid here…we are always looking for [a way to get a green card]” (6.16). A Hispanic female interviewee who has lived with her family in the United States for 11 years notes, “We do not have [green cards]…we have nothing, nothing” (3.18).

As noted previously, proper documentation requires time, money, and legal assistance, resources that many newly immigrated Hispanics find themselves lacking.
Legal assistance is expensive and uncertain in results. One newly immigrated Hispanic male interviewee tells of his trailer predecessors’ legal efforts: “They supposedly had their social security number, but no [permit]…they asked the lawyer to help them fill out the forms to keep working” but it didn’t work out (8.1). Another newly immigrated Hispanic notes the difficulty with necessary finances: “[The most important thing is] to fix our papers. We were working on that, but sometimes we’re short in cash…[I want to] earn money so I can fix my papers. It is so important – that way I can walk around not afraid anymore” (10.10). Thus, the fears of newly immigrated Hispanics are very different from long-term residents, and the constant fear is likely difficult for many long-term residents to imagine. One newly immigrated Hispanic woman talks about her insecure future: “…people tell us that we can’t get [citizenship]…Nobody knows what is going to happen” (3.8).

On one level, Hispanics’ security fears revolve around racism/ethnicism. A Hispanic male interviewee speaks of his primary desire, security in his home: “…sometimes there are people that, even though you haven’t done anything wrong…sometimes it is racism, well, [I] just [want] a secure place…where nobody bothers you” (2.3). A Hispanic female interviewee mentions her child’s experiences with racism in the schools (3.8). These security fears and experiences with racism/ethnicism are not unique to Hispanic immigrants, but the greater and more constant fear concerns documentation and possible deportation. One newly immigrated Hispanic woman tells a story of immigration officials coming to her workplace and taking people away in trucks: “I told myself that I didn’t want them to take me. Some others also escaped with me. It was a time of a lot of tension, the police took a lot of people. It was very ugly” (3.11).
Long-term residents verify these experiences. For example, a long-term resident describes an Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) search at her workplace. “The INS came in and it was like somebody had been shooting within the plant. [The undocumented Hispanic immigrants] were running and it was like a stampede because they knew they were going to be sent back. [Some were caught] and they were shackled at the plant” (4.20). The fear is constant; according to a newly immigrated Hispanic male, “…we walk around afraid. If immigration finds us…they can send us back” (10.10).

These security fears are complex, as they are connected to education, jobs/promotions, buying homes, healthcare, and workers’ rights and abuses. Not all directly related to housing and neighborhood relations, these fears nonetheless affect newly immigrated Hispanics interaction with community members and their feelings of social, economic, and educational isolation. While not specifying how, one newly immigrated Hispanic claims that not having good papers poses an obstacle to her goals of earning a GED and learning English (1.5). Documentation concerns lead another Hispanic woman to fear her company’s hiring of more Hispanics and, ironically, to fear promotion: “Because there are more Latinos at my work, they are going to start checking [social security numbers]…If I get promoted, I think that they might check my number…wanting to get a promotion, I [might] find myself without a job…I get scared” (5.13). A newly immigrated Hispanic male notes that making large purchases is difficult without proper documentation: “The racism and not having papers make it difficult to go to school, buy a car, a house” (2.11). And finally, as has been long documented (Nessel 2001; Roosevelt et al. 2001; Wilson 2000), I too found within these interviews, immigrant workers’ rights issues. One newly immigrated Hispanic male interviewee tells
of a female Hispanic coworker who was fired when her brother tried to stick up for her rights. He concludes, “We do not have papers and are afraid here. The American has all the rights” (6.16). Thus, we see that the fear over documentation is constant and complex, touching all arenas of newly immigrated Hispanics’ lives in the United States. After the recent terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 the fear and mistrust surrounding proper documentation have only increased.

Stereotypes and Complaints

In regards to Hispanic immigration, I have noted two distinct patterns within the interviews. In Duplin County, the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees are solo males living in crowded trailer parks, which fits the earlier pattern of settlement (Glascock 1999; Johnson-Webb 1999). However, the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviews suggest a different situation, in which entire families are settling in to build a future here in the United States. These Hispanic families break stereotypes of solo males, crowded trailers, and sending money to a home country. These families are in some instances, the second wave, following an earlier wave that fit the first pattern of immigration. For example, one newly immigrated Hispanic female spoke of how her husband was previously one of the solo Hispanic males working in the United States. “My husband was the one that used to come alone, and later [my four children and I] came” (3.3). Now they are building their future here in the United States, and they live among “Americans,” a term many Hispanics use to refer to whites. In describing her desired community, this interviewee states, “…sometimes Latinos fight, sometimes drink too much, play loud music. We [my family] don’t like things like that. It might be nice to
live among Latinos, but we like to live in a quiet environment” (3.5). A Hispanic herself, this woman holds stereotypes of her own ethnicity. And while many long-term resident interviewees also complain about Hispanics’ loud music, drinking, and dirtiness, others note that Hispanic residents are no different from anyone else. A woman in Cabarrus County explains: “So, the majority of them, the Spanish, has moved off of [that] street down onto [another], where it’s quieter…and they want the houses down in there” (16.7). This particular interviewee explains that she is now “disliked in the community” because she sticks up for the Hispanics. She called the police when her neighbors greeted the first Hispanics on their block by throwing bricks at them, and she often argues with other long-term resident that Hispanics “have a right to live wherever they wanna live” (16.8).

This Hispanic defender can generally be described as empathetic, one of three discernable categories I found amongst long-term interviewees. (The other two categories include generally indifferent respondents and then the full-out resentful Hispanic loathers. See Appendix B for race and gender breakdown.) Empathetic respondents do voice some stereotypes about Hispanics, but their overall attitude seems to be, “we are all human.” One such empathetic long-term respondent says, “I think that the majority of people in the United States today are finally realizing, ‘Hey, we’re all people.’” Comically, she adds, “When we die we’re gonna have to live [together] in heaven or hell. We might as well get used to it now ‘cause I don’t’ think God …does that segregation stuff. I just don’t think he does it” (19.13). Many of the empathetic interviewees are African-American females, as are the two respondents quoted above. These interviewees repeatedly make links between the plight of their own race and the struggles of the newly immigrated Hispanics. One such woman speaks about racism her family faced from
whites when they were the first African-American family to move onto the street, comparing it to white and African-American resistance to Hispanics moving into her community. When she hears other African-Americans talking badly about Hispanics, she responds: “How can you say something like that about another human being? Especially, when you think of where you come from…How can you down anybody who’s out here, doing the same thing you’re doing, trying to make a livin’, trying to protect their family?” (18.29). This woman views the Hispanic community as united, working together to help one another; she credits their upward mobility, rising past African-Americans, to hard work. “[Hispanics] work better together, staying with each other. It reminds me of the sixties, when the black people were that united” (18.6). My findings among these interviews are supported by a North Carolina study of attitudes toward the Hispanic influx (Johnson et al. 1999). It reports more negative attitudes from whites than blacks (69 percent to 54 percent) in regards to Hispanics moving into their neighborhoods, and reports more males than females (44 percent to 40 percent) are opposed to an increasing Hispanic population.

The empathetic long-term residents quoted above are not necessarily in the majority within their communities. The other two categories of long-term resident are the indifferent, and the Hispanic-loathers. Indifferent residents basically desire no interaction. An empathetic long-term resident’s explanation of her neighbors’ generally feeling toward newly immigrated Hispanics best illustrates the sentiment of the indifferent category of long-term residents. “It’s basically like, we don’t have to deal with you. Just totally ignore you. You are not a threat. You are just a nuisance” (18.65). This attitude may make Hispanics feel dismissed as inconsequential (Martinez 1993). While not
helpful to community relations, indifferent residents present no direct threat to newly
immigrated Hispanics in their areas. The final category, Hispanic-loathers, does present a
threat. One such long-term resident claims that newly immigrated Hispanics “don’t
bother me” (27.1), yet he blames “oodles of them” for drug problems, torn up
neighborhoods, wasted tax payers’ money, “taking over” neighborhoods and jobs, and
over-reliance on public assistance. His daily sightings of Hispanics driving and walking
past his home nearly infuriate him. This particular long-term resident presents the most
extreme case of hatred found in the interviews. He never addresses Hispanics’ good traits
or achievements.

While not as vociferous in their complaints, other long-term residents also express
resentment. Some African-American interviewees seem dissatisfied by Hispanic
achievement, evidenced over a short period of time.

It’s not fair. With us [African-Americans] being in this country
[as] long as we have and they come six months or a year, and
they get better benefits than [us]…[they] get public assistance,
[then buy] a $50,000 home…new trucks and cars…and it [is]
kind of frustrating when they tell you that and you’ve been
working all these years, struggling for what you can get. (9.23)

Most white interviewees who fall into the resentment category complain about African-
Americans and Hispanics alike, one man even arguing that “those people” are ruining the
country (27). Recurring complaints against Hispanics alone, from white and African-
American interviewees, include: taking jobs, “my” taxes paying for “their” reliance on
public assistance, drug involvement, dirty/nasty homes and yards, junky trucks, crowded
living, and “taking over” grocery stores, DMV offices, public phone booths, and area
stores. Additional stereotypes peg all Hispanics as “illegal” and somehow, therefore, as non-payers of taxes on retail goods and income.

Some of these complaints fall apart even under quick analysis. In regards to Hispanics taking jobs, Oswald (2001) notes, “If the newcomers have been stealing jobs, they have not been taking that many to raise the unemployment figures of native born blacks and whites” (p. 196). Others point out that immigrants are performing work that Americans refuse to do (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2001; Piore 1979). In a recent newspaper article, researchers describe ethnic succession in employment: “We don’t have much evidence of job theft. It looks like whites are moving out, blacks are moving up, and Latinos are filling in at the bottom” (Glascock 2000:1A). Studies find that North Carolina employers act on their perceptions of Latino employees as hardworking and willing laborers, prepared for long term, physically demanding labor (Leiter, Hossfeld, and Tomaskovic-Devey 2001; Hyde and Leiter 2000). Immigrant Hispanic labor in fields, plants, and factories allows Americans to buy goods at cheap prices. Many long-term residents do realize that Hispanics and other immigrants fill a void in our economy. When she hears others complain about “the Mexicans” (a label often used to mean any Latino,) one interviewee responds: “Well, they’re dying here. They’re working in those fields where we won’t work” (24.18). Another summarizes, “They’re the ones who are doing that [hard work] because the average American guy is too good to do [it]” (17.10). Even the Hispanic loathers admit that Hispanic immigrants work extremely hard in jobs that long-term residents refuse. In response to long-term residents who claim that “illegal Mexicans” have forced them out of work, I reply with opposing findings from studies on unauthorized immigration to the United States. For example, Thomas Espenshade (1995)
reports, “there is little evidence that undocumented migrants have negative labor market consequences despite what the general public thinks” (p. 195). He presses further: “the current level of clandestine US immigration may not be far from what society might view as socially optimal” (p. 195). More specific to North Carolina, a previously mentioned study reported that from 1985 to 1990, 82 percent of the state’s immigrant Hispanics were presumably U.S. citizens (Johnson et al. 1999).

Another complaint easily dissembled is the idea that immigrant Hispanics don’t pay taxes on goods. When Hispanics buy from a store, a restaurant, or a car dealership, they pay the same taxes as anyone else. When further questioned about these tax evasions, even the Hispanic loathers dismissed such arguments. In addition to these, it is interesting to note the number of contradictions within one person’s stereotypes. For example, several interviewees complained of “all” Hispanic women taking “their” jobs. Within minutes they might also argue that “all” these Hispanic women are staying home to have babies and not contributing through work outside the home. [As for statistical evidence, North Carolina analysts claim that about 80 percent of Hispanic women in North Carolina are employed (Olaya-Crowley and Torres 2002).]

I have previously addressed the issue of crowded living, noting that it is both expected of newly immigrated Hispanics (it began with American companies and landlords) and, due to finances, often necessary for at least a short period of time. If the wages were higher, newly immigrated Hispanics would be able to afford better housing. As one long-term resident notes, “They live 15 in one apartment…but it seems like a survival thing. You know, to get by” (17.10). The complaints about run-down homes and yards are also complicated. A common stereotype among long-term residents in both
counties was that Hispanic immigrants are “nasty” (4, 13, 26). Similarly, a North Carolina employer study addresses American workers calling Hispanics ‘dirty and filthy’ due to differing cultural practices regarding waste practices. Newly immigrated Hispanics may lack experience with American plumbing capabilities, resulting in some Latinos not flushing toilet paper, and ending with other workers’ complaints about Latinos’ sanitary practices (Leiter et al. 2001). Perhaps it is waste practices in housing that bothers some long-term residents in this study as well; however, most interviewees did not explain “nastiness” to this specificity. One long-term resident’s contradictory complaint actually regards “nasty” cleaning - washing clothes. “We complained about how nasty they are. [Like] trash outside. And then, they’ll make a clothesline and they’ll hang all their clothes on the clothesline” (13.10). Another respondent describes “them Mexicans” as “just nasty people. You know? I mean literally nasty…and their [house and] yard looks like it ought to be condemned or bulldozed or something” (26.6). However, it is difficult to improve your home when the landlord refuses to make repairs and clean the carpets. When one moves into dilapidated filth and nobody cares about making it better, that affects both the renters’ attitudes and capabilities. For example, a group of several newly immigrated Hispanic men in one trailer asked the landlord to clean the carpets. He refused but when pressed, finally presented a small cleaning machine and charged them $40 to use it themselves (7). Needless to say, the men weren’t impressed.

Another complaint surrounding crowded housing is the problem with “junky trucks” filling up the yards. Yet, immigrants need transportation to get to work. A car or truck is a necessary acquisition before one can move upward and out of the crowded housing. Concern over the eyesore of automobile-scattered lawns and concern regarding
the condition of yards is legitimate; yet telling occupants they cannot park at their residence isn’t a solution. While not all of the complaints above are specific to housing, all influence relations with Hispanics. As the Hispanic population (new and long-term residents) grows, the complaints, often ethnocentric and contradictory, will increasingly affect housing.

Hopefully, with experience, some of the stereotypes may be broken down. After all, many interviewees appeared to understand at least some aspect of the struggle that Hispanic migrants face. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, their personal experiences with newly immigrated Hispanics often ran contradictory to stereotypes. Even one Hispanic loather mentioned above for calling all Hispanics “nasty” notes within three sentences of his complaint that “there have been a couple clean ones out in places that I worked” (26.6). In this case, the personal experience is an exception that hasn’t changed his mind. But many other long-term residents have set aside their stereotypes after significant contact with newly immigrated Hispanics. One woman explains why she disliked Hispanics before some families moved into her neighborhood. “I heard so much about how they will kill your dog…and cat…and I thought…they will get more cars. ..I felt like they were gonna be trailer neighbors. But they’re not. They’re really not” (16.10).

Instead, she has found that these new neighbors are very clean. “They’re all picking up trash, the Spanish. Keeping their yards and the area clean…I heard that these people were really terrible. That’s not true” (16.13). Between associations at work or in the neighborhood, most every long-term resident interviewed had met newly immigrated Hispanics who they said were good people. Other times, long-term residents hint at
understanding some of the barriers and fears that newly immigrated Hispanics face. For example, one interviewee who complains about the “little Mexico trailer parks” notes that the housing problems aren’t all due to the residents. “[It] doesn’t relate to once the Hispanics moved there. It relates to the previous person who owned the trailer park. And the filth and garbage and the trailers had windows broken out…and it was just run down. So that’s part of it” (25.10). Similarly, studies of Hispanic immigrant renters suggest that the areas they move into are generally poorer from the outset. In addition, the areas “deteriorate as the landlords [are] able to avoid repairs and maintenance due to the weak bargaining position of the new Latino immigrant-renters” (Castells 1983:130.)

Consideration of structural barriers such as this, combined with personal interaction, is one key to improving inter-ethnic relations. As expected, the more advanced stages of the housing process seem to bring more frequent and personal interaction experiences that displace stereotypes.

Returning to the stereotype of Hispanic solo males living in crowded trailer parks, I have found discrepancies to this image even within the Duplin County interviews. Even among those solo males living in crowded trailers, many spoke of Hispanic families living in their area’s trailers. “We live in a trailer park…There are about five that are families and the rest are occupied by single men” (6.1). In addition to the presence of families among the solo men, it is also important to keep in mind the upward mobility goals of these newly immigrated Hispanics. As opposed to stereotypes that several long-term resident interviewees hold, newly immigrated Hispanics living in these crowded situations are generally looking for more space. Speaking of his prior situation in a crowded trailer, a newly immigrated Hispanic male says, “…we were too many in one
place…that was the problem. Now we are ok. Each one of us has his room” (10.1). The desire for adequate space is evident in Cabarrus County interviews as well. A newly immigrated Hispanic female explains, “Too many people in one house is not comfortable…Even though we sometimes don’t have enough for the bills, we like it just the family in the house” (3.4)

Some newly immigrated Hispanics deal with their community’s stereotypes by avoiding any possible trouble or by ignoring stereotypical comments. A Hispanic male interviewee in Cabarrus says,

My neighborhood [has]…some blacks…and some Americans [whites]. Right now we do not have any problems with them…because we don’t provoke anybody. Some get mad because of loud noises, they can’t sleep or because people [visit] too late. But we avoid all this, we know that there are sensitive people, racist, so we decided that in order to avoid any problems it would be better to be quiet and avoid conflict. (2.4)

Long-term residents agree that they often prefer to avoid contact with newly immigrated Hispanics. For example, a long-term resident interviewee describes her community’s attitude: “It’s basically like we don’t have to deal with [the Hispanics]. Just totally ignore them…[they] are just a nuisance” (18.65). A newly immigrated Hispanic woman from Cabarrus ignores and tries to break the image of “bad Mexicans.” She explains that she works with a lady who “pretends to be a friend [but] she speaks bad about Mexicans…One has to try to still be a friend of the person, maybe they have had bad experiences with Latinos and that is why they are like that…we have to show them that we are not like they think we are” (5.8). While many instances of racism/ethnicism occur at work or for children at school, these experiences are not left behind when one comes home to his/her community. Another newly immigrated Hispanic appears to understand
that stereotypes are harmful and that people should be judged on an individual level. She says, “…not all of us are the same. Some Americans [whites] are good people, others do not like us. And some blacks do not like us either…[but] some are good…We try to have a good relationship with people to avoid problems” (3.7) This Hispanic interviewee would be classified with other long-term residents as an empathizer. These empathetic community members are able to appreciate “others” as different, but human. This appreciation may both stem from and lead to interaction with others; it is one key to community improvement.

**Barriers to Communication: Language and Trust**

In addition to stereotypes, another barrier to interaction involves communication. Many long-term residents, both empathizers and loathers, voiced concerns regarding newly immigrated Hispanics’ knowledge of English. The complaints are complex: some revolve around the new immigrants not being able to speak and understand English, but more irritation stems from the common belief that new immigrants know more English than they admit, using claims of ignorance to their advantage. The first complaint, lack of speaking and comprehensive ability, may discourage some newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents from communicating with one another. One long-term resident explains: “They mostly stay to themselves, because I guess they realize they can’t speak English” (11.36). Yet, most newly immigrated Hispanics interviewees expressed a strong desire to learn English, especially those planning futures in the United States. For example, one newly immigrated Hispanic female, asked about the most important thing she hopes to achieve in the United States, responded, “that I get my GED and learn
English” (1.5). Likewise, race and ethnicity experts note that Latino immigrants want “to learn English, to become Americans, and to be less insulated in ethnic communities” (Hochschild 1999:544). Parillo (1996) suggests that today’s immigrants desire to learn English, and do so perhaps more quickly than immigrants of the past, due to mass media.

Yet, language is not acquired over night, and while some long-term residents express a desire to learn Spanish for communication with new neighbors, others hold adamantly to the belief that English is the only language for the United States. Explains one long-term resident, “I wasn’t going to cater to them. I feel if you live in America, speak my language” (4.22). Another long-term resident expects new immigrants to learn English quickly – “It is not our responsibility to provide them with interpreters” – but she doesn’t want them to take English classes at work during paid hours. While noting that Hispanics are “hard working people, dependable and reliable,” she expresses indignation at the idea of her co-workers remaining on the clock during language lessons. “The mill itself will take time from the job and have someone come and teach them English…and these people are getting paid while they’re learning English. I don’t understand that!” (25.12).

The second complaint from long-term residents is that newly immigrated Hispanics try to deceive them, claiming they don’t speak English when they do. “If they know English, they won’t let you know it” says one long-term resident (18.33). This often-cited frustration involves issues of comprehension and trust. In regards to the language, many new immigrants comprehend more English than they are able to speak. A few long-term residents realize this; speaking of a co-worker one woman says, “She speaks very little English, but she can understand a lot more than she can speak. And I
believe that totally because I understand a lot more Spanish than I can speak” (19.30). In addition to fears regarding ability, newly immigrant Hispanics may hesitate to speak English with someone they don’t know and trust. Many of the empathetic long-term residents noted this need for trust. Addressing Hispanics in her community, one woman says, “I don’t know if you’re over here illegally or not, but you deserve everything that you worked for. That’s the way I feel. If I could just get them to understand that. I’m not gonna hurt you. I want to help to understand” (16.43). Another long-term resident works part-time interpreting and providing assistance to newly immigrant Hispanics in her area. Even without the language barrier, she notes that lack of familiarity and trust can be a problem. Immigrants often face “the problem of having to be able to trust someone. There’s a lot of people that interpret, but yet they don’t deal straight with [newly immigrant Hispanics]” (21.11).

Formal interpreters provide limited assistance to a community. In neighborhoods, it is most often children and willing adults who make attempts at communication. Some long-term residents state that in terms of neighbor relations, a good attitude and body language can compensate for lack of language skills. “Most of us could not communicate verbally, but sometimes it’s expressions and handshakes. You know people understand this whatever language,” explains one long-term resident (18.62). However, most interviewees noted that communication fears result in less interaction among neighbors. For example, one long-term resident states that in her neighborhood the Hispanics “don’t know what the people are talking about in English. And the people don’t know they the [Hispanics] are talking about in Spanish. And they maybe think they’re picking at them. Or if blacks think they’re picking at them. So they stay in their own group” (11.36). As
newly immigrated Hispanics acquire language skills and become more involved with long-term residents, their relations may improve. As one long-term resident points out, “Once they are able to communicate, [long-term residents] learn that a lot of [newly immigrated Hispanics] are no different than we are...communication helps dissolve the myths and generalizations” (21.77).

Ethnic/Racial Character of Neighborhood

The Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees spoke more about the ethnic character of their neighborhood and their relations with neighbors than did Duplin County Hispanic interviewees. It appears that they have more neighborhood experiences due to their family make-up and their location within more integrated communities. In regards to family make-up, most of the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees spoke of their children’s experiences with racism while relating with other neighborhood and school children. “There are sometimes problems with the black children [in my neighborhood] because they insult my children,” said one newly immigrated Hispanic woman (1.3). Possibly due to the problems she sees her children face, she does not seek out relationships with her neighbors. “I only say hello to them. Sometimes they smile and answer, sometimes they do not. It is always like this with both [white and black neighbors]” (1.3). Two other newly immigrated Hispanic females say they advise their children to ignore the racism. When one Hispanic interviewee’s son talks about insults from “some black girls” at school, his mother explains, “Well, there is racism but I do not pay attention to it. If they are mean to me, it is ok. I ignore them” (3.11).
Whereas the rural Duplin County Hispanic interviewees appear to live mainly among other Hispanics, the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees describe more urban neighborhoods in which they are the minority. A newly immigrated Hispanic male in Cabarrus describes his neighbors: “Some are blacks, and on the other side of the house some Americans.” Another newly immigrated Hispanic female in Cabarrus notes that she and one other family are the only Hispanics in an area of “mainly Americans” (3.1). Long-term resident interviewees often suggested that they prefer newly immigrated Hispanics to keep to themselves. Recognizing their minority status along with community members’ hesitancy toward interaction with them, the newly immigrated Hispanics sometimes expressed feelings of social isolation. A newly immigrated Hispanic in Cabarrus describes his general experiences: “…more doors are closing for us and we are becoming alienated…each day is more difficult” (2.3).

These newly immigrated Hispanic experiences of long-term residents ignoring them are verified by many long-term resident interviews. Asked about Hispanics in her neighborhood, one Duplin County woman responds as if interaction is not wanted: “[The Hispanics] don’t bother anybody” (24.5). When asked about relations with Hispanics in the neighborhood, even a Cabarrus County community association leader acknowledges the lack of interaction: “The majority of the time, we just pass each other and don’t say ‘hi’” (15.7). Explains a newly immigrated Hispanic woman, the community “is not very close. Here, once you have your job, you just do your things alone because here, nobody helps you” (3.3). Yet this same interviewee describes the people living around her as nice. “Sometimes they give us rides when we need to go somewhere…[some] want to speak Spanish like we want to speak English. So we keep trying” (3.7). Thus, the
immigrant Hispanic interviewees have mixed experiences. And while one might expect that the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees, living in more integrated communities, to have better or more extensive relations with neighbors, this does not appear to be the case.

In fact, during the past two years, Cabarrus County’s newly immigrated Hispanic population has grown. It appears that Hispanics are now more segregated in the community than they had been previously. While on a recent tour of Concord (the largest city within Cabarrus County, population 56,000 with a 7.8 percent Hispanic/Latino population according to Census 2000,) I noticed some ethnically mixed neighborhoods, but I also found three distinct areas of Hispanic-only housing. Of these, two areas consisted of crowded, dead-end areas (including cul-de-sacs and neighborhoods with only one entry/exit road) of dilapidated trailers, and the third was an apartment complex. The most dilapidated conditions of all housing in Concord existed in the two Hispanic dead-end areas. The information from this study (which I acquired from a physical tour of Concord, first-hand discussions with researchers and a first-hand interview with Cabarrus County Human Relations Council Director, and the second-hand interviews) suggests that ethnically integrated housing leads to better conditions for newly immigrated Hispanics and as a result, for the entire community. It its logical to propose that interaction stems from opportunity, which has a basis in spatial arrangement. This study suggests that newly immigrated Hispanic concentration in dead-end housing areas leads to lesser interaction among the newly immigrated and long-term residents. From the material within these interviews and from sources of scholarly literature (Patchen 1999; Hyde and Leiter 2000; Torres 2000) we find that negative stereotypes and little empathy
are byproducts of segregated housing. The concept of ethnic integration as key to promoting good relations between new immigrants and long-term residents is quite controversial in the literature (Bach 1993; Wilson 1978). Olzak (1992) notes that competition theorists claim that desegregation causes ethnic conflict, not increased cooperation. However, what I have found in this study supports the argument for increased and frequent interaction.

Alongside integration, education/support groups for newly immigrated Hispanics would serve to improve newcomer adjustment and better community relations. When asked about the Hispanic community in each of their counties, most interviewees cited little or no experience with formal organization. While interviewees in each county mentioned the opportunity to meet with other Hispanics at Spanish language masses, none of them participated in the church services. A female interviewee in Cabarrus noted, “The church is small and gets full… I don’t like to take my kids because they suffer because of the heat” (5.13). In Duplin County the men mentioned a soccer league and meeting Hispanics in Mexican stores. Most of the Duplin County Hispanic interviewees mentioned the help of one Hispanic leader in their area. They expressed gratitude for his friendship and help in finding jobs and housing. “He helps a lot of people…he is the only one that helps us” (6.18). Other than this one Hispanic leader in Duplin, none of the interviewees knew of organizations to help Hispanics. Interestingly, and perhaps for lack of understanding, their feelings about the value of such an organization seemed to vary.

While one Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanic said it would be nice for the Hispanic community to be united, most of the other solo men did not want to get together, stating they had no time to socialize. Because their main priority is to earn
wages to send home, most of these interviewees appear to work, then rest, then work again. One newly immigrated Hispanic male explained, “I got here the 29th of May and started the job the 1st of June. I have not rested yet. I have not gone out yet” (10.10). The situation for Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees appears different, as they are making a future here in the United States. These interviewees suggested that Hispanics sometimes get together at parties, church, or at a park. One spoke of her desire to see a Hispanic center come into her area. “I would like to know if there are any Hispanic centers that can help us get oriented. Maybe there are some in Charlotte but here there aren’t any” (3.19).

In considering Hispanic organization and the differing amounts of interest in such, it may be helpful to examine intra-ethnicity statistics. The Duplin County Hispanic interviewees, none of whom expressed desire for organizing, are all Hondurans, although Hondurans constitute only 15 percent of the Hispanic population in that county according to Census 2000. The Cabarrus County interviewees, who expressed more interest, are among Mexican immigrants, whose country of descent includes 78 percent of Hispanics in that county. Overall, North Carolina Census data suggest a Hispanic breakdown of 65 percent Mexican, 8 percent Puerto Rican, 2 percent Cuban, and 25 percent “Other.” This great diversity often results in fewer similarities among Hispanics than non-Hispanics recognize (Torres 2000). The complexity of Hispanic ethnicity is significant when research and policy aim to bring different sectors of a community into collaboration. It would be naïve for long-term residents and community leaders to expect newly arrived Hispanics to easily form a cohesive group.
Role of Children in Ethnic/Racial Interaction

Throughout the interviews with newly immigrated Hispanics and long-term residents alike, it became very apparent that children play an important role in breaking stereotypes and opening lines for communication. At work, long-term residents and newly immigrated Hispanics come into contact through necessity, often working side-by-side. In neighborhoods, however, it is often the children who begin inter-ethnic play and eventually introduce parents to one another. One long-term resident says, “…there’s not a lot of interaction with [the Hispanics]” but she does “notice that the children get along pretty good” (15.8). Speaking of her Hispanic neighbor, one woman explains: “I got to know her children. They would come over and play with my kids. And that was the beginning of me becoming aware of Hispanics” (12.4). Another long-term resident notes the importance of schools for ethnic and racial integration. “You need interaction…and that’s where it’s gonna come from - in school. Because we are segregated from each other” (15.21). One long-term resident explains how her granddaughter helped break stereotypes about newly immigrated Hispanics. The granddaughter, working with Hispanic friends on a school project, said, “[The Hispanic kids] are nice…and they study at the library.” When the long-term resident expressed great surprise, her granddaughter retorted, “Well, grandma, they’re not dumb” (16.19). The schools provide a means for interaction and for improved language skills. Therefore adult neighbors often use the children to communicate with one another. For example, one long-term resident explains how she and her Hispanic neighbor sent messages through the children regarding the borrowing of a lawn mower. Her newly immigrated Hispanic neighbor’s child “came over and said, ‘Do you need a lawn mower? Poppy will let you borrow ours’”(12.5).
Not only is it often easier communicating with children, but some adults also have more empathy for children than for their immigrant parents. For example, one interviewee describes the fear and frustration non-English speaking children must face when they arrive in the United States. “How do you communicate? That’s a scary thing. That you’ve got these kids in a strange environment among strangers and they’ve got to be scared to death. Gotta be scared” (12.10). While not all newly immigrated Hispanic children feel that they fit in well in ethnically integrated neighborhoods or at school, as evidenced by several comments from Hispanic interviewees (1, 2, 3), many do make some friends of other races. According to one newly immigrated Hispanic female, her children “have friends of all races” (8). A long-term resident male notes that Hispanic immigrant children pick up language skills more quickly and seem to have fewer communication problems. Speaking about his children’s Hispanic friends, he states: “They come here. They play together. And I don’t see that it’s a problem” (28.35).

Another long-term resident summarizes, “It’s not the kids that’s the problem. It’s the grown people that are the problem. Kids will get along with anybody” (24.65). Because children are our future leaders, and they appear to have increased interaction resulting in fewer stereotypes about “others,” the prospect for better inter-ethnic relations in the future is promising.

Neighborhood Change and Movement

The newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees had many experiences with changes of housing, even during a few years’ time. The movement was generally upward, with Hispanics moving into more spacious housing with fewer occupants. One newly
immigrated Hispanic male who had been in the United States for three years had lived in three places, always looking for “more space so I could live better” (9.5). A newly immigrated Hispanic female explains that she, her husband, and two children originally lived with her husband’s friend until “his friend couldn’t pay for the trailer anymore and my husband thought they were going to lose the trailer and have bad credit, so he decided to move…The house now is better because it is a house and not a trailer” (1.1). Another newly immigrated Hispanic male spoke of having to move from a friend’s home when additional family members arrived.

These experiences of moving when others arrive, moving often, and generally upward demonstrate a phenomenon that the Cabarrus County Human Relations Council Director has noted. He explains that when immigrant Hispanics first arrive in the county, they often live many to one housing unit, usually a rented trailer or house. All those living together pool their resources, and after an individual or couple has worked for a certain amount of time and contributed to the pool, they are given an amount of money which allows them to move out on their own and purchase a used vehicle. This is a cycling process, with newly arrived Hispanics moving in while more adjusted and financially secure Hispanics move out and upward. The director explains that this cycling process is an example of Hispanics in Cabarrus County helping one another. In general, it may be that the denser the Hispanic settlement and the more segregated the living area, the more we find newly immigrated Hispanics relying on one another for assistance. The interviewees living in more racially integrated areas (more distanced from other Hispanics) spoke less of receiving and giving assistance to other Hispanics than did the Hispanic interviewees living in predominantly Hispanic areas.
In both counties, however, long-term resident interviewees noted that Hispanics seem to assist one another in gaining upward mobility. A long-term resident in Duplin County explains: “They’ll all live together. And then the next thing you know, they have moved out [and up]. They have bought them something” (24.17). Several newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees in both counties also spoke about providing this type of assistance to one another, in regards to housing, transportation, and employment.

While these newly immigrated Hispanic-housing areas provide a means for rapid advancement, to stay indefinitely in crowded, inadequate housing would be far from ideal. Not only are the conditions of the Hispanic-only trailer parks very poor, but they also contribute to long-term residents’ negative stereotypes regarding the Hispanic culture in general.

The predominantly Hispanic areas themselves are a relatively new creation, having formed as more Hispanics moved into these counties over the past ten years. One Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanic equates the increase in the number of Hispanics to his area with success. “Before there weren’t many [Hispanics] in the zone where I live. Now there are a lot of trailers. There are more people, so this means that it’s gotten better…more people is better since we don’t speak English” (10.4). Yet it is precisely this increase that bothers many non-Hispanic long-term residents, and results in complaints of Hispanics “taking over” (22.7) and descriptions of areas as “really saturated with Mexicans” (17.39).

In regards to further movement, some newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees were looking for nicer, more spacious housing. These interviewees tended to have been in the area for a shorter time than those who stated that they would only consider moving
if they were to find a better job in another area. A Cabarrus County newly immigrated Hispanic explains, “Maybe if I find another job and another place to live with better conditions, then it will be logical to move. But, if that doesn’t happen, I’m fine where I am” (2.6). The Cabarrus County newly immigrated Hispanic women with families did not express an intention of moving, and several noted that housing was becoming more difficult to find. This is likely due to the fact that they generally had nicer homes than solo Hispanic male interviewees and that they lived in more integrated, middle-class areas. In considering these issues, it is important to keep in mind that the newly immigrated Hispanic female interviewees are more financially secure, having followed their husbands to the United States or having had the resources to come together. They have generally lived in the United States longer than the solo Hispanic males interviewed. The solo males have stated that they cannot afford to bring family to the United States and that their goals are to make money to send home to support that family. They generally live with other solo male Hispanic friends and extended family members, often in very low class, segregated housing.

The future of Hispanic immigration includes both those who plan to settle permanently in the United States and those who arrive with shorter-term plans to make money and return to their home countries. Neither category of immigrant seems to be displacing long-term residents as evidenced in these interview data. While several long-term residents spoke of Hispanics “taking over” specific housing areas, when questioned further they generally explained that long-term residents had moved out of the area before new immigrants moved in. A long-term resident in Cabarrus County explains one such occurrence: “There’s another community that was all black. And now it seems to be
all Hispanic. I believe they had an episode of drugs and stuff like that and African-American families moved out. And whenever the African-Americans moved out, then that’s when the Latinos started to move in” (15.10-11).

In another part of Cabarrus County, newly immigrated Hispanics have moved into the poorer part of a previously African-American dominated area. The community has “ kinda evened out some [with] the Hispanics [moving into] the area that we call the ‘bottom.’ That’s mostly Hispanic now…A lot of the African-Americans down that way have found a new ground or slightly different areas to stay in. Some are moving to other parts of [the community] and others are just moving out” (4.4-5). In Duplin County, some long-term residents noted similar occurrences of replacement, not displacement. For example, one long-term resident spoke of change in his area with more minorities entering the neighborhood. “It’s recently become more diverse. Let’s say in the past seven years. Before it was blacks and whites…and now it has other ethnic groups” (17.3). He later elaborates, “Some [white people] moved away. But, the majority stayed” (17.11).

Other Duplin County interviewees spoke of slightly different patterns of movement and change. For example, one long-term resident explained how a parcel of private land with two trailers (both long-term residents) had grown into a fifty-trailer immigrant Hispanic community. “When I first moved there was only two trailers out there…[then] the man that the land belonged to, he started sittin’ out trailers for people that couldn’t afford that large, high payment. So then he started renting to a lot of Hispanics, and he’s got about fifty trailers out there now…with maybe [only] five Americans” (23.4). This long-term resident implies that trailers offer a less expensive
housing choice for many newly immigrated Hispanics. Judging from many references to Hispanics in trailer parks, it appears that long-term residents are increasingly associating newly immigrated Hispanics with trailer parks. With regard to displacement in Duplin County, only one woman mentions this phenomenon. She describes a street of Hispanic homes and explains, “They were all black before. The [African-American] families weren’t paying rent, so the man put them out and the Mexican people that moved in were willing to pay the rent” (24.19-20).

**The Future of Hispanic Immigration**

While some solo Hispanic males will continue coming to the United States in search of short-term wages, the future of Hispanic immigration may more closely resemble the pattern of Hispanic family settlement, as we have found in some of the interviews with women in Cabarrus County. Researchers agree that more Hispanic immigrants than ever before are now settling down permanently in North Carolina (Massey 1986; Johnson-Webb 1999). One specific interview may provide a unique glimpse into what this future settlement will look like. Among the 27 interviews, one male interviewee fits neither the category of newly immigrated Hispanic nor non-Hispanic long-term resident very well. He is a long-term resident Hispanic, Texas born of Mexican-American parents. This man has been living in Duplin County for about nine years, long enough to have witnessed the influx of newly immigrated Hispanics to his area. While long-term resident Hispanics have been present in the United States since its founding, amongst these interviews and within these rural counties of North Carolina, this Hispanic man’s long-term status is unique. Thus, his unique position in neither, yet
both categories affords him a special vantage point. Around 1993 “I noticed [Latino immigrants coming in] …And that’s something that the area that I live in was completely taken by surprise at it. And they still don’t know what to make of it. It’s something strange to ‘em” (20.10).

This interviewee himself had been treated oddly when he first moved into the area – “[people] couldn’t quite make out what I was” – but he now notes that things have gotten better and that more people know him. “Before they just tended to mind their own business and [they thought] maybe [I would] go away. But now they’ll talk or wave or whatever. I say, generally it’s getting better” (20.14). This anomalous interviewee readily admits that being married to Duplin County native, white wife helped him to become accepted within the community. “Overall, I’ve been accepted pretty well in the community. Mostly, I guess because of my wife and her relatives” (20.11). In addition, he notes the role that children may play for future settling Hispanics: “My daughter went to the school out here. So, she met quite a few friends who live in the area. Through her, I guess you could say our presence is generally well known” (20.14). This important role of children in the integration process has been previously noted.

In addition to noting that people are friendlier and that Hispanics seem to be making inroads into the local economy, this interviewee also talks about his home and possessions. For Hispanics who do carve out their futures in the United States, their financial stability will likely improve, at least to a degree. The long-term resident Hispanic owns his own home, having progressed from living in a trailer at one time. He mentions his pianos, organs, grandfather clocks and a lot of other possessions that he enjoys having in his home, which he was enlarging at the time of interview. Like many of
the newly immigrated Hispanics, he sees the American dream within the grasp of his child. His aspirations for his daughter include college and even greater success than he has seen. Some scholars argue that immigrant children face a second-generation decline due to differences in opportunity and work ethic (Gans 1992). Yet, this long-term Hispanic views the future more positively, as do other researchers (Alba 1990). They argue that following the ‘American Dream,’ the children of immigrated Hispanics will likely have more opportunities in the United States than did their parents.

However, with such a large Hispanic influx, the anomalous Hispanic interviewee does find some long-term residents becoming frustrated. He comically explains that one long-term resident “thinks that everybody in the world speaks English, except …[those] Hispanics [that speak a] different language [just] to confuse him…” (20.10). It is important to keep in mind that this example comes from Duplin, the county of North Carolina with the highest population of Hispanics – 15.1 percent in the 2000 Census. This interviewee speaks of Mexican restaurants springing up (20.7) and of seeing Hispanics in the shopping malls. However, as a long-term resident, his main clue that Hispanics were moving into the area (not visiting) was seeing them at the grocery stores. “That’s, by the way, the first indication that the people get that there’s new people in the area, is the grocery store… when you see someone in the grocery store, then you know that something else is happening” (20.12). From a long-term resident point of view, he explains, “…for the residents out here, [the Hispanic is] someone that wasn’t usually seen there before… it’s just sort of closer to home too” (20.13).

Maybe because of his unique position, this interviewee sees the influx of Latinos in a positive light. He notes that people in the community are getting over their shock of
seeing so many Latinos and they are welcoming the increased business and new presence of dedicated workers. Speaking of the newly immigrated Hispanics, he claims that community people say “that they’re a hard working lot. And they try to learn…and most of them are pretty honest and easy going” (20.15). His perception of the impact of increasing numbers of Hispanics in the community is generally positive. If his perception is accurate, the long-term future of Hispanic settlement in the United States may be more or less rosy. But it is important to remember that this interviewee has greater socioeconomic status than most newly immigrated Hispanics. Obstacles such as ethnic conflict and stereotypes will likely pose problems in the future for newly immigrated Hispanics.

CONCLUSION

Analytical Framework and Findings

The four-stage analytic scheme that I outlined earlier has proven useful for exploring newly immigrated Hispanics’ experiences in housing and neighbor relations. Breaking the over 1500 pages of interviews into more manageable pieces, I began with the newly immigrated Hispanic interviews. I added to and revised categories as I coded the data, then compiled excerpt files and composed memos on various topics related to both preconceived and revised categories. While the newly immigrated Hispanic interviews did not yield information regarding every subcategory (review pages 23-24), the interviews did address all four main categorical components: looking for housing; entering housing; community integration; and movement/change. I also incorporated in the memos my minitheories regarding causes of similarity and variation among newly
immigrated Hispanic respondents. Overall, the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees did not report frequent or meaningful interactions with long-term residents, thus the stage of community integration was brief or barely existent. This finding may be related to the small number of Hispanic interviewees and/or the average length of Hispanic interview (discussion to follow), as I did find more instances of interaction within the larger number of longer interviews with long-term residents. The lack of newly immigrated Hispanics’ references to inter-ethnic cooperation and housing integration may also reflect the actual or perceived reactions of long-term residents to new immigrants in these two North Carolina counties.

Having completed initial analysis of the newly immigrated Hispanic interviews, I next divided the long-term residents by county: Duplin versus Cabarrus. Beginning with the Cabarrus County interviewees, I followed the same process above in regards to coding and category revision. The long-term resident interviews yielded information on various topics, incorporating some of the same subcategories as the newly immigrated Hispanic interviews, as well as some additional subcategories. Again, the long-term resident interviews addressed all four main categories, allowing me to make comparisons between the two groups as well as to better understand the long-term resident point-of-view. I made these comparisons and considered the causes of variation and similarity while expanding upon the newly immigrated Hispanic memos and while composing memos on new topics, such as long-term residents’ stereotypes of newly immigrated Hispanics.

Moving from Cabarrus County data, I next tackled the Duplin County long-term resident interviews and continued the above process of coding, composing memos, and
integrating the new material. During this stage of local integration and the process of memo writing, I began to find instances (mostly within the long-term resident interviews) of increased interaction contributing to more positive attitudes toward newly immigrated Hispanics. Looking back to my original schema [ 1) looking for housing, 2) finding housing, 3) community integration, and 4) movement/change,] I realized that the majority of the positive attitudes were centered around stage three, community integration. Long-term residents reporting a greater frequency of interactive experiences voiced fewer stereotypes and less resentment than did long-term residents citing little inter-ethnic experience. These benefits might have been even greater if actual housing integration had been greater.

These findings supported my expectations regarding stereotypes. Some initial stereotypes were positive, but the majority of long-term residents reported negative stereotypes of newly immigrated Hispanics, especially at the stages when newly immigrated Hispanics were looking for and moving into new housing (stages 1 and 2). However, these stereotypes began giving way to actual experience in those instances where long-term residents found themselves to be neighbors with newly immigrated Hispanics (stage 3). The breaking of stereotypes was related not only to inter-ethnic housing integration, but more closely tied to actual experience, such as frequent conversations across yards, children playing together, and working together on community issues. This finding emphasizes the importance of frequent and meaningful interaction toward shared rewards, rather than mere spatial integration.

Finally, I entered the fourth analytical stage and began working on the overall framework, organizing the various memos into chronological sequence. I found my four
preliminarily outlined categories (looking for housing; entering housing; community integration; and movement/change) to generally cover the interview data in a logical fashion. However, within the newly immigrated Hispanic interviews, I also found important information regarding reasons for immigration to the United States, and more specifically to communities in North Carolina. As suggested in the “Background and Significance” section of this thesis, I believe that these topics deserve consideration; thus, I incorporated reasons for immigration at the very beginning of analysis. While various sections of the remainder of the analysis are overlapping and therefore, chronologically interchangeable, I attempted to follow a straightforward path through the data. As anticipated, the fourth stage of change and movement cycles back into the first stage of looking for new housing. However, as increasing numbers of newly immigrated Hispanics become long-term residents, further research and analysis will be necessary.

For Further Research

As discussed in previous sections of this thesis, I utilized several variables including gender, ethnicity, county, social location, length of residence, and general life goals while making comparisons within the interview data. Further research might include an additional variable, skin color. As noted in the Background and Significance section, prior studies support evidence of skin color-based access to housing, with non-white Hispanics found to be less successful than white Hispanics in their efforts to settle into predominantly white housing areas (Alba and Logan 1993; Rosenbaum 1996). With only nine newly immigrated interviewees, and limited information regarding skin color, I
was unable to pursue color-based housing access within this study. A variable that I did utilize as a comparative element in the analysis was county.

While I expected county to be an important factor in newly immigrated Hispanics’ experiences in housing and neighbor relations, I found that general life goals were more often the differentiating factor between interviewees. I perceive general goals to include: ultimate settlement destination (home country versus United States); location of nuclear family members; ultimate destination of wages earned; and present priorities. County encompasses many of the comparative elements listed above. The Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees were all solo males, renting trailer parks, earning wages to send to nuclear family members in their countries of origin. From the interviews, it appeared that at least two of the Duplin County newly immigrated Hispanics had traveled to their current location together, having worked together in a previous job. At least three of these interviewees also appeared to be living in the same trailer or a nearby trailer.

By contrast, the majority of the Cabarrus County newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees were females, renting houses (not trailers), and living with their husbands and children here in the United States. The fact that the Cabarrus County Hispanic interviewees were more financially stable and more often living in ethnically integrated housing areas, appeared to be due not to county but to general life goals. However, the nature of Cabarrus County’s economy (historically industrial versus Duplin County’s historically agricultural economy) may play a role in settlement and housing options. Cabarrus County is more densely populated; therefore, Cabarrus County Hispanics may be more visible to long-term residents than their Duplin County counterparts. Because of
closer quarters, Cabarrus County may also present more opportunity for inter-ethnic interaction. These county characteristics noted, overall I found the county differentiation to be lacking. In addition, the number of interviews (9 total newly immigrated Hispanic) did not lend itself to meaningful county sub-samples of Hispanic interviews. With several of the Duplin Hispanic interviewees having a common history and living nearby to one another, I also found it inappropriate to place great emphasis on county differences. Therefore, while I did occasionally utilize county as a comparative variable, I often found other variables to be more significant for the analysis.

My recommendation for future research would be to use random sampling within counties of interest, with a greater total number of newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees. Having noted that some of the newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees in Duplin County were living together or in nearby trailers and that they had common experiences, I should mention that several of the long-term resident interviewees also appeared to know one another well. For example, two of the Duplin County long-term resident interviewees were living and working together. Information from other interviews (in both counties) suggested interviewee relationships to common community leaders, leading me to question whether the number of empathetic respondents was inflated by community leaders’ choices of whom to have interviewers contact. Future studies should involve randomly selected interviewees (both long term resident and newly immigrated Hispanic) and a greater total number of newly immigrated Hispanic interviewees. I believe with these design improvements, it would be more appropriate to utilize county as a comparative variable.
A limitation of the study which I discovered during my analysis, was the selection and use of the words “community,” “area,” “zone,” “neighborhood,” and “part of town” in the interviews. Competing or contrasting notions regarding the definitions of each word may have affected the quality of the data. Respondents may have understood and described to interviewers very different spatial locations in answering questions about their location, with each respondent having a different understanding of the question at hand. It is impossible to know what definitions respondents’ understood when asked to describe their area/community, especially in the very rural county of Duplin, where the nearest home might be several miles away. In attempting to select a representative word for use in this study, I considered that “zone” may carry political and legal weight. “Area” is rather imprecise, and “street” is spatially exclusive. With regard to “neighborhood,” there is a possible urban bias suggesting a more spatially-organized, distinct area of homes. After careful consideration, I chose to use the word “community” and I have defined it at the outset of this study as the spatial location of housing that is approximately within walking distance of one’s home. For future research, it might be useful to pre-test the use of these different words and ask respondents what they understand the interview questions to be concerned with. For example, one might ask, “When I ask you to describe your ‘community’, what area comes to mind?” The same type of question could be used at the beginning of each interview, or a definition could be provided to interviewees. Before undertaking further research, it would be important to consider contrasting definitions and vocabulary selections and to assess the variation among understandings of key words both within and between categories of respondents.
Another limitation of the study was the lack of questioning surrounding structural limitations of the community and the impact of other actors on finding housing and community relations. With regard to structural limitations, it was unclear whether long-term residents blamed newly immigrated Hispanics for “taking over” areas, while not realizing the lack of available housing stock. In addition, few questions were asked regarding whether long-term residents felt the new immigrants were to blame for community problems, many of which generally exist before new immigrants arrive (Bach 1993). In terms of other actors, besides complaints against landlords, neither newly immigrated Hispanic nor long-term resident interviews showed much evidence of intervention on the part of government officials, non-profit organizations, churches, or other actors. Because the interview guide did not directly address the impact of each of these possible actors, it is uncertain whether such programs and actors were absent in fact or only in interview conversation. A few long-term residents did mention police intervention in response to noise complaints, but in general it appeared that neighbors were left to their own devices in dealing with problems and tensions in the neighborhoods.

Finally, with regard to future studies, the average length of interview should be considered. The Spanish language interviews were significantly shorter than English language interviews and the use of probes in the Spanish language interviews was minimal. I believe this to have been due in part to the fact that different team members conducted the interviews in English and Spanish. The researchers most involved in the work and with the most formal sociology training conducted the longest interviews; these were all in English. The Spanish-speaking interviewers seem to have probed less (or less
effectively), with some relying primarily on the project’s own interviewer training. Thus, they may have been less familiar with the quality and length of responses expected and less equipped to gather full responses. The Spanish-speakers also conducted fewer interviews on average, so they did not become as familiar with the material, which may have hindered adequate probing. Furthermore, it would be naïve not to at least question whether the newly immigrated Hispanics may have been fearful about responding (refer to section on newly immigrated Hispanic fears) and/or uncomfortable with an other-ethnicity, long-term resident interviewer. These possible problems should be addressed in future studies, as interviews are more comparable when average length of interview and depth of questioning is consistent across categories of interviewees.

Individuals Working Together for the Good of the Community

Driving through an ethnically integrated community in Cabarrus County one recent afternoon, I am surprised at how easily I can identify the Hispanic residences. With doors and windows wide open and the lawns often looking like they need care, the Director for Human Relations assures me I have correctly identified the homes. He claims it is even easier at night, when one finds the Hispanic lawns scattered with automobiles. I find that some of the interviewees’ stereotypes about Hispanic residences being easy to identify are based in experience. Yet, what is important is not the appearance of the home, but the response to it. A long-term resident who sees these homes daily might think, “Look at these backward Mexicans. They don’t even take care of the house and they park all over the yard. They open the doors and windows to the flies, and let everybody see into their nasty business!” On the other hand, the long-term
resident’s response might be, “Hmm, it’s interesting that Hispanics like to have their homes open. I wonder what experiences this is related to in their culture and what they are trying to accomplish by doing this. And I don’t like the cars in the yard, but I would like to get to know these people before I judge.” Not only is the latter response indicative of an attitude that would prove personally satisfying in relations with others, it is an attitude imperative for moving one’s community – African-American, white, and Hispanic - forward. There are times when a person needs to accept that others have different customs that work for them, and that difference in itself is not equal to “backward,” “weird,” or “bad.”

In this scenario, Hispanics aren’t passive and unchanging stimulants for reaction; they also have an active role to play. If community members are concerned about yellowing lawns due to excessive automobiles, they will need to approach the problem and solutions in conjunction with Hispanic residents. As some interviewees noted, people vary in looks, culture, and language, but “we are all human” (18.29). The variations accompany differing skills and abilities, all of which can be combined and used toward the common good of the community. The newly immigrated Hispanics have much to offer; even the resentful loathers admit that Hispanics work extremely hard and stick together. If their determination and work ethic were combined with long-term residents’ best traits, everyone could benefit. Community benefit might include the following areas that interviewees of all ethnicities have identified as most important: security, neighborhood relations, language education – Spanish and English, schools, health care/fairs, workers rights, housing issues, property values, and a crackdown on violence, crime and drugs.
If both long-term residents and new immigrants come to recognize that they hold these community desires in common, the breaking of stereotypes will have begun. The door to interaction will be pushed open, if only slightly. Then as community members work together and gain personal experience with “others,” more stereotypes will fall like dominoes, as experience most often leads to the recognition of “other” as human. For example, one long-term resident considering stereotypes explains, “When I hear a person talk badly about the Latinos, I feel like they have heard somebody else do it and they’re just repeating, like trying to make conversation…[and] sometimes they’re not living any better than [the Hispanics] are. And if they are, they are blessed and should be trying to pull somebody up. Not push them down” (18.31). In addition to viewing “others” as human, increased interaction and the breaking of stereotypes also helps residents to accept difference for what it is, without characterizing all difference as backward or strange.

In order to accomplish common community desires, residents of all ethnicities/races will need to work together. Again, almost every long-term resident interviewee alluded to newly immigrated Hispanics’ determination and work ethic. It is not a far step to consider ways in which that same determination and work ethic might cross over into efforts for community improvement through interaction. Bach (1993) has found many instances of voluntary community interaction between new immigrants and long-term residents. He identifies “youth organizations, informal business and commercial groups, community-improvement leagues, immigrant associations and charitable associations” whose activities include assistance to new immigrants, neighborhood cleanups, community library expansion, and youth sports clubs (p. 165).
When people of all ethnicities work actively toward community improvement, both those involved and those previously indifferent can see the results of the effort, which stimulates further effort toward improvement and allows community pride to develop and grow (Castells 1983).

Scholars note that frequent and meaningful interaction between the communities’ ethnic groups is a major key to success (Patchen 1999; Hyde and Leiter 2000; Torres 2000). Empathetic residents and community leaders in both counties agree. A long-term resident, concluding that interaction is necessary, says: “We’re here. We’re all in this community. We’ve got to work together in order to accomplish something. Hey, I help you and you can help me” (16.43). In addition to neighbor relations, the economy will also be affected by newly immigrated Hispanics’ interaction with long-term residents. How North Carolina “decides to funnel its resources to enhance the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure the successful and full participation of Latinos will determine how successful it will be at remaining in the economic forefront” (Torres 2000:3). While interaction may not be as simple as the long-term resident above suggests, it is possible. Once residents realize that “we’re all in this community” (16.43) and that we all have common desires for housing, neighbor relations, and community benefit, working together can result in significant improvement of, for, and by all willing residents of the community.

**Structural Components**

Avoiding conflict over housing and community spaces necessitates more than empathetic individuals open to interaction. Increased interaction cannot overcome a
physical shortage of affordable housing. Since immigration law and state and employers’
recruitment strategies are based not on the availability of an area to house workers, but on
the number of workers needed in an area, it is not surprising that as new immigrants
arrive to an area, the housing demand is higher than the supply. The difference between
supply and demand may create tensions between long-term residents and newcomers.
Long-term residents may view problems surrounding housing as related to ethnicity,
rather than to the physical shortage of housing. They may also blame immigrants for
problems with dilapidated housing, rather than recognizing that housing improvements
were needed well before any newcomers arrived (Bach 1993). In addition, long-term
residents may harbor complaints and frustrations, realizing that their local area bears the
direct financial burden associated with increased immigration, while the state and federal
government enjoys most of the direct economic benefits (Carmon 1996). Housing (in
addition to social services and education) is one area of stress on the local community,
and I argue that state and federal governments need to subsidize the costs associated with
increasing and improving the available housing stock.

Increasing and improving housing in the receiving communities is much different
from merely increasing and enforcing government regulations and standards for living
conditions. Realizing that new immigrant workers are living in dilapidated housing,
communities and governments may seek to enforce housing standards in an effort to
improve the immigrants’ living situations. However, this strategy has backfired in many
instances, because increasing the standards doesn’t a home build. For example, farmers in
California have responded to new federal and state housing regulations not by way of
improvement, but by razing the on-site employee housing (Rural Migration News 1996).
The farmers apparently decided the cost of improvement was too great, and now most immigrant farm workers crowd into urban areas, often living in crowded backyard structures and garages, or even in abandoned vehicles in parking lots. Some additional results of the immigrants’ move to crowded urban areas include: increased transportation costs resulting in lower net earnings, increased traffic violations and accidents resulting in death, and yet no increase in interaction with long-term residents (Rural Migration News 1996). Within the interviews for this thesis, I found similar circumstances of long-term resident complaints over the eyesore of newly immigrated Hispanics’ dilapidated and crowded trailer park housing. Many residents expressed a desire to eradicate the run-down trailer park areas, yet one must consider to where the residents of that housing might have the opportunity and resources to move.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has been involved in the financing of farm-worker housing in various states that rely on immigrant filed labor, such as California, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina (Rural Migration News 2002). Currently, HUD subsidizes construction costs related to U.S. Design Corps development of prefabricated metal buildings “with baked on paint, intended to house five or six people in 720 square feet. About 14 feet wide, the unit has two bedrooms, a living room, a bathroom and a kitchen.” (Rural Migration News 2002:2). Increased efforts such as this have and will continue to become necessary as immigrant laborers move into new areas of the United States. The government will have to subsidize the cost of increasing and improving new immigrant housing. If long-term residents continue to demand cheap produce, wines, poultry, meat, clothing, landscaping, and other services for which immigrants provide a great deal of low-wage labor, then long-term residents will have to
accept government subsidized immigrant housing. In effect, long-term residents might consider whether they prefer a cheap chicken sandwich at the drive-thru, or whether they prefer to pay less for government programs. As the reader may note, the question actually centers on wages and citizen responsibility, not necessarily on immigration. Continuing today, U.S. citizens vote (through action and/or compliance) for minimum wages below the standard of living, coupled with governmental social welfare benefits.

**Importance of the Study**

There are several realizations that this study brings to light. Firstly, the U.S. Hispanic population is growing at an accelerated rate. The U.S. Census predicts that by the next generation, one in every four U.S. residents will be Hispanic/Latino. These Hispanics, many of whom are newly immigrated Latinos, are settling permanently in the United States and not only in large port cities and Southwestern states. All U.S. residents will find themselves increasingly coming into contact with Hispanics; therefore, it would be helpful to realize their motivations for coming to this country and the contributions they make. Immigrant Hispanics come to the United States seeking improvement for self and family through hard work and decent wages. They fill voids in our workplaces, providing cheap labor from which every U.S. consumer benefits. Newly immigrated Hispanics are motivated and determined to succeed. Furthermore, they have the same desires as long-term residents: decent jobs, comfortable homes, safe neighborhoods, education, and increased opportunities for their children. High motivation and common desires, especially with regard to housing and community, could lead to interactive
resident efforts toward shared rewards such as friendly neighbor relations, giving and receiving help, and neighborhood clean-up and safety.

Previously in this thesis, I have identified three categories of long-term resident: empathetic, indifferent, and loathing. The practical goal of this study is to better understand the complexities of inter-ethnic relations surrounding issues of housing, in order to lessen tensions between long-term residents and newly immigrated Hispanics and to promote community solidarity. With regard to the three categories of resident, this report hopes to affect each one. For the empathetic well-wisher, it provides some insight into the stereotypes and barriers facing the community. It also highlights commonalities between newly immigrated Hispanic desires and long-term resident desires. For the indifferent types who prefer to stick to themselves, hopefully this report presents some reasons for reaching out to both new and old residents, Hispanic, African-American, or White, in an effort for community improvement. And for the resentful loathers, some of their stereotypes and complaints will be carried to the grave. Yet, hopefully their children will encounter more diverse and positive, one-on-one experiences with “others.” In the meantime, I hope this report acts like weeds on the vine, choking off some of the contradictions in complaint and the illogic of the perceived threat Hispanics and other minorities present.
REFERENCES


Olaya-Crowley, Martha and Yvonne Torres. 2002. “Latinos in North Carolina.” Presented at the annual El Foro Latino, April 6, Durham, NC.


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

I’D LIKE TO BEGIN OUR CONVERSATION WITH SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE.

1. How would you describe the area where you live?

2. Can you please describe your home.
   (Listen for type [house, apartment, trailer], number of rooms, how crowded.)
   Who else lives with you?

3. How long have you lived in your current home?

ASK NEXT QUESTION IF THEY’VE LIVED IN THEIR CURRENT HOME FOR FIVE YEARS OR LESS:

4. Why did you move?
   Did you feel like you were pushed out? By whom or what?
   Is your new home similar to your old home? How so?
   Do you know anything about the person/people who moved into your old home?

5. Have you always lived in this particular part of town?

IF NO, THEN ASK THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS:

6. What was your main reason for moving to where you live now?

7. [FOR LATINO/LATINA RESPONDENTS] How long have you lived in the U.S.?
   Where did you come from?
   Do you think more of your family from where you lived before will join you?
   How about your friends?
   Do you plan to return home or do you think you will stay in the U.S.?

8. How did you find your home?
   What was most important to you when you were looking for this home?
   Is it getting easier or harder to find a good place to live around here?
   How can you tell? Is that true for most folks who live or want to live around here?

9. What kinds of people live in your neighborhood?

10. Are things better or worse around here than they used to be?
    Can you give me an example of that?
    What changes have you noticed in the neighborhood in the last couple of years?
    How do you feel about these changes?
ASK NEXT QUESTION ONLY IN INTERVIEW WITH AFRICAN AMERICAN OR WHITE RESPONDENT:

11. When did you first notice Mexicans or other Hispanics moving into the neighborhood? How could you tell? How do you feel about this?

12. What do your friends say about your Latino/Latina neighbors (about Latinos/Latinas)? When they say that, are they referring to women or men? Or both? Is that different from what they say about African American neighbors? About white neighbors? Before Latinos and Latinas began to live around here, what did you think they’d be like?

13. Can you think of a specific time when you talked with some of your Latino/Latina neighbors? (FOR LATINO/A RESPONDENTS, USE African American) neighbors? What happened? Where did it take place? Did anything surprise you? Is it always like this?

14. How do folks get along in your neighborhood? How can you tell?

15. How long are you planning to stay here? Do you ever think about moving to another part of town? Why would you want to move?

NOW I’D LIKE TO ASK YOU A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT ANOTHER TOPIC - THE SCHOOLS.

16. Could you tell me a little bit about the schools around here?

17. Do you have kids (or children who live with you) in school? (IF NOT, SKIP TO 21) Which school(s) do your kids attend? What grades are they in?

18. Have the schools changed much over the last five or so years? (e.g.: number of students, new school buildings, new teachers, programs, etc.) Can you give me an example of that? When did you first start to notice these changes?

19. What do you think about having more Latino/Latina kids in the schools? What do you think about the way your school is responding to more latinos in the community? How so?
Do you think some of the teachers might agree with you? How can you tell?

20. Do your kids play with the Latino/Latina/African American/white kids at school (ask each group about the other two)?
   (IF YES), what kinds of things do they do together?
   Do they ever mention the Latino/Latina/African American/white kids? What do they say?
   Are your children’s closest friends black? white? Latino/Latina?
   Are there some classmates whom your children don’t get along with? How do you know?

LET’S END WITH SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES AT WORK.

21. Different people care about different things in their work. What do you care most about in a job?

22. Is it easy or hard for you to find that kind of work these days? Has it always been so easy/hard?

23. What are the best jobs Latino/African American/white (USE RESPONDENT’S ETHNICITY) men/women (USE RESPONDENT’S SEX) can get around here? How does that happen?
   ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS FOR THE OTHER TWO ETHNICITIES, STICKING WITH THE RESPONDENT’S SEX.

24. What are the worst jobs Latino/African American/white (USE RESPONDENT’S ETHNICITY) men/women (USE RESPONDENT’S SEX) get around here? How does that happen?
   ASK THE SAME QUESTIONS FOR THE OTHER TWO ETHNICITIES, STICKING WITH THE RESPONDENT’S SEX.

25. Where do you work now?

26. When did you start working there?

ASK NEXT QUESTION IF THEY’ve WORKED IN THEIR CURRENT JOB FOR FIVE YEARS OR LESS:

27. Why did you leave your old job?
   Did you feel like you were pushed out? By whom or what?
   Is your new job similar to your last job? How so?
   Do you know anything about the person/people who replaced you in your last job?
   Have you ever done farm work?
28. Can you please tell me about your present job. What do you do on a typical day?
(Probe for some details.)

29. How did you get your current job? (Listen for who recommended, role of personnel office, intermediaries.)

30. Roughly how many people do you work with who are black? white? Latino/Latina?
   Do you work mostly with men or with women or with about equal numbers of men and women?

31. How well do you know the people you work with?
   Do you do anything with any of them away from work?

32. Are there some folks who can’t seem to get along at work?
   Can you give me an example of this?
   Can you tell why they don’t get along?

33. What do the other people you work with say about white/black/Hispanic workers
   (ASK ABOUT ALL THREE GROUPS)?

34. What about the managers/supervisors- what do they think of white/African American/Hispanic workers
   (ASK ABOUT ALL THREE GROUPS)?
   How can you tell?
   Whom do managers like to hire? Can you tell why?
   Whom do they like to promote? How do you know?
   Are there some African American managers around here? Any Latino or Latina managers?

35. Before we finish, let me ask a general question. What is the most important thing you are trying to accomplish these days?
   (FOR LATINO/LATINA IMMIGRANT RESPONDENTS) Do you think it will be easier to accomplish that here than it would be in your home country?
   What is the greatest obstacle to accomplishing that?

36. We’ve covered a lot of ground. Is there anything you’d like to add, especially connected with the increasing numbers of Latinos/Latinas?

37. Thank you very much for your help. We plan to write a report about what we learned and also to have a meeting with people in the community who have participated. Would you like to receive the report and be notified about the meeting? (IF YES, ASK RESPONDENT TO MAIL IN PAPER IN ENVELOPE WITH NAME AND ADDRESS.)
APPENDIX B: BREAKDOWN OF EMPATHETIC, INDIFFERENT, AND LOATHING LONG-TERM RESIDENTS BY RACE AND GENDER

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