

COMMONALITIES BETWEEN MEXICAN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN THE
SOUTHWEST AND MEXICAN AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN THE
SOUTHEAST: ISSUES FROM THE NATIONAL TO THE LOCAL LEVEL

by

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Under the direction of Diane Napier

ABSTRACT

Issues faced by Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwestern United States are explored through literature review. Issues uncovered are compared and contrasted with the issues uncovered in the literature on Mexican American Immigrants in the Southeast, specifically, Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. These issues are categorized into economic issues, documentation issues, poverty issues, issues regarding public sentiment, and education issues. Evidence of these issues is examined through interviews with key informants who have a working knowledge of, and with the Mexican American Immigrant community in Athens-Clarke County. Synthesis and evaluation of the similarities and differences between issues in both regions of the United States are used to present the possible implications that these issues have in the economic, social and political realms.

INDEX WORDS: Mexican American, Immigrants, Hispanic, Latino, Undocumented.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Georgia and the Southeastern United States in general, have faced important demographic shifts in recent years. The increase in the size of the Hispanic population in Georgia has brought about many changes in the state, including economic, educational and social changes, and the issues associated with these changes are appearing more and more frequently in the public forum. Georgia politicians, both liberal and conservative, must address immigration issues as part of their platforms or risk being seen as out of touch with today's Georgia. Though immigration issues have long been a part of Georgia's political landscape, Georgia's Hispanic population has only grown to significant numbers in recent decades. Unlike the states in the Southwestern region of the United States, who, due to their historical backgrounds and their proximity to the United States/Mexico Border, have dealt with Hispanic immigration issues for over a century, the Southeast has remained isolated from issues associated with the border.

Terminology

Undocumented, or illegal (the terms are used interchangeably throughout the literature), immigrants from Mexico that cross the United States/Mexico Border in large numbers will be the focus of the study. The terms *undocumented workers* and *undocumented immigrants* will be used in this discussion, as the alternative terms *illegal immigrants* or *illegal aliens* imply the strong negative concepts of illegality and xenophobia, and insinuate political ideologies. Throughout the literature, the terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are used in reference to immigrants of Latin American descent, though the majority of Latinos in the United States are *Mexican immigrants*, meaning immigrants from Mexico, or *Mexican American immigrants*, meaning immigrants of Mexican heritage or descent. Therefore, when the literature generalizes to the

broader Latino population, the terms Hispanic or Latino will be used in this study, according to the source. Whenever possible, though, data focusing specifically on Mexican American immigrants will be clarified by referring to these persons accordingly, and Mexican American immigrants will be the major focus of this study. Though other terms are used in the literature such as *Chicano* or *Tejano*, these terms are in reference to American citizens who identify themselves as having Latin American heritage, and are a group that are beyond the scope of this study.

Mexican immigrants, largely, if not solely, base their decisions to migrate to the United States on economic pressures in Mexico. Whereas, Central American immigrants who migrate to the United States across the United States/Mexico Border identify political as well as economic and social reasons for migrating to the United States (Darder and Torres, 1997). By focusing on Mexican American immigrants, both documented and undocumented, the study will narrow the focus to one ethnic group within the Hispanic or Latino ethnic umbrella, and to isolate economic factors associated with immigration issues. Therefore, for this study I will use the term, Mexican American immigrant, to describe immigrants of Mexican origin (Smith, 2001), unless the literature in reference uses the terms Hispanic or Latino, whereas, I will use the term referenced by the author.

Another important term to be noted is *colonia*. The word *colonia* is Spanish for neighborhood or colony, but current usage of the word has a specific connotation. In this study, *colonia* represents the neighborhoods, clusters of housing and squatter camps along the United States/Mexico Border. These enclaves are largely Mexican in their ethnic makeup, and the majority of the residents are American citizens. Many undocumented Mexican American

immigrants also reside in colonias. Colonias often lack public services such as running water, electricity and sewage and often go unregulated by local authorities (Ward, 1999).

Chain Migration is a form of migrant networking in which a small number of members of a community find a suitable community elsewhere and begin to attract other members of the original community to the new community. Finally, *Transnationalism* is another important term related to immigrants, which refers to being from or of more than one nation.

Background

As an educator in the public schools in Clarke County, Georgia, I have seen an increase in the number of Mexican American immigrant students to our school system, as well as throughout the entire state. This population of students has a number of intensive educational needs, which are compounded by a disconnection between immigrant families and the schools. I am interested in learning more about: the history of Mexican American immigrants into the United States, the issues that have arisen for Mexican Americans in the Southwestern United States, and the issues currently experienced by Mexican Americans in the Clarke County Georgia area. I hope to gain insight into the problems faced by this population of students, and ways to improve educational success of these students.

As a teacher in the public school system, I have become increasingly intrigued with the Latin American experience and with Spanish speaking students in general. Through the study of comparative and international education, I have become more familiar with the discrepancies between schooling across national borders and even within a single country. My growing interest in these subjects has also been fueled by numerous readings, both formal and informal, which have allowed me a greater understanding of issues in educating diverse populations.

While working in the private sector, prior to returning to higher education, I worked as the manager at a manufacturing firm in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. The physically demanding manual labor required at this occupation made hiring employees quite a challenge. The largely Hispanic workforce at this firm allowed me an insider perspective on the obstacles faced by documented and undocumented immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Language barriers, culture gaps, and financial issues were a part of every day life for these workers, and I became more interested in the highly complex experience that is life as a Latin American living in the United States.

After completing my undergraduate degree in social science education at the University of Georgia, I found many of these issues in the classroom, as well. As I began searching the literature on the topic, I uncovered numerous accounts of the harsh realities of life as a Latino migrant. As an educator, I feel a drive and desire to more fully understand these and other issues faced by Hispanic students in the United States. To be able to teach these students, a teacher needs to be able to empathize and relate academics to students in terms that they can understand. The life experiences that these students have had may be drastically different from other students in the classroom. In order to be able to offer them the opportunities that an education can give, a thorough understanding of Hispanic culture and issues is essential.

The living conditions in the colonias is of particular interest to me, as the conditions sound eerily similar to many slums, ethnic enclaves, ghettos and impoverished areas in the Southeastern United States inhabited by migrant Hispanics. I began questioning several students in my middle school classes about the areas that they live in. I found that many Hispanic students live in housing with dilapidated walls and ceilings, a lack of neighborhood amenities such as streetlights and parks, and a general fear of gang activity, drug use and violence that

surrounds the trailer parks and duplexes that they live in. I asked one of my students if she had ever heard of a colonia, and her reply was that she lived in one in Mexico, and again in Texas. I was startled that the first Hispanic student that I asked about colonias, not only knew what they were, but lived in several of them. She also began naming the colonias that her family members lived in, in towns like Reynosa, Matamoros, McAllen, and Laredo. As I casually questioned my students about their origins, their hometowns, and the states and cities that they have lived in, I quickly began to understand that the previously discussed issues are not issues that will affect the Southeast United States in the near future, but they are issues that are affecting us now, and have been for quite some time. As several of my students described crossing the border in California, then moving to Texas, then to Georgia, as their fathers and mothers followed temporary work, I began to envision the plight of Hispanic students in a way that I had never considered.

Migrants, whether in the dumps of Tijuana, or across the border at all points north, face incredible obstacles and these dangers certainly impact the ability of these children, who arrive at American public schools, to learn. The parents of these immigrant students may not place the same importance on academic excellence as American teachers have been conditioned to expect. In our era of high stakes testing, it comes as no surprise that Hispanics score lower than the average on standardized tests. Even when taking into account the differences between Mexican and American public education it becomes difficult to know precisely where immigrant students should be placed in our rigid age graded system. That is assuming that the student has actually been in school continually during the compulsory period. Taking into account seasonal migration of families for agricultural work in Mexico and the U.S., political or economic displacement from a homeland in turmoil, and the stress, trauma, fear and violence experienced by so many migrants, it is no wonder school achievement suffers. Add onto these factors, the

language gap, poverty, cultural isolation and identity issues, Hispanics face a myriad of difficulties (Urrea, 1993).

Difficulty communicating with these students is only one of a wide array of obstacles that teachers face. The question of what is essential knowledge for these children, for whom survival and safety may be or have been first priority, is a tough question to answer. In an age where the common belief in education is that schools need to meet the individual learning needs of each student, services such as counseling may be more imperative than diagramming sentences or learning the Fifty States (Fink, 2003).

The effect that several million illegal workers have on an economy is noticeably keeping domestic goods cheap and maintaining competitiveness on the global market. The perceived success of the United States by the rest of the world causes people from all corners of the globe to look to America as a shining light of hope and opportunity. The border between the United States and Mexico is interesting because of the disparity of wealth between the two countries and the sheer size of the border only compounds the issues.

On the local and personal level, undocumented workers have a profound effect on each and every American's life. Though this segment of the American population is easily ignored and greatly marginalized, these people deserve more respect and dignity than the American public gives them. On construction sites throughout the United States, undocumented workers are building our schools, shopping centers and homes. Undocumented migrants are picking the fruits and vegetables that stock the produce section of our local supermarkets. Immigrants with false social security numbers are processing and packing our meats, sewing our socks and mowing our lawns, all the while paying into a retirement system that they will never reap the benefits from. These workers spend their hard earned money in the Wal-Marts of America,

paying local and state taxes that pave our highways and pay our policemen. These migrants are, in many cases, willing to risk life and limb to get the chance to offer a better life to their families, and in return, a little dignity and respect seems a small price to pay.

Racism toward illegal immigrants in the United States is not limited to the previously discussed issues, violence or crime. Anti-immigrant feelings permeate everyday life in America. While on a road trip on Interstate 95 in the Washington DC area, I witnessed an African American couple verbally assaulting a Hispanic man in a convenience store. The couple was berating him with derogatory terms like 'wetback', and the often used mantra 'go home'. After several minutes of being accosted in public, the man humbly said 'yes, I'm illegal', and he turned and exited the store. I often have heard acquaintances make derogatory comments regarding Hispanics, and undocumented Latinos specifically, while at the same time regularly hiring Mexican day laborers at a local parking lot, to do yard work or cleanup tasks for them. This dual attitude, though hypocritical and not a new phenomenon in the United States, is quite common among Americans.

The reactions of the public schools is also of great interest, and a comparison between Georgia and the Southwestern States, may enlighten an area of possible improvement in dealing with the increased pressures associated with a growing immigrant population. Prefacing the circumstances faced by Mexican American Immigrants in Clarke County, Georgia with an examination of literature focusing on the experiences of Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwest, will allow for a more complete contextual understanding of the stages and dynamics of Mexican American immigration in Georgia, and provide for a more complete analysis and evaluation of the current issues faced by this community of people.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain a richer understanding of a growing segment of the population in Clarke County, Georgia. The Mexican American Immigrant community has grown tremendously in the Southeast in recent years, and the growth of the Mexican American immigrant population in Clarke County, Georgia is a reflection of this larger phenomenon.

Though the actual numbers of undocumented workers, living in the United States, are varied depending on the source used, the general consensus is that there are approximately one to two million immigrants crossing the border illegally each year, and three to ten million undocumented workers living in the United States, currently (Schaeffer-Duffy, 2003). The vagueness of these statistics is perpetuated due to the mobility of migrants across the border as well as within the United States (Gutierrez, 1995). This reality can make researching the Mexican American immigrant population difficult.

The Mexican American immigrant community is an essential part of the economy of Georgia and many other states. By further understanding their background and circumstances, a more successful integration of this community into the mainstream American community may be possible. The Mexican American immigrant community also makes up a continuously expanding segment of the school age population in many states. Further study into this important portion of the student body may help to reveal insight into the needs of immigrant students. Adding to the body of literature on immigrants and their experiences in host communities also may help to generalize to other immigrant groups and host communities.

As a middle school teacher in the Clarke County School District, I have seen, first hand, the continuous growth of this segment of our student body. I have also seen the change in the dynamics of the classroom associated with this change in population. As an educator, I am

limited in my understanding of the circumstances that have brought about this change, and I am also limited in my ability to meet these students needs without a deeper understanding of the community from which they come. Many of my Mexican American Immigrant students have lived in one or more of the Southwest Border States for a period of time, and therefore, understanding the context from which they and their families have come, is essential to understanding their experiences in Clarke County, their expectations about living conditions and education, as well as their connection to the public school system. The multistage movement of hispanic immigrants to Georgia has been covered in both local and state news media and the many issues that surround the Mexican American Immigrant in Georgia have become often debated topics in the public forum. More independent investigation is needed in order for educators like myself to be able to cope with the changes in the community and in the classroom that have occurred .

The overarching questions that will guide this research are: 1)What are the issues faced by Mexican American immigrants in the Southwest? 2)How do these compare to the issues faced by Mexican American immigrants in the Southeast?

In this study, Mexican American immigration issues in Georgia, specifically Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, will be explored in two phases. Phase One: Review of Literature will, in essence, review, synthesize and evaluate the literature on Mexican American immigrants as well as establish the issues present in both the Southwestern and Southeastern United States regarding this immigrant group. The major questions to be answered in Phase One are: 1) What are the most important issues faced by Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwest and Southeast? 2) What types of work are these immigrants doing, and what are the working conditions at these jobs? 3) What types of living conditions do Mexican American immigrants

face? 4) Are Mexican American immigrants being incorporated into the United States' society? Why or why not? 5) What types of impact do these issues have on Mexican American families? 6) What impact do these issues have on Mexican American immigrant students' educational experience? 7) What types of exploitation have Mexican American experienced due to their undocumented status?

Chapter 2: Research Design

This study will be conducted in two phases titled Phase One: Findings in the Literature and Phase Two: Interviews with Key Informants. Each phase has a specific research design, described below.

Phase One: Findings in the Literature

The study begins by reviewing the literature on Hispanic American issues in the Southwestern States. Data is gathered through review of literature on the subject of Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwest and Southeast United States. I also examine literature regarding governmental and non-governmental response to these issues, then explore the literature on Latinos, specifically Mexican American, issues in the Southeastern United States.

First, the study establishes the historical context of the US/Mexico Border and the Southwestern United States, and incorporates this history into the more recent history of Mexican American immigration in the Southeastern United States, specifically Georgia. Then the study also examines historical texts of the border region in order to establish context for the circumstances that exist today.

Next, there is a closer examination of the issues associated with Mexican immigrants in the Southwest, exploring literature that focuses on current conditions: 1) faced by Mexican immigrants in Mexico prior to migration, 2) faced by Mexican immigrants as they cross the United States/Mexico Border, 3) faced by Mexican immigrants after they arrive in the United States. The literature for this section will spotlight the Southwestern Border States and isolate the issues faced in this region.

Finally, Phase One of the study examines the literature on the Southeast with the intention of comparing and contrasting the issues from the Southwest existing in Georgia and

other Southeastern States. Public reaction to the legal status of these immigrants in both regions will be compared. Public policy regarding the living and working conditions of Mexican American Immigrants will be explored. The reactions of local, state and national government to the realities of the immigrant are of particular interest, because Southwestern states have had a longer legacy and more familiarity with the issues and pressures associated with hispanic immigrants. Therefore, the similarities and differences between policy in the Southwest and Southeast offer insight into areas of possible improvement.

The manner in which I selected works of literature on the subject varied, and the period which I examined texts spanned from 2003 through 2006. Several works were referred to me by faculty in the Department of History at the University of Georgia during directed reading independent study graduate courses. I was introduced to *The Maya of Morganton: Work and Community in the Nuevo New South* by Leon Fink, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* by Nick Foley, and *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants and the Politics of Ethnicity* by David Gutierrez. From these books I was able to gain a richer understanding of issues among Mexican Americans and the realities in the Southeastern United States. From these texts, I was able to delve deeper into the history of United States/Mexico relations.

During a graduate course on the history of the American education system at the University of Georgia, I was able to explore such books as *Latinos and Education: A Critical Reader* by Darder, Torres and Gutierrez and *Issues in Latino Education: Race School Culture and the Politics of Academic Success* by Mariella Espinoza-Herold. These books allowed me to link the political and social histories previously mentioned with the impact of and on education. During a graduate seminar on immigrants at the University of Georgia, I probed the questions of

poverty and stark realities in the border region and throughout the United States using literature such as: *Colonias and Public Policy in Texas and Mexico: Urbanization By Stealth* by Peter Ward, *Across The Wire: Life and Hard times on the Mexican Border*, *By the Lake of Sleeping Children: The Secret Life of the Mexican Border*, and *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Alberto Urrea, and *Coyotes: A Journey Through the Secret Life of America's Illegal Aliens* by Ted Conover. Using various means such as searches in the university library, Amazon.com, Google Scholar and the ERIC database, I was able to corroborate the information in these texts with journal articles, periodicals, dissertations and theses, and confirm the poverty and desperation faced by many Mexican American immigrants.

After reading the books by Urrea and Conover, I began exploring instances of violence and exploitation revealed on websites and newspaper articles from around the country. Using search terms and descriptors like: Mexican Americans, illegal aliens, undocumented workers, US/Mexico border and immigration, I was able to accumulate an immense amount of literature. As this study progressed, I began to find information through many sources, because the issues I had been reading about were becoming more and more prevalent in the media. Outspoken politicians and pundits debated (and continue to debate) the topic daily. Immigration, the border, undocumented workers: these are contentious subjects that are discussed in the public forum with fervor. Most Americans feel strongly about the issues surrounding Mexican American immigrants, yet few understand the complex factors that influence the phenomenon.

In regards to the multistage movement of Mexican American Immigrants to Georgia, and specifically Athens-Clarke County, both local and state media coverage are also included for analysis (Melancon, 2005). In several cases, even film and video are used to examine particular case studies or issues (Oelberg, 2002). The issues discussed in this study are current, and new

information appears every day. The issues are also volatile, and highly susceptible to change due to the ever-changing political landscape in the United States.

Phase Two: Interviews with Key Informants

Data for Phase Two was gathered through interviews with key informants involved with the Mexican American Immigrant community in the Clarke County, Georgia area.

Research Methods.

First, I contacted and interviewed several key informants involved in the Hispanic American immigrant community in and around the Clarke County, Georgia area. Both audio taping and field notes were used during interviews. These informants are denoted as Key Informant One, Key Informant Two and Key Informant Three in the study. (See Appendix)

The major research questions for the interview portion of the study are semi-structured, conversational in nature, and are as follows: 1) What are the most important issues that Mexican American immigrants face in Athens, and in Georgia? 2) What types of living conditions occur among Mexican American Immigrants in the Clarke County, Georgia area? 3) What are the reasons why Mexican American Immigrants have relocated to the Clarke County, Georgia area? 4) What cities and states in the Southwest have Mexican American Immigrants in Clarke County, Georgia lived prior? 5) What cities and states in Mexico have these residents lived prior? 6) Have these residents lived in colonias along the border of the United States and Mexico? 7) What types of jobs have Mexican American Immigrants had prior to moving to Georgia? 8) What were the working conditions like at these occupations? 9) What types of occupations do Mexican American Immigrants fill in the Clarke County, Georgia area? 10) What are the working conditions like at these occupations? 11) What are the biggest challenges faced by Mexican American Immigrant families in Clarke County Georgia?

Other topics in these interviews focused on the vulnerability and exploitation experienced by undocumented Mexican American immigrants. (See Appendix)

Research Subjects.

Three key informants were selected in regards to their proximity and familiarity with the local Clarke County Mexican American Immigrant population. Interviews were both tape recorded and field notes taken for accuracy. Written consent for audio taping was acquired. After obtaining consent to interview, the interviews were semi-structured conversational interviews, focusing on previously established issues. Interviews with the key informants were done with the purpose of exploring their perceptions of the issues facing Mexican American immigrants, and the issues facing Georgia in regards to this immigrant population.

The identity of these subjects will remain anonymous, but were selected with the approval of the committee supervising this study. Key Informant One is an education specialist with a working knowledge of the Mexican American immigrant student population and involvement in the community with immigrant families. Key Informant Two is a local Athens-Clarke County school administrator at a school with a large Mexican American immigrant student population. Key Informant Three is a local community activist and leader with a working relationship with the Mexican American immigrant population in Athens-Clarke County, and Georgia as a whole.

These interviews focus on issues already raised in the Southwest United States, and how these issues, as well as public response to these issues is perceived by key informants in the Mexican American Immigrant community. Open-ended conversational interviews were conducted, in order to allow flexibility in the questions and answers as the interviews progressed, especially due to the different capacity to which each informant was involved with the immigrant

population. I used general questions regarding the key informant's insight into the living and working conditions in the local Hispanic community. Interview questions regarding the key informants view of the local and state governments responses to these issues, and the responsiveness of the public schools to the needs of Mexican American Immigrant students. As members of the Clarke County community with working knowledge of the realities of the Mexican American Immigrant, these key informants act as insiders into the experiences faced by these immigrants in our region of Georgia. The interviews link, as well as compare and contrast, the issues faced by the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia, and those issues in the Southwest Border States. (See Appendix)

Chapter 3- Phase One: Findings from the Literature

The purpose of Phase One: Findings from the Literature is to identify social issues with the Mexican American Immigrant population in the Southwest. Southwestern Border States have had longstanding experience with this immigrant community, and the Southwest's response to the needs of this community are well documented. Many similarities exist between the Mexican American Immigrant communities in the Southwest and the Southeast, but the Southeast does not have as lengthy of a legacy in terms of understanding and responding to the social issues faced by the Mexican American Immigrant population. This study will attempt to gain insight into the actions of the Southwestern States in regards to the social needs of this immigrant community, and use this insight to better understand the social needs of the Mexican American Immigrant community in Georgia.

Phase One contains a portion focusing on the History of Mexican Americans, and historical circumstances that were precursors to the current issues. Phase One then presents Mexican American immigrant issues: 1) In the Southwest, 2) In the Southeast, 3) In Georgia, and 4) Athens-Clarke County, Georgia.

History

First, the historical context needs to be understood in order to grasp the pattern of migration across the border that has developed over time. A long and complex history exists regarding the political relationship between Mexico and the United States and the associated past events and trends lend insight into the current situation. The pull factors drawing undocumented workers to the United States have a history going back a century or more. These pull factors have a basis in both American and Mexican policy, as well as the economic circumstances of particular eras in United States and Mexican history.

Early Period (before 1846)

In order to fully understand the history of the Mexican American, the cultural identity of the Mexican must be explored simultaneously. History and identity go hand in hand when discussing Mexican immigrants, the issues that they face, their reasons for migrating, and their economic circumstances. The cultural identity of Mexicans in the United States is an intriguing yet elusive phenomenon to pursue, partly due to the complexity of the subject.

As the border region of the United States has transformed, so have the identities of the people within that region. As with most other cultural groups, the Mexican-American's cultural identity has developed into a spectrum of experiences that no one context can shed light on. Using three very different historical sources, portraying distinctly different experiences, a wider window into this spectrum of identity will be opened, shedding light on this complex subject.

Prior to the United States/Mexican War (1846), most of the southwestern and western United States was owned and inhabited by Mexico and Mexicans. The first historical source examined on the topic begins in the frontier region of northern Mexico in the mid-Eighteenth Century. This tumultuous period of Mexico's history found distinctly different social classes of Mexicans, who, in varying degrees, showed their allegiance to the Spanish Crown. The elite of Mexico during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries were known as *peninsulares*. The *peninsulares* were born in Spain (the Iberian Peninsula) and were given the most prestigious positions in *Nuevo Spain*, present day Mexico. Occupations such as magistrate, high level bureaucratic and military positions, and large land holdings were reserved for those who were born in Spain, because those were the people most likely to remain loyal to the Spanish Crown. The second tier of Mexican society was the *criollos*, or pure blooded Spanish that were born in Mexico. These Mexicans were allowed powerful positions in the government and military, but

were restricted from the highest levels such as magistrate or general. The *criollos* were given lucrative land grants and contracts, but only after the *peninsulares* are given first choice. Many *criollo* families saw the frontier region of northern Mexico as a great opportunity to advance their social standings without the overbearing presence of the *peninsulares*.

With this in mind, Castillo Crimm's work, *De Leon: A Tejano Family History*, traces the de Leon family, a *criollo* family from Queretaro, Mexico, who settled various parts of the northern Mexican territories presently known as Texas (2003, p. 4-9). The de Leon family rose in the ranks of Mexican society through the military service of Martin de Leon and was granted large tracts of land to create a ranch along the eastern gulf coast of present day Texas. This was a dangerous period in the region due to the long distance from any substantial military presence, and the numerous Indian tribes such as the Comanche and Apache, who were prone to random attacks on settlements. Though a risky venture, the de Leon family knew the opportunities that would become available if they could develop a successful and productive ranch (Crimm, 2003).

Indians were not the only threat to settlers in this area at the turn of the Nineteenth Century. The growth and expansion of the United States presented itself as a threat to the Spanish territory. The presence of the French and British in the vicinity of Louisiana was also an ever present threat. Despite the influx of French and Anglos to the Texas territory, and the threat of contraband from the north to the Spanish Crown's purse, the de Leon family was able to develop a thriving ranch and was given land grants to start the new settlement that eventually became Victoria Texas. Martin de Leon was given the title of *empresario*, and given the power to grant tracts of land to new settlers in order to develop the settlement. A power position such as *empresario* was only given to *criollos* that had proven true loyalty to Spain and could be trusted to settle only Spanish colonists in the area (Crimm, 2003).

The story of the de Leon family is useful in discussing Mexican American history and cultural identity because of several reasons: location, timing and context. The location of the family's ranch and settlement is important because these are in the region that became a hotly contested territory during the United States/Mexican War. The de Leon family witnessed the flood of American settlers in search of new land and new opportunities. The de Leon family was also witness to the struggle over the formation of the Republic of Texas and soon after, the State of Texas. Although the de Leon family was powerful in Mexican society, the annexation of Texas placed them in an awkwardly dangerous place and time.

From 1838-1845, the region now known as Texas had declared its independence from Mexico, under the name, the Republic of Texas. This secession from Mexico was brought on by an increasing number of Americans moving into the northern regions of Mexico, and the difficulty Mexico was having with securing frontier territories so far from Mexico City. The United States annexed the Republic of Texas, making it a state, and all of the former Mexicans and Texans now became Americans. Despite the mass migration westward of American settlers, the Southwestern region, including Texas, New Mexico, California and Arizona, have remained culturally distinct from other areas of the United States, due to the hybridization of Mexican and American cultures, and the ethnic makeup of the largely *mestizo*, or mixed heritage, population (Montejano, 1987).

The upheaval in the Mexican government throughout this period also placed the de Leon family in a conspicuous situation. Rebellions and revolts abounded in Mexico as it struggled for its own independence, and the de Leon family was soon to become a part of a new country (Crimm, 2003).

The de Leon story is a great example of the development of the *tejano* as a subgroup under the Mexican American cultural umbrella. *Tejano* is a term used to define Mexican Americans who trace their lineage to Texas prior to annexation by the United States. Though the de Leon family became members of American Texas society, the connection to their Mexican roots is a clear and powerful part of their identity, as it is with many Mexican Americans in the border states of the present day United States. The shift in the social dynamics in this region after the War with Mexico and the Annexation of Texas helped to create a large segment within the spectrum of cultural identity experienced by Mexican Americans today (Crimm, 2003).

Another example of the Mexican American experience in the region centering on Texas focuses on the relationship between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans in the development of Texas between 1836 and 1886 (Montejano, 1987). During this fifty year period, the relationship between elite Anglo- and Mexican-Americans helped to shape the dynamics of present day Texas. It was the large land holding ranchers of Mexican descent who preserved what little power Mexican Americans retained after American expansion. Negotiations between the elite of both groups over territorial distribution can be linked to much of the modern day Texas elite's current asset holdings (Montejano, 1987).

Middle Period (Mexican American War through World War II)

A major undermining feature of the annexation of Texas on Mexican Americans was the shift from the Spanish tax system, to the American system of property tax. Ranchers paid taxes on the crops and goods that they could produce on their large tracts of lands, under Mexican law. Under the new American tax system, ranchers were required to pay taxes to the United States Government on thousands of acres that may or may not be productive tracts of land. Ranchers began to divide up and sell off pieces of their ranches in order to pay taxes on the desirable

premium land. The continued subdivision of land allowed new settlers to afford smaller, less desirable tracts, at cheaper prices. Not only were the *tejano* ranchers losing their grip on land ownership, but in order to maintain social prestige, began to acknowledge distinctions between Mexicans of Spanish descent (such as the de Leon family) and the lower class *mestizos* (mixed ethnicity Mexicans) and *indios* (indigenous Mexican Indians). Such distinctions were instrumental in providing basis for later labor issues and discrimination in the Border States, specifically Texas (Montejano, 1987).

Elite Mexican Americans used the social class distinctions of Mexico as a survival tool in newly annexed Texas. The association of *mestizos* and *indios* as the newly developed social group, the *peones*, would help to cement the small group of Mexican elite in the upper echelon of Texas society while delineating all other Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the lowly peon. Social attitudes toward the lower class Mexican led to the dependence of Texas ranchers, both Anglo and Mexican American, on cheap Mexican labor throughout the next century. These Mexican American ranchers needed to distinguish themselves as culturally different from the lower classes, and what better way than to generalize all lower class Mexican Americans as 'Mexican', a term that has developed numerous connotations over the past century. This distinction among Mexican-Americans in power laid the groundwork for later discrimination (Montejano, 1987).

Under Mexican authority, Mexican peasants and Indians were regularly transported north as paid or forced labor. This tradition began during the allotment of hacienda (a Spanish word meaning large plantation) lands to wealthy Spaniards by the king, which allowed the landholder to use the people living on these lands as indentured servants. The harsh conditions experienced

by these conscripted workers created a massive trend of intranational migration in Mexico (Montejano, 1987, Crimm, 2003, Clinchy, 1974).

American settlers in the Southwest began taking advantage of this cheap and mobile workforce, informally at first and then formally through contracts, during establishment of large agribusiness and manufacturing in the region. As the World War I and World War II periods progressed, the growth in the industrial and agricultural sectors of the United States began to demand more laborers due to the out flux of American males overseas to the wars. The United States government instituted the Bracero Program during World War I to bring in guest workers from Mexico to fill the jobs needed for the wartime economy. The Bracero Program officially formalized the ‘importation’ of Mexican contract laborers to fill the positions formerly held by American men. The Bracero Program lasted until 1968. The American public’s expectation that these workers would return to Mexico after the war, did not materialize (Montejano, 1987, Clinchy, 1974).

Contemporary Period (post-World War II through the Present)

Despite increased reliance on the Mexican workers in the United States workforce, the Twentieth Century saw substantial local, state and federal legislation that hindered the Mexican’s success in American Society. During the 1950’s, federal legislation, such as the Internal Security Act, the McCarran-Walter Act, as well as programs such as ‘Operation Wetback’ of 1954, during which federal agents infiltrated Mexican American neighborhoods, arresting and deporting illegal immigrants, helped to illustrate governmental and public attitudes and opinions toward the ‘Mexican Problem’. Operation Wetback arrived too late to curb American industry and agriculture’s dependency on the cheap wages of the Mexican worker. These workers had already established extensive networks, not only in the Southwest, but throughout the country,

and the revolving door border condemned by so many today, was well entrenched. Mexicans living in the United States would be faced with stark contradictions in societal attitudes toward them. At the same time that immigrant Mexican workers were being recruited as contract labor in El Paso by manufacturers in Chicago, Mexicans in the Barrios of Los Angeles were being rounded up and deported. The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 and the strengthening of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) throughout the 1950s illustrated that America viewed the Mexican American as somewhat of a commodity, being brought in when needed and shipped out when their usefulness was used up (Gutierrez, 1995, Montejano, 1987). From the 1960's forward, there has been a waxing and waning of negative public sentiment toward these workers, which closely follows the economic circumstances of the times (Montejano, 1987).

A historical source regarding the Bracero Program and the cultural identity of Mexican Americans in Texas during this period comes from a study on the equality of social opportunities in Texas (Clinchy, 1974). The study traces Latin Americans, specifically Mexican Americans in Texas from the turn of the century through the 1950's. Economic, political and cultural forces collided as Mexican Americans distinguished themselves even further from this new class of contract laborers. Anger toward the more recent immigrant Mexicans festered in both Anglo- and Mexican-American groups. Derogatory terms for these immigrants, such as 'wetbacks' (meaning that the immigrant had crossed the Rio Grande river bordering both countries and was still wet from the trip), came into common use by both Anglo- and Mexican-Americans during this period as a response to the threat of this growing class of cheap labor (Clinchy, 1974).

In many cases, the tactic of creating a distinction between the new immigrant Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, did not accomplish its goal. Discrimination against those of Mexican

descent, whether citizens of Mexico or the United States, was frequent in the post-war years. Though the Jim Crow laws which led up to the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's have been criticized for their 'Separate but Equal' doctrine, many Mexican-Americans argued that citizens of Mexican descent were not even granted these 'Separate but Equal' guarantees. In all arenas of public life, schools, work, social settings, generalization of all people of Mexican descent into the category of 'Mexican', served to lower the social status of Mexican-Americans and preserve the status quo (Clinchy, 1974).

Cultural identity is a multifaceted, complex phenomenon that must take into account historical and contextual variables in order to be better understood. What makes cultural identity all the more interesting is the ability of identity to morph according to a variety of factors: social status, geographic location, political influence, and historical context. It is the tracing of these many factors that illuminates the experience of people of diverse backgrounds, and at the same time, illuminates aspects of our own experience.

Now let us fast forward to a contemporary example of policy, which has developed a more modern character. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), made law during the Clinton Presidential Administration, initially intended to establish tariff free sales of American goods to Mexico and Canada, has drastically reduced prices of Mexican crops imported into the United States, a situation that is great for American consumers, but not for Mexican farmers or farm workers. Mexico's economy fell into a period of devaluation known to Mexicans as *La Crisis* (The Crisis). Economic instability has forced Mexicans to seek employment in the United States, by any means necessary. American industry and agriculture is welcoming with open arms, these dependable, hardworking, and most importantly, cheap,

workers from our southern neighbor, and in many cases, businesses have come to depend on this inexpensive workforce for survival (Chavez, 1998, Martinez, 2001).

Mexican American Education

To add depth and context to the history of Mexican Americans, a brief history of Mexican American Education follows. This will give important background information on contemporary subjects and issues.

The history of Mexican American Education parallels many of the experiences of minority groups in the United States, with several distinct characteristics all its own. First, a look at two major organizations representing Latin Americans in the United States: the GI Forum and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). These groups help to explain two different directions that the Mexican American took in response to their experience in the United States. These organizations also play important role in the development of Mexican American education (Gutierrez, 1995).

The GI Forum was made up of American citizens of Latin American descent, the majority of which were Mexican, who fought in the United States Armed Forces during the World Wars. The GI Forum took the stance that many African American veterans took during the post war years, arguing against racial and ethnic prejudices and comparing discrimination in the United States to the practices of Nazi Germany and other fascist regimes, while highlighting their efforts during the wars (Gutierrez, 1995).

LULAC, whose membership was made up largely of Mexican Americans, took an assimilationist approach to issues. LULAC focused on improving the lives of citizens of the United States who were of Latin American descent. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s gave LULAC a forum during which to press for the rights of Mexican Americans. As for illegal

or temporary Mexican workers in the United States, LULAC's policies were less than beneficial. Many of LULAC's leaders publicly stated their opposition to the immigration of Mexicans into the United States, in fear of negative affects on Mexican American Citizens. During the Cold War and the post-World War II 'Red Scare', many Mexican Americans feared damage to their own social status and the status of their group. This created an atmosphere of timidity within the Mexican American community (Gutierrez, 1995).

Regarding Mexican American Education, a variety of experiences warrants a variety of responses among Mexicans and Mexican Americans. Prior to the American Civil War, Mexican Americans relied heavily on local parochial schools for their children's education. The tradition of the Catholic Church in Mexico carried over to the Border States in the Mexican American Community, and Catholic schools were prominent throughout the border region of Texas. After the Civil War, with the expansion of public education, elite Mexican Americans were using private and parochial schools as well as public schools for the education of their children.

Though the Jim Crow 'Separate but Equal' laws mandated segregated facilities for African Americans, poor Mexican Americans and Mexican worker families were not even guaranteed educational facilities. As compulsory attendance laws came into place and were being enforced in the Anglo and African American communities, school officials made little effort to enforce Mexican American children attendance in the schools (San Miguel, 1987).

Large agricultural employers contributed to this trend by using Mexican child labor on their farms. Mexican families could not afford to have one of their children's incomes disappear for several months of the year. Since many of the workers relied on the ranch owners for transportation, and the public schools made little effort to provide transportation, Mexican

worker families had neither the incentive nor the opportunity to access public education (Montejano, 1987).

Over time, the educational gap between Mexican workers' children and other children had grown immensely. This generational education gap set the stage for the disparities that are faced presently by Latino children in the public school system, disparities which have now become almost institutionalized. For instance, during the early Twentieth Century, non-native students were forced to spend up to four years in the first grade in Texas. As school systems began to enforce compulsory attendance on Mexican children, many districts in the Southwest were separating Spanish speaking students into one room schools with poorly qualified teachers and little funding or resources (San Miguel, 1987).

After World War II brought forth the Cold War, most local school systems refused to allow immigrant students to be taught in their native languages, a policy which largely affected Mexican Americans in the Southwest. Mexican students and parents complained that learning English was made more difficult because students were segregated in their classrooms and rarely came into contact with English speaking peers with which to practice their English skills. By the time most Mexican American students had acquired fluency in English they were several years behind other students due to the concentration on English and the neglect of other academic subjects during their first years in American schools. These setbacks in the educational development of Mexican American students, along with racial stereotypes and prejudices, created great obstacles to the success of Mexican Americans in the United States throughout the Cold War era.

This era also signified a push in assimilationist education policies that stressed the Americanization of immigrant students as top priority. Groups, like the previously discussed

LULAC, strongly supported assimilationist education of Mexican Americans because it was seen as a means to gain more civil liberties for American Citizens of Latin American descent. Several Mexican American political leaders, such as George L. Sanchez with the State Department of Education in Texas, opposed assimilationist education, pushing for a more multicultural stance on the education of Mexican Americans. Sanchez stressed the importance of the Good Neighbor Policy between the United States and the Latin American countries, focusing on increasing awareness of Latin American culture and history among students of Hispanic heritage. As Mexican Americans came more into the public forefront they began a push for teaching proper Spanish as well as English skills to Mexican American students. The argument given by Mexican American leaders was that bilingual fluency and literacy were powerful skills for these students that can be used to succeed in other academic areas (San Miguel, 1987).

Another interesting development, aimed at combating the disparities in Mexican American education, called the Little Schools of the 400, was created by former LULAC President Felix Tijerina. Tijerina developed a preschool program for Spanish speaking children, which taught preschool age students 400 essential English words that were important to starting school in the American public schools. Adult literacy versions of Tijerina's lessons were even taught in community centers and churches. The Little Schools of the 400 were widely successful in Texas and other Southwestern States during the 1950s, despite a lack of government funding, but were overshadowed by the implementation of the Head Start program of the 1960s. Tijerina was able to secure State funding in Texas in 1959 but the majority of his support came from private contributions such as the Ford Foundation. Tijerina was also able to mobilize support for the Little Schools of the 400 through local Spanish newspapers and radio, as well as local churches and Hispanic civic groups, and broadcasted lessons on Spanish speaking radio stations

for a short period at the end of the 1950s. Though the Little Schools of the 400 were short lived, they illustrate the Mexican American community's growing interest in public education (San Miguel, 1987).

The changes to the education system after the American Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s brought about outwardly visible changes in Mexican American Education in the American Public School System. Mexican Americans were no longer segregated into separate schools by the 1970s but a closer look at these desegregated schools reveals a more complex situation. Mexican American students spent much of their elementary and secondary education in homogeneous classrooms with other Spanish speaking students. The Civil Rights Movement and the activism of key Hispanic Americans, such as Tijerina, in the public spotlight had given the Mexican American community the courage they needed to pursue equality in education through the court system. Though great improvements have been made since the 1960s, much remains to be accomplished regarding equality in Mexican American Education (San Miguel, 1987).

Summary of the Historical Literature

The history of Mexican Americans in the United States shows us that many variables must be considered in order to understand the issues and identity of the Mexican American, and the state of Mexican American Education. The spectrum of Mexican American identities can be better understood through understanding the economic and social pressures historically impacting Mexican Americans, such as the Bracero Program and Operation Wetback. The Mexican American experience is much more of a continuum than a single experience, and understanding the Mexican American's past helps us to imagine the trajectory of the Mexican American's future in the United States.

Issues

Describing the issues faced by Latinos, especially Mexican American immigrants, is difficult because many of the issues are interwoven together. The major issues facing undocumented Mexican American immigrants can be extrapolated into five major categories. 1) Economic issues: global market forces on the price of goods, a lack of opportunity for many Mexicans in Mexico due to marginalization, and economic incentives to move to the United States, 2) poverty issues: poor living and working conditions on both sides of the border, 3) issues of legal status, illegality and transnationalism: vulnerability of undocumented migrants to numerous groups including border bandits, vigilante groups, gangs, unscrupulous employers, and the black market, 4) issues of American sentiment: anti-immigrant groups, political rhetoric, post 9-11 xenophobia, and finally, 5) education issues: lack of Spanish speaking services in schools, cultural differences among students and schools, family orientation toward education, and volatile home environment. These issues manifest in countless variation among members of the immigrant population, but the five categories of issues contain the major sets of pressures experienced by Mexican American Immigrants.

Issues in the Southwest

The Southwestern United States offers a longer legacy of issues regarding Mexican American immigrants, therefore, exploring the literature on the Southwest makes for a more thorough and extensive body of work from which to draw.

Stages of Migration. Leo Chavez gives us a theoretical framework for looking at the stages of migration that undocumented migrants go through when entering the United States. His anthropological study, *Shadowed Lives: Undocumented Immigrants in American Society*, of

undocumented migrants in the San Diego County area of Southern California sheds light on the determinants involved in a migrant's life north of the border, and the factors involved in how an undocumented worker becomes incorporated into society in the United States. Chavez considers three stages that the Mexican worker goes through on their journey to the United States: 1) Separation, 2) Transition, and 3) Incorporation. Not all undocumented migrants make their way through all three phases, as barriers prevent their full incorporation into the United States' society (Chavez, 1998).

Stage One: Separation is the first stage that migrants to the United States face, which entails the Mexican individual considering the United States as a possible option, then deciding to make the journey, and finally, actually leaving their family, friends and home for opportunities in *El Norte* (the North in Spanish, and a Mexican slang term for the United States). In earlier period of Mexican immigration to the United States, mostly men would make the decision to head north, but according to Chavez, more and more women, whose economic opportunities in Mexico may be even more limited than men, are leaving home and taking their chances by crossing the border (Chavez, 1998).

Author and journalist Ruben Martinez explored the Separation stage during his study, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*, which focuses on Migrants from the Mexican town of Cheran, in the state of Michoacan. He traces the family of three undocumented workers (they were also brothers) killed in Temecula, California, during a high speed chase between the Border Patrol and the coyote used by the brothers. The Chavez family made headlines in both the United States and Mexico after the incident and the family received much media attention. The family lived in a small town in the mountains of Michoacan, Mexico, where they were poor farmers. The Chavezes were members of a tribe of Native Americans

called the Purepecha Indians. Several members of the family had migrated back and forth to the U.S., including the three deceased brothers, and throughout the book, the author traces each member of the family as they decide to move to the United States. The remaining brothers and sisters, as well as cousins, and even the family matriarch, over a period of a few years, migrate to the U.S. illegally, despite the sadness and fear that the family members had over the three brothers' accident (Martinez, 2001).

Each family member chose to migrate for different reasons, but economic factors were the most pertinent. The family's farm land was marginal and the price of corn, the staple cash crop in the region, was down. The family witnessed migrants, returning to their home village after months or years in the United States, with money to build nice houses with such amenities as running water, air conditioning, indoor plumbing and central heat, all of which were unheard of to Cheran's poor Purepechas. The returning migrants also drove new cars, and wore new store-bought clothing. Though some returning migrants told horror stories of failed border crossing attempts and harsh working conditions, the poor Chavez family could hardly ignore the opportunities that were possible in the United States, opportunities that were not available in Michoacan (Martinez, 2001).

The Separation stage was stressful and traumatic for some members of the Chavez family. Some of them consulted with priests and even local medicine women for blessings to help them on their trek. They feared that the end which the three brothers met would also be their own destiny. Many members of the Chavez clan eventually ended up in the suburbs of St. Louis, Missouri, where distant family members and friends from Cheran had been established in the migrant community for several years (Martinez, 2001).

Stage Two: Transition is the stage at which migrants chose their methods of travel and go through the process of crossing the border to the new country. After Separation, the migrant must make several decisions. Crossing the border using a *coyote* is one of the most often used methods. This nickname comes from the skittish nature of the real coyotes (the four legged animal), as these smugglers are easily scared off, and will quickly abandon their clients at the first sign of danger. The nickname also comes from the trickster archetype in many Native American myths. Another nickname is ‘polleros’ meaning *chicken rustler*, and they typically refer to those being smuggled as ‘pollos’, or *chickens* (Genicot and Senesky, 2004).

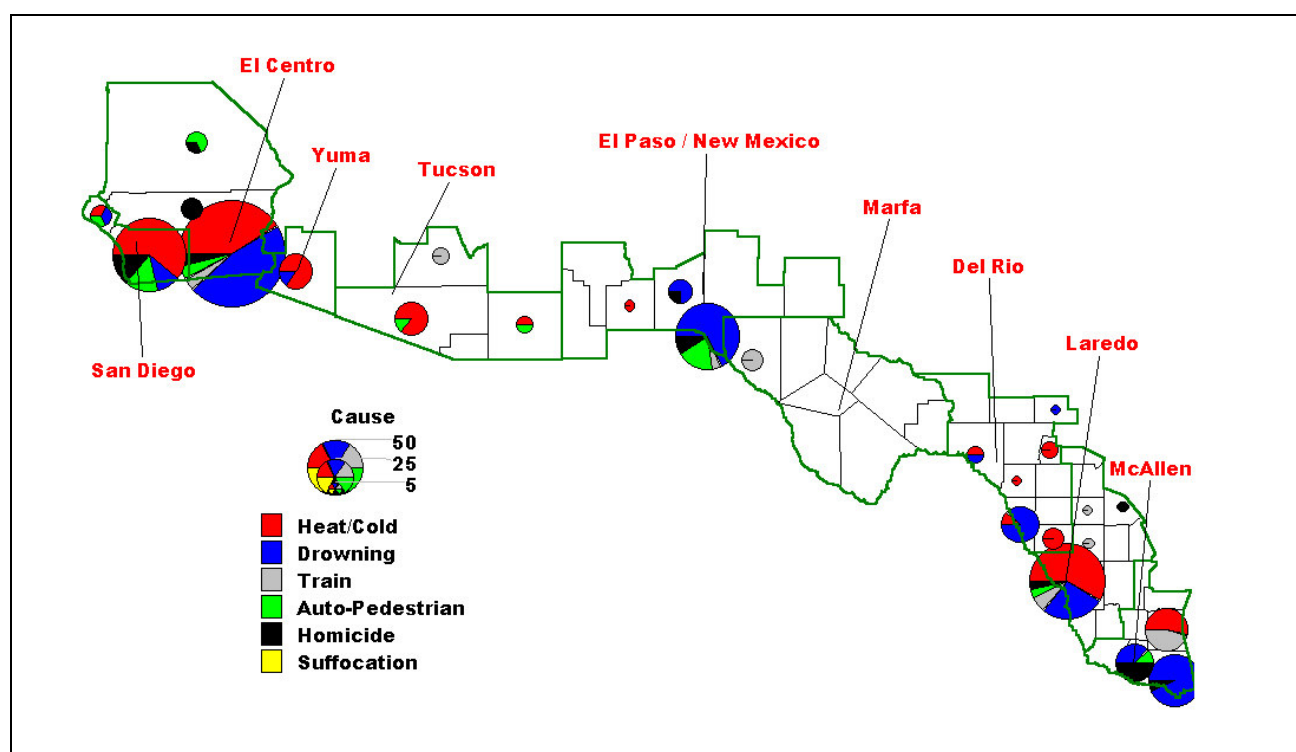
Coyotes come in all varieties, from well organized networks of several coyotes with extensive resources, to individuals, sometimes even teenagers, who live near the border and see the opportunity to make some easy cash. Some potential border crossers have contacted coyotes, whom they may have done business with before, prior to arriving on the border, and some migrants arrive in border towns and wait until being approached by a coyote (Castro, 1997)

In Ted Conover’s accounts, during one border crossing, he and several Mexicans were told to wait in a small shack until someone arrived with the ‘speedboat’ that would take them across the adjacent river. Hours later, two teenagers with an inflatable raft and makeshift wooden paddles arrived, asking the group to help blow up the raft. This ‘speedboat’ did take the group safely across the swift current of the river, despite the hole in the side of the raft (Conover, 1987).

Some coyotes arrange employment for workers, having connections at factories or farms, and some pretend to have these connections, especially with women, only to turn migrants over to prostitution rings, gangs or other people with bad intentions (McCarthy, 2001, Gonzalez and Bustos, 2003). Nonetheless, crossing the border is a dangerous and multifaceted endeavor,

undertaken by millions each year. In recent years, crossing the border has become increasingly more dangerous for illegals due to increased security in the less harsh environments of western California and eastern Texas. Migrants are now forced to the central region of the border which encompasses the western desert region of Texas, including El Paso, and the Sonora Desert of Arizona (Meek, 2003, Treat, 2001).

Figure 1: Deaths of Foreign Transients by Selected Cause for Counties in Southwest Border Patrol Sections, 1998



Source: University of Houston, Center for Immigration Research – www.uh.edu/cir

Cases of death due to heat, dehydration and exposure have increased over the past decade. In 2003, numerous undocumented immigrants were abandoned in a locked semi truck trailer near Harlington, Texas by coyotes that feared being caught by authorities, and eighteen of these immigrants suffocated and/or died due to the heat exhaustion, before the trailer door was knocked open.

Figure 1 shows the percentage of the causes of deaths along the United States/Mexico Border. The graph illustrated the high danger level that undocumented border crossers face from extreme heat and cold, drowning, and being transported in unventilated vehicles utilized by coyotes. This graph is a stark reminder of just how treacherous the border is.

In May of 2001, fourteen migrants died in the desert outside of Yuma, Arizona after running out of water on this several day hike. This case became known as the ‘Yuma 14’ and is meticulously chronicled in Luis Urrea’s book, *The Devil’s Highway: A True Story* (2004). The book follows Mexican migrants from Veracruz, a city in southern Mexico, who decide to go north and cross the border to find work in the United States. They procure the services of a local coyote with connections in Arizona, and the coyote puts together a bus load of twenty six migrants who are to be smuggled across the border in the Arizona desert. Once the group arrives at the border, they are shuffled around to different safe houses and are eventually told to get on a bus with a young, inexperienced coyote who would take the migrants across the border to a safe house on the United States side. Out of twenty six, only twelve survived the five day trek through the desert and among the barren mountain ranges in southern Arizona. (Urrea, 2004)

The Devils Highway shows the reader that numerous variables are at play on an undocumented immigrant’s journey to the United States, and how truly vulnerable these migrants are at many points along that journey.

Some migrants brave the border alone, with friends or with relatives and opt not to use the services of a coyote. Typically, veteran migrants who have made multiple trips to the United States are the ones who decide to risk the trip without a coyote. This stage, which follows Separation, is termed Transition by Chavez and consists of the period of travel from the home village to the border, the act of crossing the border, and traveling to towns, cities or rural areas in

the United States. Transition is the stage of migration that holds the most danger for the migrant. It is during transition that the migrant is highly susceptible to fraud, robbery and even violence (Spicuzza and Lomonaco, 2006). Migrants who are in the Transition stage for the first time are extremely vulnerable to dishonest coyotes, border bandits and corrupt law enforcement on both sides of the border (Martinez, 2001, Urrea, 1993, 1996, 2004, Conover, 1987).

In Ruben Martinez' work on undocumented migrants, he follows the migration of each member of the Chavez family, and also explores many of the border towns that these family members used (2001). One exceptional case was that of Rosa, whose husband Wense, had already gone to the United States several months earlier, and was working in St. Louis. Rosa secured the services of local Cheran coyote known as Mr. Charlie. For a fee of \$1000, Mr. Charlie would provide a chartered bus to the border, safe houses on both sides of the border, safe crossing across the border, and delivery to St. Louis through several other cities including Phoenix, Arizona. Rosa is told to have her bags packed, and when Mr. Charlie has been hired by enough migrants to fill the charter bus, he would come to Rosa's home and give her a short notice, as well as directions for starting her journey. What complicated Rosa's trip was that she would be taking her two year old daughter, Yeni (Martinez, 2001).

Rosa and Yeni began their thirty eight hour bus ride to Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, and arrived at a safe-house which had no furniture, and were fed meat, potatoes and tortillas. Twenty five migrants were then piled into a van with the back seats removed and told to lie down flat. They crossed a barbed wire fence section of the border, piled into another van and pulled over by the Border Patrol within fifteen minutes. The migrants in Mr. Charlie's group were deported back to Nogales, Mexico, regrouped back at the safe house and made another attempt the following day, where they were discovered by the Border Patrol almost immediately. They were

again deported. The following day the migrants and coyotes again crossed the border, walked for fifteen minutes, piled into a van and were pulled over by the Border Patrol in minutes. The coyotes then split the group into two groups, one men, one women, and made another failed attempt to cross. Finally, the group of women was taken to a remote area of the border, crossed the barbed wire barrier, walked for six hours through the desert, met their pickup van, and finally made it to the safe house on the United States side of the border. Mr. Charlie calls Wense from Phoenix demanding more money due to unexpected expenses. He tells Wense that if the money does not arrive, he will have to leave Rosa and her daughter in Phoenix, without money or food. Wense sends the money. Mr. Charlie bought a van and began their journey to safe-houses all over the country. In Colorado, the group had a window blow out during an accident in a snow storm and spent the remainder of the trip in the cold. Finally, two weeks after the trip began, Rosa's husband Wense arrives to pick her and their daughter up (Martinez, 2001).

This case contains many elements of danger and vulnerability that migrants face during their journey across the border. During this Transition stage, the undocumented immigrants are largely at the mercy of the coyotes. The migrants are in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by unfamiliar people, and are asked to do things that may put their lives at risk (Chavez, 1998).

The final stage in Chavez's framework is Incorporation. This stage may or may not be fully reached by all undocumented workers. Chavez offers several excellent cases that exemplify the issues faced by undocumented immigrants in San Diego County, California, and how these issues create barriers to incorporation into the surrounding society. Chavez focuses on several de facto camps near suburban San Diego. The camps have existed since the 1970s, continued well into the 1990s, and are likely to exist today. One major camp, known as Green Valley, had several hundred makeshift campsites built far up into a canyon near an affluent

suburb of San Diego. The Green Valley community was even large enough to maintain two makeshift restaurants. The residents of Green Valley ranged from single men and women, with and without children, and families, and most of the residents worked on the surrounding fruit and vegetable growers' ranches or as day laborers in the affluent neighborhoods. These undocumented residents lived with no running water, sewage, heat, or many of the conveniences that most Americans consider essential. The campsites were made from sheets of plastic, wood and metal scrounged from abandoned camps, construction sites or dumpsters. The campsites and impromptu housing were built in clusters along the canyon, hidden behind bushes and trees, and migrants from the same region in Mexico would set up camp near each other (Chavez, 1998).

The San Diego County residents in the surrounding neighborhoods would periodically complain to local authorities about the growth of the camps and local law enforcement would bulldoze the camps on a regular basis. Green Valley residents would then migrate to one of the other canyons in the area, such as McGonigle Canyon, and set up camp there until the process repeated itself. The famous farmworker activist, Cesar Chavez is quoted as saying, after seeing the McGonigle Canyon campsites in 1975, "I've seen a lot. But these conditions [were] among the worst. Disgusting. Inhuman." (Chavez, 1998, p.198).

In 1994, after much community political debate and media attention, the camp in McGonigle Canyon was leveled by bulldozers. The camp contained "401 shacks, a medical clinic, six restaurants, two soccer fields, four basketball courts, a volleyball court, [a] communal bathhouse, and a general store" (Chavez, 1998, p.199, Carr, 1994).

As can be extrapolated by examining these camps, the undocumented immigrants who reside there have many difficulties becoming a part of the society outside of their makeshift camps in these canyons. Their incorporation into American society comes in the form of

interactions with English speaking Americans at work, or possibly on rare outings from the camp, but most of their social interactions exist inside these isolated camps. Undocumented immigrants react to this lack of incorporation into the larger society by creating their own within the confines of their camp. With common language, traditions, foods, residents view the camps as somewhat of a safe haven for them away from the difficulties faced outside the camps.

Economic Issues. Economic issues are among the most powerful issues facing undocumented migrants from Mexico. As can be seen through the bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico, policy and market forces have major impact on the lives of these migrants (Hanson, et al, 2001).

Push factors in Mexico relate not only to the economy, but to the land itself. Due to the historical impact of imperial conquest, political corruption, and unfair business practices, land in Mexico is unevenly distributed. Typically, poor rural Mexicans are only offered marginal lands to buy because most of the good farming land is still owned by the wealthy classes. Many of the undocumented migrants crossing the United States/Mexico border for work are leaving bleak economic futures in their home villages behind. Most of these migrants send home money earned in the United States, to either spouses and children, or extended family, with the intent of returning home eventually after perceived success in the US. The fact that Mexico earns more from remittances from Mexican workers in America, than from tourism, is a testament to the dire economic straits that rural Mexico faces (Conover, 1987).

The United States/Mexico border is a major economic pivot point between the two vastly different countries. The border between the United States and Mexico is also one of the most contentious and hotly debated topics in the public arena, and the tension surrounding border issues has only increased after the events of September 11, 2001 (Vann, 1998). The number of

new immigrants moving into the United States has fluctuated over time due to numerous variables, including political climate, military conflict, and economic opportunity, but recent focus on the United States/Mexican border has shifted attention to undocumented immigrants arriving from the south (Mullen, 2005). During periods of increased migration to America, public sentiment has been characterized by a particular negative rhetoric and behavior. This rhetoric and behavior has evolved as the makeup of immigrants in the United States has changed, but the underlying sentiments have remained the same.

According to the 2004 US Census, the number of immigrants from Latin America has significantly increased in the past four decades. Along with this increase, tensions on the border have increased, and the United States Government has responded with tougher border policies. California passed a law known as Proposition 187 in 1994. This law attempted to refuse social services such as education and health care to undocumented immigrants (Martinez, 2001, p.14). Interestingly, Proposition 187 did not involve fair labor practices, but sought to make immigrants lives more difficult (Martinez, 2001, p. 194). Labor Secretary Robert B. Reich is quoted as saying the following:

One reason that employers in the United States are willing to risk employer sanctions right now and hire illegal immigrants is because they can get those illegal immigrants at less than minimum wage, put them in squalid working conditions, and they know that those illegal immigrants are unlikely to complain (Chavez, 1998).

Proposition 187 failed in stopping the surge of Mexican immigrants arriving in California. One area of the California border which makes an interesting case study is known as the Soccer Field. This field is near the Tijuana/San Diego border, and has been a staging ground for undocumented migrants preparing to cross into the United States. Migrants have gathered on the flat area, in clear view of the Border Patrol stationed, for years. Hundreds of migrants congregate, play

soccer and wait for evening to arrive so that they can cross over into the San Diego County area for work. Both the migrants and the Border Patrol know that this is a numbers game. The limited number of Border Patrol is limited in the number of illegal border crossers that they can apprehend, and many make it to the United States on their first few attempts to cross (Chavez, 1998).

One of the best examples of federal policy that has changed the political and physical landscape of the border, and particularly the Soccer Field, is Operation Gatekeeper, initiated by the U.S. Department of Justice in October 1, 1994. Operation Gatekeeper brought two and a half miles of lighting along the border between Tijuana and San Diego. It also funded a greater number of Border Patrol agents, night vision and radio equipment, and instituted tougher penalties for illegal migrant reentry to the United States (Chavez, 1998). Though the Soccer Field still remains, it now has a twenty feet tall corrugated metal fence at the border. Some migrants had dug a hole under the fence and charged a fee to migrants for use of the hole. Other migrants simply climb the fence, since the ridges in the corrugated steel are easy to climb (Chavez, 1998, pp 196).

Some American companies have been known to actively recruit workers in Mexico, and American corporations, such as Tyson Foods, have been cited for extensive labor violations, such as making false documents and social security cards for undocumented workers, at fifteen facilities in nine states. ChefSolutions, a manufacturer of bread for Subway restaurants, has been scrutinized because of several unethical business practices. Supervisors at ChefSolutions told undocumented workers that they needed to garnish some of the workers' wages to help the workers to get Green Cards, or legal residency. None of the workers ever received any papers of

this sort. Some Supervisors also sexually harassed female migrant workers and threatened to turn them into to the INS if they told anyone of the harassment (Oelberg, 2002).

In Chavez's study on workers in the San Diego County area, he found many instances where undocumented workers told of their unethical treatment by employers who used the migrants as what Chavez calls 'Discardable Workers' (1998). In several cases, a worker was injured and the employer promised to take him to the doctor. Instead of the doctor, the employer drove the worker to the border and told them to go back to Mexico or they would call the Border Patrol (Chavez, 1998, pp 77-79).

Big business is not the only contingent that relies on Mexican labor. The American consumer depends greatly on the cheap labor used in agriculture and manufacturing, to maintain low prices on consumer goods that buyers have become accustomed to. Domestic cash crops compete with foreign prices on the world market, and in order for today's agriculture sector to stay competitive, prices and therefore costs must stay low. In summary, both American business and Mexican laborers depend and benefit from the relationship between the United States and Mexico. Economic pressure will likely continue the growth of the Mexican American immigrant population in the United States. Consider the stereotypical hard working Mexican field hand who is willing to do backbreaking labor to earn a glimpse at a better life for his family. Both the owners of production and the workers maintain the stereotype, and benefit, in their own ways, from it. Unfortunately, the staggering discrepancy between benefits for either group shows us that the owners of production benefit much more from the status quo.

Legal Status, Illegality and Transnationalism. Unfortunately, life for the undocumented immigrant in the United States can be dangerous. Border crossers face many dangers and unfamiliarity with their surroundings after they arrive in the United States can increase the

danger for undocumented immigrants (Chavez, 1998, p.61). Interstate 5 is a notoriously dangerous highway for risk taking border crossers, and deaths of migrants attempting to cross the many lanes of fast moving traffic are so common that warning signs have been placed along the shoulder of the road saying CAUTION and illustrating a family running. Since many of the camp dwellers are farm workers, they are often reluctant to leave the campsites because of the many instances of violence committed by local San Diego County residents. In 1986, three teenagers dressed in camouflage and armed with guns, attacked a group of migrant farm workers. Also in 1984, off duty Marines beat and robbed farm workers, and even set one migrant on fire. In 1989, two local teenagers shot and killed two migrant workers on an isolated road in San Diego County (Chavez, 1998)

The migrants are not necessarily safe in the camps either. In 1989, white teenagers shot at migrants with pellet guns and paint ball guns, in a camp near Poway, California. In another camp the same year, several teenagers destroyed shelters and scared migrants with knives and baseball bats. Mexican American gangs have also been known to terrorize migrant camps, robbing the workers of their money and beating or even killing them (Chavez, 1998)

The instances of death on the border are also increasing, and some of these deaths are at the hands of vigilantes (Vann, 1998, Stein 2005, Cienfuegos, 2003, Phares, 2001, Gonzalez, 2004). For example, in November, 2003, on Interstate 10 outside of Phoenix Arizona, vigilantes with assault rifles driving a van, opened fire on two Ford trucks containing twenty four undocumented immigrants. Four were killed and five were injured. The shooting coincided with Mexican President, Vicente Fox's arrival in Phoenix to discuss border issues with the Arizona Governor. Many people associated the shooting with two private militia groups named the American Border Patrol and the Tombstone Militia, but local authorities blamed 'coyotes'

(Cienfuegos, 2003). Over 2,300 deaths of illegal immigrants have occurred since 1995, and the rate of death has increased to one per day in the last several years (Schaeffer-Duffy, 2003).

Violence against undocumented immigrants while crossing the Mexican border is also increasing (Eschbach, Hagan, and Rodriguez, 2001). In Arizona, in particular, ranch owners are establishing private patrols nicknamed 'minutemen', to guard both their property and the border, and membership in these groups has risen drastically since September 11, 2001. These minutemen groups are armed with high tech weaponry, such as assault rifles and laser scopes, as well as state of the art surveillance equipment like infrared and night vision binoculars and video cameras. Media attention on these groups has only increased their popularity, despite President George W. Bush's labeling them as vigilantes and condemning the behavior (Economist, March 10, 2005).

Though not all politicians agree with Bush, for example California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger recently called the minutemen 'heroes'. Schwarzenegger's outspokenness about immigration, though an immigrant himself, has become controversial as well, recently suggesting that the United States close the border, before retracting the statement and revising his vocabulary, stating that he intended to say 'securing' the border (Scherer, 2005). Due to the vulnerability of illegal migrants crossing the border through the desert, many violently oriented gangs, white supremacist groups and other hate groups, in both Mexico and the United States, have capitalized on these easy targets. Rapes, beatings, robberies and murders are becoming commonplace on the border, and the perpetrators operate with relative impunity (Urrea, 1993, 1996, Conover, 1987).

The half a million arrests of illegals in Arizona, alone, by the Border Patrol in 1999, illustrates the sheer size of this issue. At the same time, demand for cheap labor from

agribusiness and large manufacturing firms is as strong as ever. Though, on the surface, this may seem like a partisan issue in the United States, the debate is more complex. Some conservatives, such as Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington, claim that there is *No Americano Dream*. Such conservatives fear the *Hispanicization* of America, while other conservatives, such as the owners of big business, push for less restriction on immigrant labor coming into the country, and cheap labor that is already here illegally (Huntington, 2004). Liberal activist groups like Humane Borders, call for the construction of water facilities in the Arizona desert to cut down on migrant deaths, while others fear the outsourcing of jobs and the affects of undocumented workers on the wages of American citizens (Treat, 2001). Others still, fear the loss of American culture if the growth of the Hispanic population causes the *bilingualization* of the United States (Huntington, 2004).

Sophisticated social and familial networks guarantee Mexican's jobs from as far away as Southern Mexico, promising gainful employment if they can somehow get across the border. For an unemployed farm hand in the hills of rural Mexico, the hope for a better life and the sense of adventure, are enough to motivate migrants to pick up and head north to the, typically unfamiliar, border (Conover, 1987, Schaeffer-Duffy, 2003).

Decades of transmigration across the United States/Mexico Border has created widespread networks that have developed throughout America, which inform migrants of job opportunities, housing possibilities and other options available to migrants. Communication networks typically consist of extended families, friends or acquaintances from particular villages, towns or regions in Mexico, who over time, have established chain migration, either seasonally or long term, to particular cities and/or regions in the United States.

Chain migration is an important manner in which Mexican American immigrants migrate to the United States, and can occur in several ways. Undocumented workers employed in the United States typically contact family members on a semi regular basis to relay their progress and to send money to help the family in the home community. If the undocumented worker finds a job and becomes relatively settled in the host community, they may invite family or friends from the home community to come and live with them. If a company that employs an undocumented worker has job openings, the worker may send word to family or friends about the employment opportunity. Migrants may choose a particular town in the United States because someone from their home village lives there, or even that people from their home region are known to reside in a particular area.

Many Mexican families would be considered Transnational families because they may have family members living in the United States as well as Mexico, and even have members that were born in either of the two countries. Chain Migration and Transnationalism are essential to understanding the complexities of the Mexican American immigrant networks that create the basis for the immigration patterns that we see today.

For a more personal perspective on these migration networks and their associated issues, Ted Conover's book, *Coyotes, A Journey Through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens*, takes the reader first hand on a journey to the rural mountain village Ahuacatlan, in the Mexican state of Queretaro (1987). Conover lives for several months in the village with a Mexican family, and joins a group of several young men from the village, who begin a journey north to cross the border, bound for Idaho, to work at a potato farm run by a farmer known only as Farmer Edwards. For almost a decade, Mexicans from Ahuacatlan have been coming to Farmer Edward's Idaho farm, during potato season, which is incidentally during the harsh Idaho winter.

After all of the potatoes have been harvested, some of the illegal workers return home, and some migrate to the Phoenix Arizona outlying area known as El Mirage, just in time for the citrus season (Conover, 1987).

Conover was able to trace Ahuacatlan villagers from Los Angeles to La Belle, Florida, who had been returning to obscure towns for years, to work on particular farms. An intriguing question that arises is 'How does a Mexican villager from the Sierra Gordo Mountains end up spending many summers picking oranges and grapefruit in La Belle, Florida, only to return to Mexico at the end of the season?' The answer lies in the social and familial ties, the power of informal communication networks and chain migration.

Information regarding the prosperity of previous migrants and possible future opportunities travels very quickly across the border. Conover's truly ethnographic approach in the book, gives the reader insight into the drive behind these migrants and the promise of reliable work and better wages on the other side. Conover experiences the harsh realities of illegal migration into the United States firsthand, as he and the group arrive in the border town of Sonoita, and they attempt to hire a 'coyote', or migrant smuggler, to smuggle them to Phoenix, Arizona. Due to exorbitant fees that the coyotes offered, the group opted for a cheaper rate to be smuggled just across the border to the American border town, La Nariz. After handing over precious cash, half up front half after the trip, to the coyote, the group was left completely vulnerable to the 'coyote', and they were not sure if they would be scammed, abandoned, or successfully smuggled to the other side of the border. Unfortunately, the group had made only a partial trip toward the border in the back of a pickup truck, when they were arrested by Mexican 'Judiciales' or police. The police beat and tortured each member of the group, attempting to gain confessions of drug smuggling, and eventually releasing the group after taking most of the

group's cash and discovering Ted Conover, the American, among the Mexican immigrants. Within several hours of being released, a member of the group phoned a relative across the border in the United States who promised to pay another coyote when they reached the other side, offering an illegal immigrant's version of credit. In *Coyotes, A Journey Through the Secret World of America's Illegal Aliens*, several of Conover's undocumented travel companions are deported, yet arrive back in the United States within days, if not hours, of repatriation (Conover, 1987).

Several other aspects of Conover's book are particularly interesting, due to their first hand look at many of these immigration issues. One highly pertinent aspect to the book begins as Conover arrives at a large citrus orchard on the outskirts of Phoenix, Arizona. He discovers that there is only one house on the premises to house several dozen workers who are without transportation to find housing alternatives. Conover shares the one small house with twenty or more undocumented workers who all sleep on the floor. These workers face 8-12 hours per day of grueling manual labor in the blazing Arizona heat, climbing rickety ladders while carrying 80 pound bags of oranges around their necks (1987).

Conover unearthed another difficult aspect of life as an undocumented migrant worker, and that is transportation between regions of the United States for seasonal work. Many migrants are promised jobs in other parts of the country, but transportation often times is not provided by the farm owner or the factory manager. After the picking season was over in Arizona, Conover and several undocumented acquaintances procured a used car and set out on a journey to Florida. They had received word of work from friends and family in La Belle, Florida. The problem was distance. Passing through several states meant law enforcement of many different types. Some highways were notorious traps for undocumented Mexicans, and the

police, state patrol and other law enforcement were well known among migrants for paying particular attention to Hispanic motorists. The group took an out of the way route, avoiding Interstate 10, the direct route to Florida, and going up into Northern Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee and finally to Georgia and Florida where they took back roads from Macon to South Florida. When they arrived, the group was not provided living quarters, being forced to stay in a makeshift tent in the orange orchards. The workers were also made to buy gloves, bags and other necessities for picking the fruit, which was taken out of their pay. The long days, backbreaking labor and hot, humid Florida weather was most difficult on Ted Conover, the American, and the Mexican workers seemed relatively accustomed to the dire situation. Despite the conditions, the pride and machismo, or Mexican male macho attitude, among the workers, was a testament to the relatively worse conditions back home in Mexico (Conover, 1987).

Another good example of migration networks and patterns comes from the book *New Immigrants in New York*, by Robert C. Smith. Smith focuses on the slow growth of the Mexican community in New York City. This text offers an important example of the concept of chain migration. The early arrivals of Mexican immigrants into New York City were small in number. These Mexicans came to the city during the World War II period under the Bracero Program, the guest worker program allowing Mexicans to work in the United States under contract. This program brought approximately 2 million Mexican workers across the border, largely to work in agriculture. Some Mexicans, however, like Don Pedro, went to the cities, in hopes of staying in the United States. Don Pedro alludes to the ease of getting work in the city, due to the war, and he talks of bringing friends and family from his home, the Mixteca region of Mexico, up to New York. (Smith, 2001)

The first migrant Mexicans to New York were from the Yucatan region, in the 1920s. The 1930s and 1940s saw a shift of chain migration from the Yucatan to chain migration from the Mixteca region, surrounding Mexico City. Chain migration helps to explain the otherwise inexplicable phenomenon of migrants from a highly specific area in one country, to a very distant and also highly specific region in another. In the 1920s, the chain migration from the Yucatan was limited to small numbers, partly due to the agricultural success of the Yucatan. The lush Yucatan did not offer many push factors, which would cause Mexican nationals to leave. During World War II, however, the push factors such as Mexico's struggling economy, and pull factors, such as the labor vacuum in the United States, made for a potent mix for massive emigration from Mexico (Smith, 2001).

At that point, Mixteca people had begun to set up networks in the New York area, which triggered chain migration from Mixteca. Those Mexicans from the Yucatan had been established in New York for decades, and their connection to the labor network, and therefore the Bracero Program, was weak. Mixteca is made up of the Mexican states of Puebla, Oaxaca and Guerrero. The majority of Mexican immigrants from the 1940s through the 1980s, were from this region. They continued to migrate to New York, as news of opportunity arrived back in the home villages, and as remittances accompanied the news (Smith, 2001).

The tightly knit communities and family structures in Mexico help to explain the sophisticated networks that facilitate chain migration of this sort. Extended families remain in contact over great distances, and migrants often attempt to secure employment for family and friends back home, in their new cities (Smith, 2001).

Another element of Transnationalism is the effect of multinational corporations, international agreements and Non Governmental Organizations (NGO), such as the World Bank

and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on the transnational family. The burgeoning period of globalization that the world is experiencing now, affects families throughout the world. Mexico is a perfect example, and much in the literature on transnationalism exemplifies this. Contributions from the World Bank and the IMF to Latin American countries have all been accompanied by drastic restructuring of those countries' governments and economies, largely to the benefit of the industrialized world. Is it any wonder that people want to leave their homes after their country crumbles and jobs are scarce, largely to the benefit of countries like the United States? Why not go to the countries that are reaping the benefits?

The benefits that America experiences, from cheap undocumented labor, and cheap goods from our southern neighbor, most certainly benefit multinational corporations, as well. Legalizing undocumented workers might have the effect of raising their wages, and could the American consumer really handle that, especially with the gradual decrease in real wages in the United States among its citizens. In *More Mexicans, Please*, from the June 10th, 2004 issue of *The Economist*, Mexico's President, Vicente Fox travels to the Midwest to inspect programs and facilities intended for use by Mexican workers in Midwestern factories and on Midwestern farms. At the same time, states like Texas and Arizona, are embroiled in bitter disputes over the illegal border crossings occurring on their doorstep.

In *Another Rebellion*, an article that appeared in the October 28th, 2004 edition of *The Economist*, Arizona officials have begun to penalize businesses for employing undocumented workers, and the new proposed Arizona law, Proposition 200, will usher in a new era of increased arrests of illegal Mexicans in Arizona. Policy on the border echoes the public outcry in the Border States. Michael Scherer's article in the July/August 2005 edition of *Mother Jones* focuses on the vigilante movement of self made border patrols in Arizona and other Border

States. Events like the Minuteman Project, a public press staging in Tombstone Arizona, where Minutemen vigilante's met, posed and sensationalized border issues, have created a grandiose aura around the 'wild west' of the Border States. Groups like the American Border Patrol, have recruited militaristic American Citizens from all over the United States, supplied them with assault rifles, night vision binoculars, and 4 wheel drives, and ominously redirect groups of desert crossing undocumented migrants to the nearest Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) office, under the imposing silhouettes of camouflage attire.

All of these cases and elements of transnationalism offer new angles on the life of people who live the transnational life. Undocumented Mexican American immigrant families from rural Mexico have been relocating through chain migration to New York City since the 1920's. The same established networks that have brought workers to New York from Puebla, Mexico for decades, have been connecting millions of Mexican laborers to farms in Florida and factories in Minnesota.

In summary, issues of the legal status of many Mexican American immigrants create a great vulnerability of this population to dangers and deception. Despite the immense obstacles that undocumented immigrants face, some are able to use social and familial relationships to overcome these difficulties. The question of who benefits from the undocumented status of immigrant workers is troubling, as businesses profit, maintaining the low status of this group may also maintain the success of many American business sectors.

Poverty Issues. Urrea's *Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border* is a descriptive case study of the Tijuana, Mexico/San Diego, California border (1993). Urrea astutely portrays his experiences as a missionary volunteering for a San Diego group named Spectrum Ministries, Inc., led by an interesting minister/entrepreneur called Pastor Von (1993).

Urrea, throughout the late 1970s and 1980s regularly crossed the border into Tijuana from San Diego, which incidentally is the busiest international border crossing in the world, and brought food, clothing, and other services to the residents in 'El Dompe', the enormous landfill in Tijuana where numerous squatter's live. The residents of 'El Dompe' live in makeshift shanties and lean-tos made from materials found in the landfill. These materials vary from scraps of sheet metal and plywood, to discarded doors, tarps and pieces of plastic. Many of these shanties house large families with several children, who spend their day searching the landfill for recyclable materials to use or sell. Many residents survived on discarded canned food and food scraps brought over from San Diego, because the San Diego city government pays to dump waste in Tijuana's landfill. The residents face many dangers on a daily basis, such as the massive land movers and bulldozers that are used by the landfill, methane explosions, fires, pollution and diseases such as Hepatitis A, Dysentery, Malaria, and Tuberculosis (Urrea, 1993).

Urrea and Pastor Von travel into the dump to distribute food, water, medicine and provide haircuts and showers for the residents. The majority of the children in the dump have lice and scabies, and typically do not attend school due to the dress codes in the Tijuana school system as well as the lack of transportation or funds for supplies. Students who attempt to go to school with the help of the goods provided by Von and Urrea are typically beaten up by gangs of homeless or parentless street kids, and have their school uniforms and supplies stolen (Urrea, 1993).

Many of the residents of 'El Dompe' are not originally from Tijuana, but migrated from southern Mexico or Central America. These migrants largely intended on using their savings to get them across the border into the United States. Unfortunately, there are usually numerous difficulties on the way, including muggings, theft, beatings, rape, extortion, and other illegal

practices, that take advantage of unsuspecting migrants heading north. If, and when, these migrants arrive at the border and if they have any remaining money, they seek out a 'coyote', as discussed previously. Many 'coyotes' unscrupulously trick their clients by taking their money up front and not following through on their border crossing promise. Many women have gone missing in this manner, having been kidnapped and sold into the sex slave market, by 'coyotes' (Urrea, 1993).

Even if the 'coyote' is trustworthy and leads them across the desert into the dry, arid landscape that stretches from San Diego to Texas, these migrants still face danger. Gangs from both the Mexico and United States side of the border violently accost migrants crossing the border as part of initiation rituals or just as an outlet of aggression. Racist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the Aryan Nation, go on outings in the desert on the border in search of people crossing the border, with the help of high powered hunting rifles and four wheel drive vehicles. Migrants crossing closer to San Diego have to cross ten lanes of freeway traffic on Interstate 5, where desensitized motorists regularly run down migrant pedestrians running across the road (Urrea, 1993).

Continuing in this vein of literature, Luis Alberto Urrea's second book, 'By the Lake of Sleeping Children', offers vivid discussion of orphanages in Mexico (1996). Mexico's policies on orphans and orphanages are greatly different from the United States. Mexico maintains numerous state orphanages throughout the country and these are aptly named State House 1, State House 2, and so on. Mexico also has an interesting private orphanage phenomenon. In the United States, we typically see foster parents with several foster children under their care. In Mexico, anyone can start an orphanage, without any oversight from the government. Orphanages dot the border region of Mexico that range from church affiliated orphanages, both

catholic and protestant, and private orphanages. According to Urrea, the majority of these private orphanages are relatively legitimate, being run by middle aged couples, widows or widowers, and began as acts of good samaritanism to help homeless and/or abandoned children in their area. Urrea also gives accounts of questionable orphanages in rural Mexico where children live in self-dug foxhole type holes in the ground covered by camper tops, trashcans or any other makeshift shelter. Most of these private orphanages provide the only education that these orphans will receive, and some private orphanages utilize local parochial schools run by their affiliated church. State orphanages typically send their orphans to local public schools. Both state run and private orphanages offer adoption to Americans. This process is notoriously corrupt, due to the involvement of orphanage directors, local officials, judges, and others who receive kickbacks from adoption fees paid by the unsuspecting adoptive parents (Urrea, 1996).

When focusing on the issues surrounding orphans and their education, there can be a diverse set of experiences. Some orphans may have received public schooling, whereas others may have received rigid parochial schooling or none at all. All of these educational backgrounds can be generalized to be likely with all Hispanic immigrant students in the American public schools (Urrea, 1996).

Even in the greatly improving areas on Mexico's northern border, where American manufacturers set up plants, or subcontract out work in manufacturing operations called 'maquiladoras', the harshness of the landscape, and the lack of housing opportunities force migrant workers to develop impromptu squatter neighborhoods called 'colonias'. These colonias are typically set up on land not owned by colonia residents, and the housing consists of everything from shanty's and lean-tos made of scraps of wood, plastic and metal, to brick houses that have taken resident years to gather funds and materials. Colonia residents are made up of

both American citizens of Mexican descent or origin, as well as undocumented Mexican American immigrants (Jarman, 1997).

Colonias exist on both sides of the border, but in Texas, they have been largely ignored by the authorities. Most colonias do not have basic services such as water, sewage or electricity, and it is not uncommon for colonia residents to commute several hours to work in the maquiladoras. Though a large portion of undocumented workers in the United States are men, both single and married, the colonias do have families, whose children are typically ignored by school officials, and not offered bus transportation to schools.

Compulsory school laws are not enforced in many border colonias in Texas, and this is not a new phenomenon, as some colonias in Texas and Arizona have existed since the Bracero Program's beginnings in the early 1940's. To the average American citizen, these conditions would be unacceptable; many undocumented workers consider them to be a vast improvement over the situation in the home village. (Montejano, 1987, Conover, 1987)

In Ward's *Colonias and Public Policy in Texas and Mexico: Urbanization by Stealth*, the data from a Policy Research Project, sponsored by the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, is compiled and analyzed (1999). 'Colonia' (Ward, 1999, p. 1) is a Spanish term referring to community or neighborhood, but this term's meaning has changed when referring to the Border States and Mexico's border region. This new definition of the term colonia refers to makeshift communities, especially, but not restricted to, the United States/Mexico Border. According to Ward, colonias are characterized by little or no infrastructure, inexpensive and questionable land acquisition, and what Ward calls 'self-help dwelling construction' (1999).

Below is an excerpt from the book in which Ward quotes Texas land developer, Cecil McDonald:

1. Preparation: Perform Market research. Find a poor community with conservative banks that will not provide mortgage financing for migrants or recent immigrants and which also has a shortage of housing for low income families.
2. Find a willing attorney to research land development, septic tank and water supply regulations. In the absence of those regulations, you have a good potential for developing a colonia.
3. Select an area close enough to but at the same time away from the city where building and development activities are not readily noticeable.
4. Negotiate with the landowner, offering to pay double the asking price as long as the sale is owner financed. Offer to pay 10 percent down and the rest in a very short term at a negotiable interest rate; the owner has already made money doubling the price of the land. Do not get any bands involved. The transactions are to be kept secret; you don't want to lose the element of surprise. Fiercely protect the anonymity of the landowner.
5. Sell lots on a Contract for Deed basis.
6. Get a surveyor or engineer to develop the subdivision on paper. Advertise, but not in a nearby city. Ask for a very low down payment, even as low as \$25 or as little money as the potential purchaser has in his pocket. Starting next month he will have to produce \$125 or \$150 until he pays off his debt.
7. By the time local officials realize a colonia is developing, hundreds of lots may be sold and many families may already be living on the site.
8. By the time there is an official local action or state legislation is enacted, the colonia will likely be completely sold.
9. If pressured by the state or county to provide improvements such as water, sewers, or streets, argue lack of funds but continue selling lots in order to finance the improvements. Meanwhile, keep on making money.
10. It may take a year to be subjected to enforcement action, at which time you declare bankruptcy because of the high cost of improvements.
11. Relocate to another city, communicate with attorneys by mail (Ward, 1999, p. vii).

The purpose of Ward's study was to examine the difference between the way that Texas and Mexico have coped with the inevitability of colonias, and the effectiveness of policies that each have put into place to deal with colonias. Since many of the counties in Texas that border Mexico have large Mexican American immigrant populations faced with poverty issues, this

region study offers insight into the transformation that the Southeastern states are experiencing (Ward, 1999).

Land developers, such as Cecil McDonald, in Texas have been participating in this questionable business practice since World War II. During the Bracero Program, colonias were considered a necessary evil during the war years because of America's labor deficit. After World War II ended, the federal government expected the braceros, or Mexican contract workers, to return to Mexico, a large portion of which did not. The federal government then instituted Operation Wetback to search out and deport undocumented workers. By this point, colonias had become one of the only options that Hispanics in the border region to establish themselves and a community that represented them. In Texas, there are approximately 1400 colonias in the border counties, housing approximately 350,000 people, the majority of which are citizens or legal residents of the United States. This topic is intriguing from both a human interest standpoint, as well as from an educational standpoint, and the implications for education and society are great (Ward, 1999).

The issue of poor living conditions is an important aspect of life for colonia residents. Even though many colonias are decades old, and are many times inhabited by American citizens of Mexican origin, most do not have public water service, sewage service or waste treatment. Only recently have colonias that were established in the 1970's beginning to get running water from municipalities such as Brownsville and El Paso. Colonias typically have high rates of Hepatitis A and Tuberculosis, as well as other water born illnesses, due to unsanitary water storage containers and makeshift sewage systems. Due to the isolation of many colonias, bus transportation is typically not provided in the colonia, and compulsory attendance policies are ignored by local officials. Illiteracy rates are high in the colonias of Texas, yet Ward (1999, p. 1)

used the term ‘Slums of Hope’ when referring to certain colonias, especially in Mexico. These colonias being referenced had high rates of improvement by what Ward calls self-help methods. The residents of many of these colonias felt a sense of comradery and community, and worked together to improve colonias on their own. Most households began in makeshift lean-tos or shacks, but these dwellings were considered temporary. The temporary dwelling was what the family lived in while building their real house, typically of brick, and of considerable construction quality. Colonia residents often work together to get water from local wells or spigots at stores and churches, and residents get both water and propane for heating, from large delivery tanker trucks (Ward, 1999).

Most families in colonias have more than one wage earner in the household, and those teenagers who do go to school typically drop out at approximately 16 years of age (if not younger) to begin contributing income to the household. Due to the survival needs of colonia residents, school is not typically a high priority for parents or students, though this is beginning to change (Ward, 1999).

Peter M. Ward’s study closely examined the lack of concern that Texas local officials appeared to have toward the improvement and integration of colonias. Mexican government, on the other hand, viewed colonias as a natural reaction to market forces and the shortage of low income affordable housing. In the colonias, for example in Matamoros and Ciudad Juarez, local politicians struggle to improve colonias in hopes of capturing the large number of potential votes from residents. In Texas, this is not the case. Much of Texas’ public policy attempts to ignore colonias, and restrict rather than aid in their development (Ward, 1999).

Regarding colonias and their relationship to education, there has been a shift in attitude in recent years toward colonias, largely due to the diligence of residents as well as concerned

citizens and activists. Several of the larger colonias in Texas now have elementary schools at their entrances. These developments have occurred in the past few years, and due to petitions by colonia residents, bus service is provided to many more colonias now than a decade or two ago (Ward, 1999).

American Sentiment Issues. Public rhetoric is another interesting aspect of the immigration issue (Huntington, 2004). In Arizona, the rhetoric is particularly interesting, as Nathan Gandomi of the University of Arizona points out in his examination of anti-immigrant sentiment titled *Immigrants are dangerous Water? An examination of Anti-immigrant metaphor in Arizona public discourse.* (2002). Gandomi focuses on two Arizona newspapers, The Arizona Republic and The Arizona Daily Star. Gandomi considers that metaphors are more persuasive than literal references, and that negative metaphors regarding illegal Mexican workers illustrate underlying tensions and feelings among Americans. Gandomi found that the media most often associated immigrants as criminals by opting to use the term 'illegal' over the term 'undocumented'. He also found that the newspapers often used metaphors that referred to immigrants as objects and/or commodities. Examples of these metaphors are: the 'flow' of immigrants, 'import' or 'export' immigrants, 'supplying' immigrants and 'smuggling' immigrants. These metaphors insinuate a callous and desensitization of the American public to the faceless masses of immigrants crossing the border (Gandomi, 2002).

Public sentiment weighed heavily in Chavez's (1998) work on squatter camps in San Diego, California. During periods of heightened negative public attitude toward these camps, local officials would bulldoze the camps and facilities, forcing Mexican American immigrants to relocate from canyon to canyon. Within days of the bulldozing of the camps, new makeshift housing was being reconstructed (Chavez, 1998).

In sum, the lives of undocumented Mexican American immigrants are highly susceptible to the whims of American public sentiment. During labor shortages, the Mexican American immigrant is welcomed with open arms, yet during times of unrest, the undocumented immigrant lives partly at the mercy of public opinion.

Education Issues. One pertinent arena of American public life that is highly impacted by immigration issues is education. Immigrants, documented or not, attend American public schools in the millions, and the difficulties experienced by both educators and immigrant students are numerous. Language barriers are often the first and largest obstacles to overcome for immigrant students. Though young immigrant students tend to assimilate quickly and acquire English skills with relative ease, many immigrants struggle greatly with the English language. The growth of ESOL (English as a Second Language) classes in schools is a testament to the challenges faced in public education, and the attempts that educators are making to meet the needs of diverse student populations. As with other transnational families, one point of contention between first generation Mexican immigrant parents and their second generation children, documented or not, is the cultural divide that begins to grow as immigrant children embrace American culture and assimilate more quickly than their parents. Many undocumented migrant workers operate under the assumption that they will regularly return to Mexico to their families and home villages. Many times, Mexican immigrant children feel less of a connection with the family's home village and more of an association with American culture and values, than do their parents.

The implications for public schools and the social science classroom in particular, are numerous, and can be used to the classroom teacher's advantage with some imagination and sophisticated teaching practices. Many themes and concepts used in social science courses can

be applied easily to the lives of immigrant children, and a savvy teacher can incorporate the experiences and first hand accounts of these students into many lessons. For example, abstract concepts in Geography can be brought into students' realm of understanding when they can associate a friend and a story with ideas like globalization, migration and push-pull factors. History and Political Science students can more easily understand the real world effects of foreign policy when they are able to discuss the impact that international relations have had on their fellow students' lives. In Sociology, students can more readily grasp trends among groups of people when they can connect the experiences of their cohorts with issues related to war, economic instability, refugees and migrants. Having students participate in simulation exercises allow students to empathize with immigrants as well as understand the decision making processes that occur. Considering the impact that governmental decisions have had on fellow students may help students to deem political participation important, and motivate them to become more involved in the community.

To augment the contextual information, Espinoza-Herold's *Issues in Latino Education: Race, School Culture, and the Politics of Academic Success* began to shed light on how these factors affect students in the schools and in the classrooms (2003). Espinoza-Herald does not distinguish between Latino, Hispanic and Mexican origin students, and terms used by this author are placed accordingly.

Espinoza-Herold is a Peruvian woman who came to the United States to enter graduate school, and then teach at an Arizona Community College. She began to question the reason why the Arizona population was largely Hispanic, yet there were few Hispanics in higher education. She begins teaching French and English as a Second Language (ESL) at a rural Arizona high

school, then at an urban high school, and uses her experiences at each to give the reader insight into the struggles of Hispanic students in the modern school setting (Espinoza-Herold, 2003).

Espinoza-Herold points out that in both the rural and urban school there is a higher status placed on the French language program than the ESL or Spanish language program.

Administration and Teachers expressed these sentiments to her, as well as students. While comparing the high dropout rates of Latinos in American public schools, Espinoza-Herold is able to dissect several of the factors that impact the Latino educational experience. First, racism among students and from teachers was prevalent. Many of the teachers of Hispanic descent looked down on Latinos for using the Spanish language in the schools, and for other cultural indicators that rejected American assimilation. The Espinoza-Herold also observed many of the administrators pushing English immersion for students in ESL classes, whether these students were ready or not (2003).

Espinoza-Herold focuses on two Hispanic students who struggle for various reasons in the schools that she taught. The first student, Manny, was a second generation American (he and his parents were born in the United States), yet he and his grandparents spoke Spanish in the home. Manny felt quite disconnected from school and was encouraged to only use English by his parents because of the difficult school experiences that they had at the same school years earlier. Manny wanted to drop out of school, but stayed in because of pressure from his family. He was interested in auto mechanics, media and graphic arts yet did not have many classes in the school that allowed him to pursue his interests. His least favorite subject, Social Studies, was uninteresting because the students were only required to look up answers in the book for worksheets, and the teacher only lectured about American History from the white perspective. Manny was very interested in Mexican History and Culture, but was never able to pursue these

topics in Social Studies classes. Manny explained in interviews with Espinoza-Herold that he knew how to play the game of school, but felt that teachers favored students who were interested in going on to college. Manny and his friends had an antagonistic relationship with the administration and many teachers at his school, and had a lengthy disciplinary history throughout high school. He remarked that his teachers seemed more interested in punishing students than trying to work out conflicts between students (Espinoza-Herold, 2003).

Dr. Espinoza-Herold remarks on the dual identity of many Hispanic students in American schools. As with Manny, many Latinos are torn between their Mexican (and other Latin American country's) heritage, and their lives in the United States. Some Hispanic students decide to quit school and become *cholos* or gang members, selling drugs or participating in other illicit activities. This seems to be a common thread running through many American communities, including the Southeast. Espinoza-Herold also discussed teaching and learning styles with Manny. He cited that there were few good teachers at his school, and that the good ones usually gave the students choices as to what activities they would do in class, and what topics they would cover. Manny mentioned that most teachers did not allow students to work together in groups, and were always giving students the sense that the teachers did not trust them (Espinoza-Herold, 2003).

The second subject that Dr. Espinoza-Herold interviews is named Carla. She attends an urban Arizona high school and was an immigrant, moving to Arizona from Mexico when she was in elementary school. Carla had already dropped out of school for two years and was returning because she recognized the importance of education. Carla did not have encouragement to stay in school from her family. Her parents did not graduate from high school in Mexico, and did not consider this to be a priority. Carla mentions several negative

experiences that she had in school including sexual harassment by a teacher, blatant racist comments by a teacher, bullying by students both Hispanic and White, and preferential treatment of non-Hispanics in the classroom. Carla's saving grace seemed to be an ESL teacher who was very encouraging. Both Carla and Manny exemplify some of the major issues that Hispanics face in the public education system. Few positive reinforcements for graduating from high school made both students' school careers a struggle. The disconnection between the home and the school set the stage for students who had little personal investment in their own education. A lack of practicality in many of their classes made Manny and Carla feel that school was a game. The curriculum did not reflect the cultures of these students, namely social studies, which is ironic because these communities and schools were a majority Hispanic. The push for Americanization and assimilation came from every angle, home, fellow students, teachers, administrators and even society at large (Espinoza-Herold, 2003).

To recap, education plays its role in the status quo, as well. The American public school system offers chances at upward mobility, but these chances rarely manifest in results for the lowest status groups in our society.

Summary. What do these pieces of literature on Hispanics in the United States tell us about education and our society? Luis Alberto Urrea shows the harsh realities of the labor market, poverty issues and survival (1993, 1996, 2004). Urrea paints a picture of the ugliness of modernization and development, and how closely connected we truly are to these realities.

Peter M. Ward describes the colonia as a phenomenon that has been both tolerated and condemned depending on the context, relating both to American public sentiment issues and legal status issues. Ward's observations of colonias are enlightening in that they serve economic and social roles and functions outside the realm of bureaucracy and government. Ward's study

of colonias is also a warning signal to those bureaucracies that, if suitable low income housing is not provided or available, houses, neighborhoods and communities will arrive de facto (1999).

Chavez shows the impact that legal status and transnationalism have on the individual and the family unit. Conover illustrates the human side of the Mexican American immigrant crossing the border, and the dangers that they face (1987).

Lastly, Mariella Espinoza-Herold brings these issues into the more personal space of the Latino experience in American public schools. With a background in the previously mentioned topics, many of the issues that Hispanic students experience in Espinoza-Herold's study take on new meanings and significances (2002).

Issues in the Southeast

Now that the issues faced by Mexican immigrants in the Southwest have been discussed, the study will now turn to a focus on the Southeastern United States. The study will then narrow the focus to the State of Georgia, and then finally to Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, in order to illustrate the commonalities between issues and experiences between the Southwest and the Southeast.

With comparatively limited literature on Mexican American Immigration in the Southeast, the issues previously characterized in the Southwest, including economic issues, legal status issues, poverty issues, American sentiment issues and education issues, are more difficult to separate due to the smaller body of formal research. Therefore, movement from a general focus on the Southeast to a narrow focus on Athens-Clarke County Georgia allows for these issues which are highly interwoven and integrated, to be more easily gleaned from the body of formal and informal literature.

Leon Fink offers a glimpse into complex labor networks where sophisticated systems operating on market forces can bring obscure groups of people halfway around the world in hopes of a better life. In 'The Maya of Morgantown', Leon Fink (2003) discusses the transplantation of groups of Mayan Indians, indigenous to Guatemala and southern Mexico, who through complex networks of family, friends and associates, from Guatemala, through Mexico and into the United States, were able to find jobs in manufacturing settings for themselves, their family and even entire villages. What is more intriguing is that these jobs were in a small town in rural North Carolina, by way of Florida and California. After decades of establishment in this community, the Mayan workers, most of whom did not speak Spanish, but an indigenous Mayan language called Q'anjob'al, developed their own Mayan enclave and even established their own workers union. The author used a nickname for the Southeastern United States, 'The Nuevo New South', (Fink, 2003) which referred to the strategic migration of Latin American labor to the Sunbelt States. This reading made it quite apparent that there is much regarding Latin Americans in the United States that goes under the radar, so to speak, and that more extensive review of the literature on this broad and diverse topic was needed.

One extremely intriguing aspect to this book was the realization of the existence of complex de facto networks of people that either transported or smuggled people as labor for various businesses. Many coyotes are closely connected to the owners of large manufacturing firms or agribusiness, and for a fee the coyotes can provide the requested number of manual laborers right to the front door (Fink, 2003). The sophisticated nature of this illicit activity is extraordinary, and certainly deserves more investigation.

One powerful idea from 'The Maya of Morganton' was that these Mayan workers were all transported to North Carolina from a small rural town in central Florida named Indiantown,

ironically. The Mayan immigrants did not originally arrive in the United States at Indiantown, but crossed into the country at various places, especially Texas and California. After arriving in the United States, several of the Mayans were told of the possibility of work in the Southeast but would need to go to Indiantown, Florida in order to be placed at the jobs. These Mayans told the many fellow Mayans living throughout the United States about the employment opportunity and whole villages of families and acquaintances converged on Indiantown to be driven in vanloads to rural North Carolina. The complexity of this system is astounding. The typical pattern was that young single Mayan and older Mayan men with families would work in the factories, and eventually the women would be given jobs in the factories, as well (Fink, 2003).

Education Issues. Morganton's demographic shift presented quite a few challenges to the school system. Since these Mayan students spoke neither English nor Spanish, and none of the educators in Morganton spoke indigenous Guatemalan Q'anjob'al, the complications become apparent. In the Morganton situation, it was the local Catholic Church that became the liaison between the schools, the community and the Mayans, offering support services, English classes and even an annual cultural festival. Though 'The Maya of Morganton' is an exceptional case, it offers a window of insight into immigration and the variety of circumstances that accompany immigration. That is, education of immigrants is often provided by community groups rather than traditional educational institutions.

Economic Issues. Mendoza, Ciscel and Smith gave an interesting account of the migrant Latino population in their work *Latino Immigrants in Memphis Tennessee: Their Local Economic Impact* (2001). This study highlights the major shift in the Southeast that began in the 1990s, during which Tennessee's Hispanic population has more than doubled. Economic growth in this southern city offered migrants jobs in the service and construction industries which the

local American population could not fill. Between 1990 and 2000, the United States Census saw a growth in the Latino population from 8,116 to 53,628 respectively in the Memphis Metropolitan Statistical Area (Mendoza, et al, 2001). According to Mendoza, et al, the total economic impact of Latino immigrants in Memphis, as of 2001, was over one billion dollars. In 2000, Latinos earned \$570.8 million in wages, paid \$85.6 million in payroll/income tax, \$12.3 million in sales tax and spent \$359.6 million in the local economy (Mendoza, et al, 2001).

In Birmingham Alabama, the Latino population is also growing significantly. In Jefferson County, Alabama, this population has grown three hundred percent since 1990. Kimberly Hamilton and Ivan Machado have begun filming a documentary on the growth of the Hispanic community in Birmingham. Dr. Raymond Mohl, of the University of Alabama at Birmingham and a proponent of Birmingham's Hispanic community, declared that local Hispanics "worked hard and spent their money locally, boosting rental housing, retail stores and the used-car market (Seay, 2006)." Opposition to the pro-immigrant argument is evident in a recent study from Auburn University's Center for Governmental Services "which found that 23 percent of Alabamians 'somewhat agreed,' and 34 percent 'strongly agreed' with the statement, 'New guest immigrants take jobs away from American workers (Seay, 2006).'"

Both sides of this argument are common throughout the Southeast, making the immigration issue an increasingly heated debate. Consequently, economic issues are often the most pivotal and polarizing issues regarding immigrants. Each of the economic actors must weigh the cost versus the benefit of the economic relationship between business and immigrant labor. The interests of both are proving to be preserved through a continued, if not increased connection between Mexican American immigrants and the Southeast.

Legal Status, Illegality and Transnationalism. According to Kandel and Parrado, there are several factors involved in the shift of Mexican immigrants from the traditional Southwest locations to the nontraditional locations in the Southeast (2006). One of these factors is the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) and undocumented migrants' tendency to remain in the United States after arriving because of increased security on the border (Kandal, et al, 2006). The migrants who remained were helping to establish and entrench social networks throughout the country including the non-traditional locations. Another factor that brings migrants to the Southeast is the relatively lower crime and affordable housing compared to traditional migrant gateway cities such as Los Angeles, Houston, Chicago and Phoenix (Kandal, et al, 2006).

An increase in the size of Hispanic communities in the rural Southeast has accompanied the relocation of meat and poultry processing plants from metropolitan areas to rural areas. This relocation was spurred by the meat and poultry industry's desire to reduce transportation costs and reduce the threat of unionization that was present in previous locations in the northern states (Kandal, et al, 2006).

In Woodward's project, *Mexican Immigrants: The New Face of the South Carolina Labor Force*, South Carolina's largest sector employing Mexican immigrants is the construction industry (2006). Woodward's study followed the mobile Mexican Consulate, interviewing immigrants in several locations who were visiting the Consulate for information or to obtain documents. One third of the interviewees worked in construction, while the other two thirds worked in landscaping, manufacturing, restaurants, trade and agriculture (Woodward, 2006).

South Carolina, like other southern states, saw a drastic influx of Hispanic immigrants, the majority from Mexico, from the 1990s to the present. These new immigrants were not

working in the traditional agriculturally based jobs that their predecessors were. Mexican immigrants in South Carolina earn substantially less, on average than all South Carolina workers, \$21,000 versus \$31,940 respectively. The largest number of Mexican immigrants came to South Carolina from the Mexican states of Veracruz, Guerrero and Hidalgo, suggesting chain migration. South Carolina's population grew by 15.1 percent from the 1990 United States Census to the 2000 Census, however, the Latino population in South Carolina increased by 211 percent, falling behind Georgia's growth rate of Latinos at 300 percent (Woodward, 2006).

Florida is the exception that has not followed the migration patterns of the previously discussed states. Florida has a long legacy of Mexican migration, largely on a seasonal basis, due to the citrus industry. Citrus, however, is not the only agricultural niche that Florida farmers fill. The fresh winter tomato market is another major crop during the citrus off-season. Unfortunately, this industry is being undermined by American policy. NAFTA, which is a major reason that many Mexican farmers are unable to produce crops for the low prices that competition has caused, has also caused the fresh winter tomato farmers to petition the federal government for protection against the flood of tomatoes from Mexico (Tresna, 2003). This is interesting because the same factors that bring Mexican immigrants to Florida are the factors that cause Florida farmers to lose profit. The Florida fresh winter tomato case is illustrative of the impact of globalization on both sides of the border.

According to the United States Census' projections, Hispanics will make up 24.6 percent of the United States' population by the year 2050, making one in four Americans' Latino (Woodward, 2006). These figures are only inclusive of the legal resident or naturalized citizen Hispanic, due to the elusive nature of the undocumented population and the difficulty of accurately counting this portion of the Hispanic population. Therefore, these previously

mentioned population figures are likely to be larger, which shows the urgency and importance of further research on the experiences and impact of Mexican American immigrants.

In summary, many of the issues seen in the literature on the Southwestern United States are also evident in the Southeast. In order to narrow the focus of the study henceforth, I have focused the following discussion on literature solely regarding Georgia.

Georgia

Georgia, like other states in the Southeast, has seen a major increase in Mexican immigrants since 1990. Prior to 1990, the number of Mexican migrants was limited, largely, to seasonal agricultural workers in rural areas like Vidalia, Georgia.

Economic Issues. Since 1990, Georgia has experienced a major economic boom. This boom was exacerbated by the arrival of the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996. Preparation for the Olympics meant an increase in jobs in the construction and service industries, which coincided with labor shortages in several key industries around the state (DeVillar and Gonzalez, 2005). Economic improvement meant jobs in construction, landscaping, service industries and domestic services. Many jobs were also available in food processing and manufacturing, and because of stigma's associated with these types of jobs, along with lower wages, meant that plants around the state had a growing need for a new cheap, dependable and substantial work force.

Approximately 345,000 foreign born residents immigrated to Georgia between 1990 and 2000. The majority of these immigrants began to arrive after 1994 (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). Between 2000 and 2003, the size of the Hispanic population in Georgia rose from 433,882 to 541,124. Due the likelihood of undercounting of undocumented Hispanics, this number could be higher (DeVillar and Gonzalez, 2005). According to a study by the Pew Hispanic Center,

somewhere between 200,000 and 250,000 undocumented immigrants reside in Georgia (Cowan, 2006).

It is difficult to ignore Atlanta's economic prosperity as a major focal point of Mexican immigration. From 1980 to 2000 the Atlanta metropolitan area experienced what is known as *hypergrowth*, having a nine-hundred and ninety-five percent increase in the Hispanic population (DeVillar and Gonzalez, 2005). The importance of this growing segment of the population to the sustainability of the economic success of Atlanta and Georgia in general, will become apparent.

The Southern Growth Policies Board developed a report in 2004 which found that because of the baby boomer generation's impending retirement, and shortages of labor, the South's economy will soon largely depend on foreign born workers (DeVillar and Gonzalez, 2005). These findings can be generalized to Georgia, as Georgia ranks as the state with the third highest increase of Hispanic immigrants since 1990, behind only Arkansas and North Carolina (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). Some of Georgia's industries are already dependent on foreign born labor, the largest portion of which is the Mexican immigrant population.

Three cases studies in Georgia will be the focus of the proceeding discussion on Georgia's Mexican immigrants and their impact on industry. The first case is the Northwest Georgia city of Dalton, known as the 'Carpet Capital of the World' (Barros and Waslin, 2005). The cluster of carpet mills in Dalton and the surrounding Whitfield County produces eighty five percent of the world's carpet. In the 1980's, the younger generation of Dalton residents began to move off to college and relocate in areas where their education would match their employment, and though Dalton offered plenty of jobs, the status of factory work is considered lower than many professional careers (Barros and Waslin, 2005).

Mexican immigrants began to migrate to Dalton through social networks and chain migration to fill the plentiful and well paying jobs in the carpet mills. Throughout the 1990s, the Mexican population grew at a rapid pace. The Mexican population in the city of Dalton rose from 6.5 percent of the total population in 1990 to 40.2 percent in 2000 (Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga, 2002). The 2000 US Census tabulated 18,419 Hispanics in Whitfield County (Russakoff, 2006). The relatively low skill labor needed for carpet mill work brought Mexican immigrants from traditional gateway cities such as Los Angeles and Chicago to the Southeast. The growth of this population was partly spurred on by the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which legalized over 2 million undocumented workers (Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga, 2002).

According to Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga (2002), much of the decision making processes involved in the migration of Mexican immigrants to the Southeast was based on social capital (2002). Low skill jobs in agriculture at the time were also becoming low pay jobs due to the large size of available labor, yet the carpet industry offered low competition for low skill labor at relatively high wages. As the Hispanic population grew in Dalton, so did the influx of semi-skilled and educated Mexican immigrants. The Mexican of Dalton had become a sizeable market for Hispanic businesses and services, and Mexican entrepreneurs began opening businesses throughout Whitfield County. As of 2002, there are over seventy Hispanic owned businesses in the area (Hernandez-Leon and Zuniga, 2002).

Prior to the influx of Hispanics, Dalton, much like other cities throughout the South, were racially divided between blacks and whites. Despite the social tensions that have arisen since the 1980s, mill owners have been relatively successful at incorporating the Hispanic population into the community. Dalton is largely considered a success story among Southeastern towns for

several reasons. The involvement of Dalton's churches and public schools, as well as carpet industry associations, have helped to reduce anti-immigrant sentiment in the area, provide soccer leagues, offer social events and improve the affordable housing for immigrants (Barros and Waslin, 2005). Part of this successful incorporation in the community may stem from the local economy's obvious dependence on the Hispanic work force. Though many of the workers are not citizens, without them, carpet mill owners may have been forced to relocate plants to other countries and/or outsourced jobs (Barros and Waslin, 2005).

The success of the Dalton community has not been without its difficulties, one of which is a class action suit filed by American citizens employed by Dalton carpet manufacturer, Mohawk Industries. The workers claim that Mohawk is using the migrant workers to lower the wages of the workers who are U.S. Citizens (Russakoff, 2006).

Legal Status, Illegality and Transnationalism. Georgia's recent legislative actions may also greatly impact the carpet industries and other industries throughout the states, which depend on immigrant labor. The Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act, which will take effect in July of 2007, is one of the toughest state immigration laws in the country, which denies certain services to undocumented workers and allows police to check the immigration status of possible undocumented migrants. The Mexican government has even openly criticized Georgia's governor, Sonny Perdue, calling his bill "discriminatory" (Grillo, 2006). The federal government is still deliberating over the form that a new immigration reform bill will take, before it is signed into law. These developments will most certainly have a major impact on both the carpet industry of Dalton, and the poultry industry in the next example, Gainesville, Georgia, in Hall County.

The poultry industry has long been a staple industry in the Georgia economy. Since the 1930s, Georgia poultry plants have been exporting poultry, and as of 2002, Georgia exported \$308 million in poultry, which makes Georgia the largest poultry exporting state in the United States (Weinberg, 2005). The success of the poultry industry also coincided with an influx of Mexican migrant workers in the 1980s, much like Dalton. Now, the Hispanic population of Gainesville is estimated at over 50,000. Much like the Dalton case, Gainesville has developed a substantial Hispanic market for ethnic goods and services. Many Hispanic business owners have capitalized on this group of consumers, and now Gainesville offers a Spanish language newspaper and radio station (Weinberg, 2005).

Another major sector of the Georgia economy is the Vidalia onion producing region in South Georgia. The onion only grows in a particular soil type, a 20 county area surrounding Vidalia, Georgia (Clothier, 2006). Vidalia onions, have up to eight percent sugar, almost as much as Coke, at ten percent (Clothier, 2006). This \$200 million crop contributes greatly to the Georgia economy as a whole. Local growers have been working with the Georgia Department of Labor and promote the availability of jobs locally, but local people do not want these physically demanding manual labor jobs, so the growers resort to Mexican workers. Despite the difficulty of these jobs, some Mexican workers have earned up to \$200 per day harvesting onions (Clothier, 2006).

With the lack of a guest worker program, and the tough, impending immigration laws in Georgia, Vidalia onion growers worry that they may go out of business, and for good reason. In 1998, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) raided farms and deported over twenty undocumented workers. The rest of the undocumented workers fled Southeast Georgia for fear

of deportation. This caused many growers to lose money as Vidalia onions rotted in the fields, and farms were unable to fill their lost labor supply (Clothier, 2006).

The issues of legal status and the dangers and vulnerability associated with these issues are pertinent in Georgia, as they are in the broader Southeast and Southwest. Though Georgia has less experience with immigration law and law enforcement, when compared to the Southwest, the realities of Mexican American immigrants are similar. Since much of the political climate in Georgia relates to the public sentiment of the states residents, the following issues are pertinent.

American Sentiment Issues. Despite the importance of the Mexican American immigrant to the economy of Georgia, instances of negative public sentiment toward them occurs throughout the state (Russakoff, 2006). Sometimes negative sentiment goes beyond rhetoric. Six Mexican immigrants were killed recently in Georgia, and the murders were allegedly racially motivated (Taylor, 2005). Raids at factories and farms throughout Georgia have become common practice, in some cases law enforcement are without official warrants, and employers are not given consequences, but undocumented workers are fined or deported. (Clothier, 2006)

Athens-Clarke County

Athens, home to the University of Georgia, and the unified city and county governments now known as Athens-Clarke County, is a microcosm of many of the immigration issues that have been occurring throughout the State of Georgia, the Southeast, and the nation as a whole, over the past two decades. The area was originally inhabited by Cherokee and Creek Indians, but became an agricultural community that focused on cotton and food crops after the formation of Georgia (Cooksey, 2006). Now the largest employers in the area are: two hospitals: Athens

Regional Medical Center and St. Mary's Health Care System; two poultry processing companies: Gold Kist and Pilgrim's Pride; the University of Georgia and the Clarke County School District.

Economic Issues. The counties that surround Athens-Clarke County are largely rural agricultural and manufacturing based areas that are rapidly becoming bedroom communities for Atlanta commuters. Economic growth in the vicinity of Athens-Clarke County has meant a boom in new home construction, and the Highway 316 and Highway 78 corridors to Atlanta have brought the urban sprawl of Atlanta rapidly closer to Athens-Clarke County.

In addition to poultry processing, Athens also boasts several other large manufacturers and many small manufacturers. With a vacuum of labor supply in the construction industry, Mexican workers have filled the void. Large construction projects at the University of Georgia have created a need for skilled and unskilled construction workers, many of which are Mexican. Numerous upscale as well as tract home developments in the area have meant plentiful work for both the skilled and unskilled Mexican worker. Those workers who cannot provide legitimate or illegitimate documentation of their residency status are often times paid in cash (Melancon, 2005).

Even after these developments are built and sold, the demand for landscaping, cleanup and other odd jobs is high. Much like San Diego County, Mexican day laborers gather in the Athens-Clarke County area in hopes of obtaining temporary work (Chavez, 1998). One particularly visible example of the day laborer phenomenon occurs across the county line in Oconee County, in the parking lots of large shopping centers on Epps Bridge Road, which leads from Athens to Highway 316. Day laborers have been gathering in the parking lot of the Home Depot, Lowes and Wal-mart, looking for day jobs. Many contractors use the spot to select workers for construction projects, landscaping and cleanup. These workers are particularly

suitable to contractors because of their strong work ethic and willingness to work for low wages. Day laborers come from as far away as Gainesville, Georgia, in response to the construction boom in the vicinity of Athens-Clarke County. Homeowners pick up day laborers as well for odd jobs such as cleanup and yard work and the shopping centers' parking lots have become such a haven for day laborers and day laborer seekers that a shelter and portable toilet has been constructed by Oconee County Government on county land so that these workers have a place to gather (Melancon, 2005).

Legal Status, Illegality and Transnationalism. Being of undocumented legal status causes day laborers to be susceptible to many dangers and the fear of being arrested. Due to complaints from owners and patrons of the shops in the shopping centers, the local sheriff's office conducted a large bust of thirty one day laborers in December of 2005 (Melancon, 2005). This law enforcement operation fueled the immigration debate in both Athens-Clarke County and Oconee County, opening the question of the local economy's dependence on these laborers versus the question of these laborers residential status. In this particular case, most of the arrested day laborers were released on bond quickly, but under the new immigration law signed by Governor Perdue, sheriff's offices and police departments will be required to check the immigration status of all detainee's arrested on felony charges, and law enforcement will have the ability to check the status on other arrestee's if they choose (Melancon, 2005).

Day laborers in the Athens-Clarke County area are typically paid ten dollars an hour or less for construction work. These workers are usually paid in cash and therefore do not pay income taxes on this money (Melancon, 2005). The contractors also do not have to pay into Workmen's Compensation or be held accountable for any dangers that day laborers may encounter on the job. According to Professor Ron Warren of the University of Georgia, this

phenomenon has been occurring throughout the United States for years (Melancon, 2005). These workers are also highly susceptible to fraud due to their unfamiliarity with day laborers' rights, undocumented status and language barriers.

Day laborers are not the only Hispanic presence in the Athens-Clarke County area. Large poultry processing facilities in Athens-Clarke County employ a large number of Mexican immigrants. Like Gainesville Georgia, Mexican workers migrate to these high demand occupations, which are less desirable to other groups of workers due to their low pay and difficult working conditions. In a typical poultry plant, jobs may vary from 'killers' who stun the chickens and cut off their heads, to workers who scald the chickens in large vats of hot water used to remove feathers, to cutters who slice and saw the chicken meat, to cleanup jobs where workers move back and forth from freezer rooms to scalding hot rooms throughout the day. These and other positions at poultry facilities have high turnover rates, and companies appreciate the dependability of Mexican immigrant workers. Poultry processing plants in Athens-Clarke County provide transportation for some of their workers in large buses, and it is common knowledge that these companies are lenient on the legitimacy of the documentation provided by workers. Other manufacturing firms in Athens-Clarke County that employ numerous Hispanic immigrants include a large manufacturer of electricity transformers, a manufacturer of garage doors and a manufacturer of rubber and rubber products. Landscaping companies in the area have also become steady work opportunities for Mexican workers.

The majority of Athens-Clarke County's Hispanic population, 4,091 according to the United States Census Bureau (2000), is male (2,506), which is common throughout the United States (Chavez, 1996). After Mexican migrant men become established in their new community in the United States, it is common for those who are married to bring their spouses up from

Mexico (Chavez, 1996). Female Mexican immigrants are beginning to step out of their traditional roles in informal economies: preparing food at home to sell to neighbors, keeping the children of other Hispanic workers, sewing and other such endeavors that provide the household with small amounts of extra money. Now, more and more, female immigrants are moving into the formal workplace, and some industries consider female Mexican workers to be ideally suited for a particular company's labor needs (Chavez, 1996). This has not only changed the roles and dynamics of the Mexican immigrant family, but has empowered many women in a way that may have not been possible back in Mexico (Chavez, 1996).

The size of the Hispanic population has grown in Athens-Clarke County, and Hispanic entrepreneurs have begun to open small businesses throughout the area. One does not need to be a scholar to appreciate the growth of diversity in the community. Authentic Mexican, Puerto Rican and Cuban restaurants are particularly interesting because they provide some of the few places in the community that Mexican immigrants and white or black Americans interact outside of the workplace. Other examples of Mexican immigrant owned small business in the area are supermercados (supermarkets), carnicerios (butcher shops), night clubs, Spanish or bilingual publications, music stores, wire transfer and check cashing businesses, all of which cater to Hispanic clientele.

Several Hispanic enclaves in Athens-Clarke County are also part of the growing Hispanic population in Athens. These enclaves feature affordable housing, sometimes in less than desirable conditions (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). According to Atilas and Bohon, Hispanics face many challenges in regards to housing. Hispanic immigrants do not easily reach "residential assimilation", which refers to the segregation of housing according to a particular group and incorporation into the broader society (2003). Undocumented immigrants have great limitations

in regards to housing selection. First, it is common for transportation limitations to affect housing choices. Without their own vehicles, many Mexican workers are limited to living near a friend with a vehicle, near their worksite or near a public transportation route. Next, due to documentation issues, many Mexican immigrants have difficulty obtaining apartments or houses, so are limited to trailer parks or enclaves where landlords are lenient on the status of their renters. Landlords of this nature commonly rent their housing to more than the legal capacity of the living quarters (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). In some cases, landlords charge each individual in the residence rent, the total amount equaling far more than the appropriate rent of the property. The number of Mexican migrant workers in a particular rental residence can vary greatly, but many single males who are living with four to six men per room (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). This phenomenon is known as “Camas Calientes”, a slang Spanish term. “Camas Calientes” is a term that refers to a living situation that is so crowded that there are not enough beds for every person. People take turns sleeping in the available beds and these beds stay warm because they are never vacant (Atilas and Bohon, 2003).

It is also common for several families to share one residence. Crowding and affordability are not the only issues that Mexican immigrants face in regards to housing. Many landlords rent dwellings with holes in the floor, broken air conditioning and heating, and other conditions that are below governmental housing regulation (Atilas and Bohon, 2003). One of the interviewees in Atilas and Bohon’s study acknowledged that they were being taken advantage of, but had little recourse, “...since the landlord is also the sheriff” (2003). In another of Atilas and Bohon’s interviews a fireman who recounted that he was

going to a fire in a trailer park primarily inhabited by Latinos. The fire was started because tenants had electrified their own rented housing units by stringing wires from a nearby electrical pole to their trailers. When putting

out the fire, he noticed that children were playing in the backyard in pools created by broken sewer pipes (Atilas and Bohon, 2003).

Poverty Issues. Several Mexican immigrants living in an undisclosed trailer park in the Athens/Atlanta area were interviewed for their work attitudes and work experiences (Dewey, 2004). Some of the subjects worked as day laborers, and employers even regularly came into the trailer park looking for workers. All of the subjects living in the park came from poor farming families back in Mexico. Some of the subjects had little more than an elementary school education, but not all. One particular subject had both a high school education and business school education. She was unable to use her education to get a job because she got married after finishing school. The family moved to the border town of Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, to work in the *maquadoras* or border assembly plants. The family relocated to Georgia after twelve years in Matamoros and the subject has worked in several manufacturing settings since. Mexican schools' diplomas and degrees are sometimes not transferable to the United States and the language barriers that this subject and many other immigrants face mean that sometimes even educated Mexican immigrants will be underemployed in the United States (Dewey, 2004).

Some of Dewey's subjects faced racism in the workplace and some did not. The interviewees that worked in factory settings complained about the higher pay given to, and less work required of, American workers doing the same jobs. Some of the subjects had good work experiences, such as those who were able to secure a long term position with a construction contractor or small business. All of the subjects in Dewey's study remarked about the relative ease of their new lives in the United States as compared to life back in Mexico, despite difficult living and working conditions that they now faced (2004).

To summarize, issues of poverty among Mexican American immigrants in Athens-Clarke County are similar to those experienced by Mexican American immigrants in the Southwest.

Stark realities exist here within my own community, which resemble those brutal conditions on the border. The fact that the subjects in Dewey's work saw life in the United States as comparatively better than back home in Mexico. Therefore, the desire to stay in the United States, despite the hardships that Mexican American immigrants face, is powerful.

Education Issues. Ashcraft's (2004) study on formal and informal adult education of Mexican Immigrants focused on how formal and informal learning processes were related to the adaptation and incorporation of these immigrants into the larger society. Ashcraft was involved in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through a social service agency in the Athens-Clarke County area. Overall, Ashcraft found that Mexican adult immigrants valued education highly, both for themselves and for their children. Most had a strong desire to learn English to improve their status in American society, yet due to issues such as transportation and work hours, many were unable to devote the time necessary to master the language. Ashcraft found that Adult Education played a significant role in the adaptation and integration of Mexican immigrants into American society. Ashcraft also found that Mexican immigrants are among the least integrated immigrant groups in the United States, partly due to language barriers and low education levels (2004).

Several of Ashcraft's research subjects came from poor farming families in rural Mexico. Access to schools was limited and the cost of buying uniforms and supplies, requirements of many Mexican schools, deterred several of the interviewee's from pursuing their education beyond elementary or middle school. Though not all of Ashcraft's research subjects were uneducated, all have worked, whether short- or long-term, in the poultry processing industry. The accessibility of these jobs to low English proficient immigrants is attractive to many immigrants. As jobs in poultry processing became more prevalent in Georgia, word spread

throughout the United States and Mexico. The complex labor networks previously discussed also act as communication networks, and Mexican immigrants have followed the news of available jobs to Athens-Clarke County (Ashcraft, 2004).

The participants in Ashcraft's study had significant barriers to incorporation and integration into mainstream American life in Athens-Clarke County. For instance, in the poultry processing plants, Mexican immigrants were grouped with other Hispanic workers, so these workers had very little contact with English speakers at work. Ashcraft's research subjects often learned vocabulary which would be helpful in the workplace. For instance, one of the subjects who worked in a plant nursery learned all of the English names for the plants that were grown. Though learning workplace vocabulary is important to these migrants' success in their jobs, without conversational English skills, their upward mobility is limited (Ashcraft, 2004).

Even when migrants came into contact with English speaking Americans, the relationships were not reciprocal. For instance, social services agents were often in the homes of Mexican immigrants, but their relationship with these immigrants were largely based on providing some sort of aid or assistance to the immigrants. The immigrants were not in a position to offer help to the social services agent. These relationships are unidirectional. In order for true incorporation and integration into society, the relationships between Mexican Immigrants and English speaking Americans would need to be relatively more balanced (Ashcraft, 2004).

Despite language barriers, some savvy Mexican immigrant workers use the skills that they learn in the American workplace as leverage for upward mobility. By showing initiative, several of Ashcraft's interviewee's were able to use skills gained in one job to obtain another, higher paying job (2004).

Other types of learning also contributed to the improvement of mobility for Mexican immigrant's in Athens-Clarke County interviewed by Ashcraft. Among these included: learning to drive and studying for the written driving test, studying for citizenship tests, shopping in American stores, taking ESL classes and going to church (Ashcraft, 2004).

Summary

Issues in the Southeast, specifically Athens-Clarke County Georgia, are similar to the issues found in the Southwest, with a few key differences. Like many urban areas in California and Texas, Southeastern states have large industrial centers that attract migrant workers, specifically, Mexican American immigrants. Southwestern states also have large agricultural regions which attract seasonal workers, as does the Southeast. Both Southwestern and Southeastern agribusiness and manufacturing actively recruit and often times rely on Mexican American immigrant labor to maintain global market competitiveness.

Mexican American immigrants have difficulty becoming fully incorporated into the larger American society in both the Southeast and Southwest. De facto segregation of Mexican American immigrants into ethnic enclaves occurs in both regions, giving immigrants less opportunity to use and become familiar with American English. Mexican American immigrants in both the Southwest and Southeast likely have experienced similar hindrances during border crossing, and often experience abuses due to their dependence on coyotes to make this crossing. Mexican American immigrants use similar social networks to establish jobs and housing in host communities in the Southeast and Southwest.

One major difference between the Southwest and Southeast has to do with the presence of coyotes. Though coyotes do operate in the Southeast, it is often as a recruiter for specific industries, rather than as a smuggler of people across borders. The role of the coyote in the

Southeast is often more secondary and indirect. Often the networks of safe houses and rendezvous locations for migrant smuggling are more complex and well established in the Southwest, partly due to the relatively recent influx of Mexican American immigrants to the Southeast. Though the Southeast does have an increasing connection to Mexico and its economy, the Southwestern states depend much more heavily on trade with Mexico. This may serve as a beacon that as the Southeast continues to increase trade with Mexico, so do the intensity of these economic issues increase.

In the Southwest, the presence of the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Border Patrol, has become a part of everyday life in many areas. The Southeast has yet to see this amount of federal law enforcement involvement, but the current political atmosphere may be an indicator of a change in this involvement.

Both the Southwestern and Southeastern regions have problems with the growth of the black market due to the expansion of the undocumented immigrant population. Poverty issues perpetuate this market, as Mexican American immigrants grow desperate for goods and services not available to them due to their legal status. The Southwest is not alone in its lack of affordable housing for immigrant workers, and the issues with poor living conditions in the Southeast resemble the colonias of the Southwest.

Public outcry also ebbs and flows in both regions. Though the Minutemen and many other vigilante groups originated in the Southwest, some have spread to the Southeast, and negative attitudes toward Mexican American immigrants are certainly present in Georgia.

To reiterate, education issues for Mexican American immigrants in the Southeast do vary from the Southwest. A longer legacy of Spanish speaking residents from Texas to California

means that the Southeast is even less equipped than the Southwest with appropriate language services in the schools to deal with the rapid growth of Spanish speaking students.

Chapter 4- Phase Two

Through formal and informal literature, the story of the Mexican American immigrant in the Southeast can be sufficiently outlined. One problem with conducting a literature-only based study on this topic is that some of the personal and individual perceptions in the community may become skewed due to the influence of local media and politics on the public's understanding of the realities faced by Mexican American immigrants. Because Athens-Clarke County has seen a rapid growth in the Mexican American immigrant population, there are many realities that may not be covered in the media or literature but that members of the community may have extensive personal involvement with. For this reason, the selection of key informants for the second phase of the study was important as a way to gain perspectives not already provided in the first phase of the study, and to corroborate the data gathered from the literature, with what is going on on the ground in Athens-Clarke County. In order to make the information gathered from the interviewees compatible with the findings of Phase One, the data from interviews was categorized into the five major issues discussed: Economics, Undocumented Status, Poverty, American Sentiment and Education.

Economic Issues

Economic issues were at the forefront of each of my interviews. The economic pressures experienced by Mexican American immigrants are certainly an overarching theme running throughout the discussions on the other issues. Also, the interconnectedness of these issues makes for many instances of cross-issues anecdotes and key points.

Key Informant One confirmed my findings that the poultry industry was a major economic pull factor for Mexican American immigrants in Athens-Clarke County. Other local manufacturing sectors employed large numbers of Mexican American immigrants, including:

textiles, garage door manufacturing, electrical supply manufacturing, paper products and rubber products among others. Key Informant One claimed that Mexican American immigrants often voiced their dissatisfaction with treatment and working conditions in these manufacturing settings. Key Informant One stated that “[Mexican American immigrants] were regularly given the most difficult and strenuous jobs...” at the businesses, and that supervisors treated them more harshly than white or black employees. One story came from a woman with whom Key Informant One had developed a working relationship with. This woman worked at a “...factory near Athens”. She was “...injured at work, and the manager made her wear a big sign on her front and back saying that she was not careful, and was not following the rules”, [and that carelessness was why she was injured]. This woman was required to “...walk up and down the line all day while others worked”. Key Informant One felt strongly that this treatment was caused by the awareness of the management of the female worker’s undocumented status, and that the company knew that she and others would not quit the job. Another manufacturing scenario mentioned by Key Informant One was a female Mexican American immigrant worker beginning work at pre-dawn hours without a specified time to get off work. This worker often worked 12 to 16 hours a day, five to seven days a week. Overtime pay was also a benefit owed to this worker, yet not mentioned or given by the businesses.

Key Informant One also discussed the day laborers in Athens, and the situation that received local media attention where day laborers were arrested by local law enforcement. Key Informant One cited construction, particularly masonry and carpentry, and yard maintenance, as jobs that day laborers often seek. The rumors of day laborers given work and not paid for the work were verified, as Key Informant One affirmed that several families that the informant worked with had members who had been cheated in this manner.

Key Informant One noted Transportation as a major issue for Mexican American immigrants. This informant mentioned several cases where cabs or friends with cars charged exorbitant amounts to transport Mexican American immigrants to work or other various locations. A stringent drivers license law recently passed in Georgia were seen as major influence of this issue by the informant.

Key Informant Two, a school administrator, focused on the educational factors impacted by the economic issues that Mexican American immigrant parents and students experienced. Informant Two stated, “many of our Hispanic parents only have access to manual labor sorts of jobs. They don’t have a view of other job opportunities available to their children.” “Many of our students work manual labor jobs in the summers to earn money for the family.” The students that Informant Two mentioned are under the legal working age, yet have no difficulty finding jobs. “Many of our students have to take care of their little brothers and sisters at home, and translate for their parents.” Home responsibilities are important roles that these students fill in order to allow the parents to work at the occupations mentioned prior. “Our Latino students change schools a lot. They move to where the affordable housing is. We recently had several trailer parks on the East Side [of Athens-Clarke County] get condemned. Hispanic families moved to the west side because of the cheap housing”.

Key Informant Three reiterated many of the economic challenges mentioned by the other two informants. Informant Three discussed economic issues and how language barriers affected job opportunities. Many of the Mexican Americans with which Informant Three worked were from Michoacan, Mexico, a very poor, very rural and very indigenous state in Mexico. A large portion of the families that Informant Three worked with were illiterate in both English and Spanish when they arrived in the United States. In their home regions, these Mexican American

immigrants had low status because of their indigenous backgrounds, little job opportunity because of the Mexican economy, and viewed moving to the United States as one of the few options to improve their social standing and the lives of their families. Key Informant Three recounted one incident where a Mexican American immigrant male wanted to show Informant Three a picture of the home that he has been building back in Michoacan with the extra money he saved from working. He was proud of the photograph, and Informant Three was very complimentary of the house. Informant Three described the house to me during the interview as “a shed”, no bigger than the room in which I was conducting the interview. Informant Three also considered the trailers in local trailer parks where many Mexican American immigrants live, as castles, compared to the housing where these immigrants came from.

To recapitulate, economic issues seem to be overwhelmingly important in regards to the Mexican American immigrant population in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. The economic benefits for immigrants, compared to opportunities in the home country, often times outweigh the negative aspects of life in the United States.

Legal Status, Illegality and Transnationalism

Many of the problems surrounding the undocumented status of a large portion of Mexican American immigrants are also related to economic issues. Undocumented status also causes difficulty doing research by interview, as the vulnerability of the target group plays into many issues that are important to this study. Therefore the Key Informants were a way to gather first hand information on the local Mexican American immigrant population without risking harm to the individuals to be interviewed.

One issue that both Key Informants One and Three focused on was the black market. The lack of documentation for Mexican American immigrants marginalizes these people in many

ways. First, Georgia's strict driver's license law, which requires residency documentation in order to obtain a state license, causes many undocumented immigrants to drive without insurance. Also, since passing a drivers test is no longer an option, Key Informant Three pointed out, that undocumented immigrants often neglected to learn or follow proper traffic rules while driving. Therefore, licensed, insured drivers are now at more risk, both by unskilled drivers and by the lack of insurance in case of an accident.

The black market is also an optimal way for undocumented immigrants to obtain a vehicle. Often, they are sold vehicles at exorbitant prices, or falsified residency papers, insurance or driver's licenses that are not legitimate. Key Informant Three recanted an instance where an immigrant paid over 2000 dollars for fake documents. Other high priced items are sought out on the black market such as electronics, furniture, and even housing.

Health care is another domain of issues that both Key Informants One and Three focused on. Without documentation, immigrants are forced to use home remedies to treat illnesses. When these remedies fail to help, Mexican American immigrants, they look to the black market for medicines such as antibiotics. Often, undocumented immigrants are left with no choice but expensive emergency room treatment at one of the two local hospitals, or the regional emergency outreach clinic. Both Informants discussed the rise of medical costs for all patients partially caused by this predicament. Even families with two undocumented parents, may have one or more children who are citizens because of being born in the United States. These children cannot access programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, because the parents are unable to show documents proving their financial status. Often times, undocumented workers are paid under-the-table, with no record of their income, and no tax identification for paid taxes under false social security numbers.

Undocumented status makes Mexican American immigrants highly susceptible to exploitation and mistreatment. Informants One and Three mentioned stories told to them by Mexican American immigrants about employers picking up day laborers and not paying them, or paying less than the agreed upon wage. Even workers in factory settings were subject to abuses by employers. Informant Three told a story of a female Mexican American immigrant who was fired for complaining about working conditions. This worker felt that she had no recourse because of her undocumented status. Informant Three mentioned the men who worked as chicken killers at a local poultry plant, whose hands and fingers became oddly deformed after working the job for only a year. Younger female workers at the plant are often given jobs in the freezer, where, as told by Informant Three, their “hands hurt so bad after only 15 minutes, and they have to work eight or ten hours”. Informant One recounted a story of a female factory worker who was undocumented. She had developed a rash on the side of her neck and face from handling harsh chemicals at the factory. The rash spread quickly, and soon covered the side of her body. She did not report the problem to the employer for fear of losing her job. Therefore, her access to Workman’s Compensation was subsequently forfeited. Key Informant Three remarked that several undocumented workers who did report injuries on the job at particular companies were treated appropriately.

Key Informants One and Three also discussed the overarching sense of fear experienced by undocumented Mexican American immigrants. Informant Three, who works with children as well as adults, said that the children tell her that they are “afraid that when [they] get home from school that [their] parents will be gone”, likely meaning deported. After law enforcement raided local day laborers, rumors spread among the Mexican American community that the immigration officials were going to raid schools, factories and other locations frequented by Mexican

Americans. Even social services workers found it difficult to establish rapport with undocumented migrants, because of distrust and fear held by immigrants toward anyone who was not a part of the immigrant community. One exception, according to Key Informant Three, was the Catholic Church and Catholic Social Services, a religious based social service outreach agency in Athens-Clarke County. Because of the strong Catholic ties of many Mexican American immigrants, these particular faith based social services were welcomed in the immigrant community.

Living conditions were also a factor referred to by Key Informants One and Three. Both informants discussed local neighborhoods and trailer parks where undocumented immigrants were rented housing that would be considered substandard and unsanitary. Key Informant One mentioned one trailer park where the floors of the trailers were rotten, and full of holes, yet were being actively rented. Informant One also revealed that a local, largely Hispanic neighborhood, nicknamed Duplex, because of the run-down duplex apartments there, had apartments that had no heat and no windows, yet were being actively rented to immigrants. Several of the trailer parks that resembled the one discussed by Informant One were recently condemned by local law enforcement, and residents evicted.

In summary, the legal status of Mexican American immigrants weighs heavily on their ability to effectively incorporate into American society. Being undocumented causes many Mexican American immigrants to seek out their needs through extra-legal means. Often times, employers and landlords take advantage of the vulnerability of this segment of the Athens-Clarke County community, knowing that these immigrants have no recourse against injustice.

Poverty Issues

Poverty, like the other issues discussed, is intertwined among the other issues, and difficult to tease out as a distinct issue. Some examples given by Key Informant One and Three do highlight the difficulties surrounding the impoverished lives of many Mexican American immigrants. According to Key Informant One, day laborers often wait for days or even weeks before getting work. Multiple families regularly rent housing together, and often times all of the children share the living and dining rooms as sleeping quarters. Informant One claimed that it is common for other members of the family, or recent arrivals from Mexico, to be given temporary refuge in these multi-family dwellings.

Frequently, both parents in a family work, and have less than desirable work hours. Informant One brought up the story of a mother who works three a.m. to five p.m., six to seven days a week, for a paycheck of approximately 900 dollars biweekly. Informant One stated, “some of the workers are not given days off, receive fines at work for accepting phone calls while at work, and docked pay for work uniforms and equipment. Informant Three told the story of a Mexican American immigrant woman who had recently arrived in a local trailer park to live with family. The woman was nine months pregnant, and two days prior to meeting Informant Three in Athens, had swam across the Rio Grande on the border of Mexico and the United States, to get to this country. She arrived in Athens one to two weeks before the baby was born. Informant Three stated, “She told me that she couldn’t swim. She said, ‘I was scared’. I said ‘I bet you were’”.

In sum, issues of poverty are woven through the lives of Mexican American immigrants in the Athens-Clarke County area. Low wage employment also comes with dangerous or

unhealthy working conditions. Poverty also effects Mexican American immigrant's access to good housing, transportation and health care.

American Sentiment Issues

All three key informants made statements that focused on the lack of contact with the Hispanic community by other Americans contributed to negative American sentiment toward immigrants. Informant One acknowledged that despite rhetoric in the public regarding closing the border and more stringent laws on undocumented immigrants, many Americans take advantage of the Mexican American immigrant as cheap labor. Informant One affirmed, “[Mexican American immigrants] are a disposable workforce”. Informant One also cited racism in the South as contributing to Georgia's harsh immigration laws. Informant Three, who facilitates middle class American tutors who work with Hispanic children in largely immigrant communities, stated, “I don't know who gets more out of it, the children or the middle class tutors”. “The children hear horror stories about Gringo bosses from their parents and they fear white Americans, but when they get to know the tutor, the children are exposed to Gringos in a new way”. “I think the tutors get more out of it, because [the experience] opens their eyes to life as one of these children, and their middle class values are challenged”.

To summarize, the larger American public lacks interaction with the Mexican American community in important meaningful ways. When interaction begins, often the fears and prejudices on both sides dwindle and growth can occur for both Americans and Mexican American immigrants.

Education Issues

Being a school administrator, Key Informant Two's interview responses centered around the last issue, education. Poverty and the undocumented status of their family greatly impact the

education of Mexican American immigrant students. Many Mexican American immigrant students have parents with little education, and Key Informant Two stated “migrant parents distrust the school at first, but if the school builds a long term relationship with the families, and show that the school is fair and welcoming, we get much more support from the parents”. A misconception by educators and the public alike, is that Mexican American immigrant students are not intelligent, because their parents did not get much education. Test scores disagree. Hispanic students familiar to Informant Two have high average math scores, yet low average language skills scores. The language barrier appears to be a major obstacle in achievement for these students, but is not reflective of a student’s intelligence.

Because of dire economic needs, some Mexican American immigrants are encouraged by their families to drop out of school at a particular age. This may be necessary to the family, as the student would be able to contribute financially to the family’s income, or provide childcare for the family while others work. Though this does occur, many Mexican American immigrants make education for their children a priority, despite low educational attainment on the part of the parents.

Key Informant Two also focused on job opportunities for Hispanic students, saying “Some of our Hispanic students are not aware of the job opportunities available to people with more education. If the parents only made it to the Fifth Grade, they may not know the types of careers available in the United States”.

Mexican American immigrants are also often chronically mobile, following seasonal work or day labor jobs. This means that the children of these families often have irregular school attendance, and inconsistent school achievement. Sporadic schooling leads to low school performance and disinterest in school.

To review, public education for Mexican American immigrants is lacking in several key ways. A lack of Spanish speaking faculty and staff causes a language barrier that is often not breached. The disconnection between the home and school is further exacerbated by cultural and language differences that are difficult for schools to curb. More familiarity with the schools and a proactive approach to Mexican American immigrant parent involvement in schools may help to bridge this gap.

Chapter 5- Conclusion

To summarize the findings of the study, I have created a conclusion with three sections. First is the Findings of the Study section that culminates the data found in the literature and interviews. Next is the Thoughts of the Researcher section which explores my own personal findings as the study concludes. Finally, the Future Research section will discuss my plans for further study into the subject as a Doctoral Dissertation, and what other fields of research might be explored

Findings of the Study

The issues facing Mexican American immigrants in the Southwest and Southeast are similar. Economic issues, push factors such as the lack of opportunity in Mexico and pull factors such as the abundance of unskilled jobs in the United States, are the most powerful issues facing Mexican American immigrants and their migration patterns. Economic issues are also interwoven throughout the other issues that impact Mexican American immigrants. For example, issues involving a Mexican American immigrant's undocumented status are highly influenced by economics. The definitions of who is a legal and who is an illegal immigrant have changed to suit economic circumstances. The decision to bring in more Mexican workers or restrict the number of Mexican workers is largely a function of the political and economic atmosphere of the time. For example, during World War II, the Bracero Program offered Mexican American workers an opportunity to earn money by working in the factories and on the farms of the United States, but in recent years, stringent immigration laws have resulted from the uncertain economic stability and concerns regarding national security in post-9/11 America.

Because of the circumstances that many Mexican American immigrants find themselves in today, living in poverty and exploited at work, fear is ever present in their lives. Mexican

American immigrant schoolchildren may not know, from day to day, whether their undocumented parents will be deported, or will be home for dinner after work like their documented counterparts.

Business owners using unscrupulous labor practices, landlords illegally renting housing that is below safety code, and black market entrepreneurs that offer unregulated products are all a reality throughout our country, and within the local Athens-Clarke County community. Employers and landlords prey on the fear of the undocumented worker, and the imposing threat of the immigration official showing up at work, or knocking on their door.

Who benefits from this marginalized group of people? The United States does. The American people do. Political rhetoric only strengthens the façade that Mexican American immigrants are a detriment, when they are filling jobs that other Americans refuse to fill. The American education system does not seem to be changing the realities of Mexican American immigrants, despite its commonly known nickname, the Great Equalizer. Can the education system make improvements that better Mexican American immigrants' chances of success? After reviewing the data, my conclusion is: yes it can. Incentives for attracting bilingual personnel to the education field can only benefit both the students and the teachers who struggle to bridge the language gap. Incorporation of community groups and grassroots organizations into the school, for instance bilingual volunteer tutors, and community English classes, would also increase the strength of the link between school and home. Grassroots efforts to improve circumstances for immigrants have been effective in many communities, including faith based organizations (Fink, 2003). Community level involvement of concerned citizens is a heartening development that will hopefully continue to grow if the public can be exposed to the exploitation and mistreatment of Mexican American immigrants.

Atiles and Bohon's study, *The Needs of Georgia's New Latinos: A Policy Agenda for the Decade Ahead*, gives great insight into the existing issues related to Mexican immigrants in Georgia, and offers suggestions for addressing these issues in the future (2002). The issues that Atiles and Bohon uncovered are issues that are present in the Southwest, throughout the Southeast and in the local Athens-Clarke County area. These issues include: 1) economic issues: a need for a formalized system to regulate day laborers and their employers, 2) legal status issues: a need for a realistic and effective system to standardize the status of migrant workers, 3) social infrastructure issues: a need to increase the number of bilingual staff at public agencies and health care providers, a need for better public transportation in identified areas with significant numbers of migrant pedestrians, 4) poverty issues: a need for an increase in affordable housing, a need for stringent enforcement of housing codes and laws on landlords in areas with large numbers of migrants, and 5) interaction issues: the need for closer working relationships between community leaders and migrant populations (Atiles and Bohon, 2004). My research found these issues in both the Southwest as well as throughout the Southeast, and should not be seen as geographically isolated issues. Their study also found that the overarching issue that affects each of the previous issues profoundly is the issue of adaptation to American society (2004).

Atiles and Bohon also recognize the uneven distribution throughout the state, and that the communities that "bear the disproportionate cost of Latino migration also reap considerable economic benefits" (2004). They also recognize that the job market for Mexican immigrants has grown rapidly in Georgia, and continues to grow. Most jobs held by Mexican immigrants pay between six and twelve dollars per hour in Georgia, versus three dollars and fifty cents per day in Mexico (Atiles and Bohon, 2004). Using the Peach State Poll in 2001, Atiles and Bohon found

that the majority of Georgians feel that immigrants fill jobs that Georgians do not want, and that these immigrants help to create new jobs (2004). This finding expresses the relatively less significant negative perception that the public in Georgia has about immigrants, compared to traditional gateway states in the Southwest. These and other pull factors in Georgia make this state a desirable choice for Mexican migrants searching for work.

Atilas and Bohon also found that Georgia's strict driver's license laws regarding immigrants actually have a negative effect on Georgia's motorists. Mexican immigrants unable to obtain a driver's license may opt to drive without a license and therefore insurance. The Georgia law has also caused a black market for Latino taxi services that charge exorbitant fees to immigrants.

Lack of affordable housing in Georgia leads to unscrupulous landlords charging high rents and allowing high numbers of migrants to live in unsanitary conditions, which risk the health of migrants and the community at large (Atilas and Bohon, 2004). This also leads to the ghetto-ization of areas with large migrant populations.

Immigration trends have long mimicked economic changes, and the Mexican immigrant phenomenon is no exception. Powerful push and pull factors on both sides of the border have exacerbated not reduced illegal immigration into the United States. Undocumented immigrants face challenges that far outweigh the negative outcomes that they face if caught by immigration officials. Potential benefits to be gained from employment in the United States dwarf the consequences of being deported or jailed by law enforcement.

In the Southwest, undocumented immigrants have been a fixture in the population for most of the twentieth century. The border between Mexico and the United States has existed in a symbolic manner, rather than a physical form, since its creation, and only relatively recently

have actual walls begun to manifest. The Southwest has had a long legacy of dialogue and policy surrounding immigration issues. The Southwest has also had a longer legacy of issues regarding immigration. Poverty and health concerns have long been a topic of debate in Southwestern states like Texas and California. Concerns about undocumented immigrants causing wages to be depressed for other workers, has been an issue in the public forum since prior to the World Wars (Gutierrez, 1995, Montejano, 1987). Affordable housing issues have developed throughout the Southwest for years (Ward, 1999).

The Southwest's longer history of Mexican immigration issues offers a unique example from which new gateway states in the Southeast can gain insight. The Southwestern States have both successes and failures in policy implementation that Southeastern States like Georgia can learn from. Georgia does not need to 'reinvent the wheel' so to speak, when addressing immigration issues. Government officials should adopt aspects of successful cases in the Southwest with similar circumstances, and these officials should avoid policies and reforms in the Southwest that worsened issues and/or conflicts (Ward, 1999).

Though Georgia can gain valuable information from the Southwestern States' experiences, it is shortsighted to think that the circumstances are identical to states like Texas and California. The rapid growth of the undocumented immigrant population in a relatively short period of time causes its own unique issues. Georgia needs to adapt the insight gained from the Southwest to the distinctive circumstances throughout Georgia's diverse communities. Cities like Gainesville and Dalton, Georgia, have vastly different needs when compared to cities without significant undocumented immigrant populations. Athens-Clarke County shares many issues with these two cities, being that Clarke County is ranked number ten out of one hundred and fifty nine counties in Georgia in the number of Latinos (Atiles and Bohon, 2002). Athens-

Clarke County stands to gain significantly in resolving the issues surrounding immigrant workers in the area and improving the relations between these immigrants and the community at large. Athens-Clarke County also has a large economic stake both in the labor provided by Mexican immigrant workers and the buying power of this group as well.

The growth of the Hispanic population in Athens-Clarke County, and the state as a whole, has a great impact on the public school system. The concerns and issues that Mexican immigrants affect the educational experiences of their school age children. Limited educational backgrounds of a large number of the immigrant parents may lower the educational attainment of their child. Findings from Ashcraft's study, as well as my own research, showed the high value placed on education by Mexican immigrant adults (2004). Though a high value is placed on education, repeated relocation of migrant families following temporary work may reduce their school age children's incorporation into the American education system. Unhealthy and crowded living conditions faced by many migrant families may also negatively impact a migrant student's educational attainment.

Addressing these and other issues related to immigration in a positive, productive and proactive manner can only benefit the immigrants themselves, the community in which they live, the state, the region and eventually the country as a whole. Some issues vary depending on the region, and the factors influencing the region. For instance, the particularities of the poultry and carpet industries in Georgia may vary compared to major industries in the southwestern states, including dangers to workers' health associated with specific jobs. In final analysis of the data, the amount of time a particular industry has employed migrant workers may vary, and therefore the incorporation of the migrant population in a particular community varies, however, the overarching issues of exploitation and mistreatment, low status and low pay, remain common in

both regions of the United States that have been the focus of this study. Though the issues are many and large in scope, American society must approach immigration issues in a realistic and reasonable way for any solution to become successful.

Thoughts of the Researcher

As a resident of Athens-Clarke County, I have been personally impacted by the Mexican American immigrant community as a whole, and see the issues that these immigrants face as having a major impact on our community as a whole. Having the exploitation of undocumented workers occurring right in my own city, is both disturbing and heart wrenching. Exposure of the root causes of this exploitation, and the powerful factors that cause Mexican American immigrants to choose Athens-Clarke County as a new home, has become a personal mission.

It is mind boggling to think of poor Mexican farm families going from living in the villages of Michoacan to living in Northeast Georgia. Having to navigate the journey from rural Mexico, across the border, into the Southwest United States and eventually to Georgia, takes extraordinary initiative, will power, strength and resilience. These are the characteristics that our country ought to be holding high upon the pedestal of American values, yet these migrants are viewed as low status, disposable workers who are lined up in an endless que, easily replaced by another just like them.

I see the policies of the various levels of government effectively maintaining the illegality of the majority of the American low wage workforce. The pressures exerted by businesses, for example the poultry processing industry in Athens-Clarke County, and other special interest groups like onion farmers in South Georgia or citrus growers in Florida, serve these special interests very well, while continuing to marginalize a significant portion of our population. Our nation has a long legacy of mistreatment of the Mexican American immigrant. From the early

days of Mexico and the United States' expansion, migrant workers have been an essential segment of the work force, while the perpetuated low status of these unskilled workers has kept them firmly cemented among North America's working poor.

The realities of today's Mexican American immigrants, though varied, illustrate disturbing discrepancies within our society. What can be done to improve these discrepancies? I argue that much can be done. Exposure of the gross exploitation of the undocumented Mexican American immigrant worker to the larger public will help to educate people about mistreatment in the workplace that often times may be occurring throughout our own communities. Turning the media spotlight on unscrupulous employers, landlords and land developers, on a larger scale than is occurring presently, will help Americans to see how close these injustices are happening around them.

Future Research

I intend to continue my research in this arena of study, focusing my next work on the vulnerability and exploitation of undocumented Mexican American immigrants. The difficulty with this field comes with the population's reluctance to participate because of fear of retaliation by law enforcement, or other institutions. Gathering personal accounts of injustices in and around the Athens-Clarke County area serves more than just to chronicle events, but also to shed light on a hidden set of unethical practices occurring right in my own community. My community, and American society, does not benefit in the long term, from success built on the exploitation of others. The United States was founded and is maintained upon ideas of fairness, high moral standards, democratic ideals, and concern for our fellow men and women. If we allow injustices to occur to marginalized 'undocumented' migrants, how long will it take for the

injustices to spread to other low status groups, or new labels to be applied to groups of people which desensitize America to their mistreatment, as well.

Other areas of possible further research exist in each of the categories of issues explored in this study. Future researchers might look at the long term effects on the local economy of Mexican American immigrant workers in various industries. Case studies of individual Mexican American immigrants that trace their origins, transition to the United States and incorporation into the local community, may offer insight into individual perceptions of migration.

Comparisons between Mexican American immigrants with legal documentation and immigrants without proper documentation, may uncover other variables impacting the Mexican American immigrant. My personal interest for future research in this area lies in the individual experiences of Mexican American immigrants. I feel that tracing specific individuals or families from their current homes in Athens-Clarke County, Georgia, backwards to the Southwest, the family's border crossing experiences, and back to their homes in Mexico, would offer bountiful insight into the issues of the Mexican American immigrant. I am also interested in exploring and exposing the illegal practices of employers and landlords in the Athens-Clarke County area, in hopes of improving the lives of immigrants in my community.

Education issues also offer many paths of further future research. Case studies of students of undocumented Mexican American immigrant families, which explore the differences between the home lives of American citizen students, and students whose families lack proper documentation, might be of use to academia. Advocacy for increasing the funding and more aggressive recruitment of bilingual personnel in the schools is a personal interest of mine. Using my research to teach educators about the issues that this rapidly growing segment of the student

body in Georgia is another avenue I intend to pursue in the form of in service trainings for teachers and other school personnel.

Possible solutions to the issues of Mexican American immigrants range from: amnesty through a new federal government program that allows undocumented migrants to work toward legal residency, laws to combat the exploitation of undocumented workers in the workplace, more research exposing the abuses of employers and others, growth of grassroots actions at the community level, incorporation of community service groups as volunteer tutors in schools and advocates for migrant populations, and a stronger push for the education of the general public on the injustices and disparities that exist for Mexican American immigrants.

In conclusion, the nebulous topic of the Mexican American immigrant experience is a continually morphing topic in the public spotlight, and likely will continue to be a contentious issue for some time. All fields of research in this area will help to enlighten all parties involved on ways to improve immigration policies, the lives of immigrants, and society as a whole.

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Appendix A

Check OneNew Application: Resubmission*: Revision (All changes must be highlighted)

Human Subjects Office
University of Georgia
612 Boyd GSRC
Athens, GA 30602-7411
(706) 542-3199

*NOTE: A new application is required every five years.

IRB APPLICATION

MAIL 2 COPIES OF APPLICATION TO ABOVE ADDRESS

(Check One) Dr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>	(Check One) Dr. <input type="checkbox"/> Mr. <input type="checkbox"/> Ms. <input type="checkbox"/>
(Check One) Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/>	(Check One) Faculty <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate <input type="checkbox"/>
Graduate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Graduate <input type="checkbox"/>
Robert Spires _____ 810 020 5080	_____
Principal Investigator UGA ID – last 10 digits only	Co-Investigator UGA ID – last 10 digits
Social Science Education, Aderhold Hall	_____
UGA Department, Building and + Four (Include department even if living off campus or out of town)	UGA Department, Building and + Four
175 Harold Drive Athens Georgia, 30606	_____
Mailing Address (if you prefer not to receive mail in dept.)	Mailing Address (if you prefer not to receive mail in dept.)
706 354 0398	_____
bspires@uga.edu	_____
Phone Number (s) E-Mail	Phone Number (s) E-Mail
(REQUIRED)	
**Signature of Principal Investigator	Signature of Co-Investigator (use additional cover sheets for more than one Co-Investigator)
UGA Faculty Advisor: Dr John Napier _____ Elementary/Social Science Education	_____ Aderhold Hall _____ 7065426491
Name Dept.	Building Phone No.
**Signature: _____ Date: _____	UGA ID – last 10 digits only _____
**Your signature indicates that you have read the human subjects guidelines and accept responsibility for the research described in this application.	

If funded:

***Sponsored Programs
Proposal#

Name of Funding Agency

***By listing a proposal number, you agree that this application matches the grant application and that you have disclosed all financial conflicts of interest (see Q6a)

TITLE OF RESEARCH: Commonalities between Mexican American Immigrants living in the Southwestern United States and Mexican American Immigrants living in the Southeastern United States.

NOTE: SUBMIT 4-6 WEEKS PRIOR TO YOUR START DATE

APPROVAL IS GRANTED ONLY FOR 1 YEAR AT A TIME

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY:

Investigational New Drug Exceptions to/waivers of Federal regulations
If yes to the above, provide details:

Data Sets RP Pool Deception
 Illegal Activities Minors Moderate Exercise Audio/ Video taping
 MRI/EEG/ECG/NIRS/Ultrasound/ Blood Draw X-RAY/DEXA Pregnant
 Women/Prisoners

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH APPLICATION

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. *Type responses to all 11 questions (all parts) listed below (12 pt. font only).*
2. *Do not answer any question with “see attachments” or “not applicable”.*
3. *Submit original plus one copy to the Human Subjects Office.*
4. *We will contact you via email if changes are required. Allow 4-6 weeks.*

IMPORTANT: Before completing this application, please determine if the project is a research project. Check the federal definition of research at <http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/faqs/hso.html#7> or call the Human Subjects office at 542-3199. The IRB only reviews research projects.

1. **PROBLEM ABSTRACT:** *State rationale and research question or hypothesis (why is this study important and what do you expect to learn?).*
 In recent decades, an increase in the number of Mexican American Immigrants arriving in the Southeastern United States has occurred. Prior to this influx of immigrants to the Southeast, the Southwestern United States experienced a similar immigration. This study will examine the social issues faced by Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwestern Border States (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California), and determine common themes regarding living and working conditions in both the Southwest and Southeast regions. Literature focusing on the social issues related to Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwest and Southeast, such as poor working and living conditions, will be reviewed. Due to the larger body of literature on issues in the Southwest, a significant portion of literature on Southwest United States is likely.
 Next, interviews with selected key informants in the Clarke County Georgia area, who are involved with the local Mexican American Immigrant population, will be conducted. These interviews will focus on issues already raised in the literature from the Southwestern and Southeastern United States, and how these issues, as well as public policy and response to these issues is perceived by key informants and Mexican American Immigrant community members. The focus of this study

will be to compare issues faced by Mexican Americans in the Clarke County Georgia area, with those faced by Mexican Americans in the Southwest, to determine common themes. I would like to gain insight into the important issues faced by Mexican American Immigrants in Clarke County, and hope to learn about the role that these issues play in the educational experience of our rapidly rising number of Hispanic students in the Clarke County School District.

2. **RESEARCH DESIGN:** *Identify specific factors or variables, conditions or groups and any control conditions in your study. Indicate the number of research participants assigned to each condition or group, and describe plans for data analysis.*

This study will be conducted as qualitative research. Data for Stage One of the study will be gathered through review of literature, in general, on the subject of Mexican American Immigrants in the Southwestern and Southeastern United States. Document analysis of policy literature and current events literature pertaining to living and working conditions of Mexican American Immigrants and the multistage movement of these immigrants to Georgia, will contextualize the issues, like living and working conditions, faced by immigrants in the Clarke County, Georgia area. I will obtain local and regional news media coverage of the growth of this immigrant population and the issues that surround the topic.

Data for Stage Two of this study will be gathered through informal, semi-structured interviews with key informants involved with the Mexican American Immigrant community in the Clarke County, Georgia area. These key informants have been selected because of their working knowledge of the conditions faced by this immigrant community. The identity of the key informants will remain confidential, and permission to interview will be obtained prior to any interviews.

Data will be analyzed in multiple ways. First, through review of literature, several key social issues in the Southwestern Border region and the Southeastern United States will be identified, as well as the manner in which governmental and nongovernmental public response is manifested. Second, interviews will be conducted with key informants, with a focus on the Mexican American Immigrant population in Georgia's social issues, like living and working conditions, previously identified through literature review. I will both, take notes during the interviews, and audio tape interviews for accuracy purposes. These issues, as well as local and state governmental response to these issues, and the response of community organizations, will be compared and contrasted with issues in the Southwest and the Southeast, in general.

3. **RESEARCH SUBJECTS:**
- a. *List maximum number of subjects 4, targeted age group 20-70 Years (this must be specified in years) and targeted gender Male/Female;*
- both

b. Method of selection and recruitment - list inclusion and exclusion criteria. Describe the recruitment procedures (including all follow-ups).

Three to Four key informants will be selected in regards to their proximity and familiarity with the local Mexican American Immigrant population. These key informants will be selected based on having documented status in the United States and fluency in both English and Spanish. The identity of each of the informants will remain confidential

c. The activity described in this application involves another institution (e.g. school, university, hospital, etc.) and/or another country. Yes No

If yes, provide the following details:

1) Name of institution:

2) County and state:

3) Country:

4) Written letter of authorization (on official letterhead only)/ IRB approval:

Attached:

Pending:

d. Is there any working relationship between the researcher and the subjects?

Yes No . If yes, explain.

The key informants have been identified but no relationship has been established. Permission to interview and the interviews themselves will be conducted after IRB approval.

e. Describe any incentives (payment, gifts, extra credit).

Extra credit cannot be offered unless there are equal non-research options available.

No incentives have been established.

4. PROCEDURES: State in chronological order what a subject is expected to do and what the researcher will do during the interaction. Indicate time commitment for each research activity. And detail any follow-up.

Key informant subjects will be contacted by phone and an interview will be requested. After obtaining permission to interview, this interview will be semi-structured and conversational in format, focusing on previously selected issues, and a followup interview will be requested as needed. Following the interviews, I will review my analysis of the interviewee's answers with the interviewee in order to verify my analysis of the answers and to clarify any answers, thus allowing interviewees to verify whether my analysis is accurate and contains what the interviewee stated, or not.

Duration of participation in the study: 6 Months

No. of testing/training sessions: 4 interviews with request for followup with key informants

Length of each session: open ended

Start Date: July 1, 2006

Only if your procedures include work with blood, bodily fluids or tissues, complete below:

Submit a MUA from Biosafety: Attached Pending

If you are exempted from obtaining a MUA by Biosafety, explain why?

Total amount of blood draw for study: ml *Blood draw for each session:*
ml

5. **MATERIALS:** *Itemize all questionnaires/instruments/equipment and attach copies with the corresponding numbers written on them.*

1 Semi-structured interview questions in an Interview Guide, 2 Consent Form for interviewing key informants.

Check all other materials that apply and are attached:

Interview protocol Debriefing Statement Recruitment flyers or advertisements

Consent/Assent forms

If no consent documents are attached, justify omission under Q. 8

6. **RISK:** *Detail risks to a subject as a result of data collection and as a direct result of the research and your plans to minimize them and the availability and limits of treatment for sustained physical or emotional injuries.*

NOTE: REPORT INCIDENTS CAUSING DISCOMFORT, STRESS OR HARM TO THE IRB IMMEDIATELY!

- a. **CURRENT RISK:** *Describe any psychological, social, legal, economic or physical discomfort, stress or harm that might occur as a result of participation in research. How will these be held to the absolute minimum?*

The key informants identified for this study have documented status in the United States, and therefore any risk will be minimized by maintaining confidentiality of identity of each of the key informants, and therefore the community in which they work.

Is there a financial conflict of interest (see UGA COI policy)? Yes No

If yes, does this pose any risk to the subjects?

- b. **FUTURE RISK:** *How are research participants to be protected from potentially harmful future use of the data collected in this project? Describe your plans to maintain confidentiality, including removing identifiers, and state who will have access to the data and in what role.*

Justify retention of identifying information on any data or forms.

DO NOT ANSWER THIS QUESTION WITH “NOT APPLICABLE”!
 Anonymous Confidential Public *Check one only and explain below.*

All information will be stored on my home computer and in the office of my house, under the protection of a locked room and password protected computer. Data linking the identity of key informants with the study will be destroyed following the study

Audio-taping Video-taping

If taping, how will tapes be securely stored, who will have access to the tapes, will they be publicly disseminated and when will they be erased or destroyed? Justify retention.

Interviews will be audio taped for accuracy purposes. These tapes will be destroyed after data is analyzed.

7. **BENEFIT:** *State the benefits to individuals and humankind. Potential benefits of the research should outweigh risks associated with research participation.*

a. *Identify benefits of the research for participants, e.g. course credit, educational benefits:*

A study of this nature will first identify social issues with the Mexican American Immigrant population in the Southwest. Southwestern Border States have had longstanding experience with this immigrant community, and the Southwest's response to the needs of this community are well documented. Many similarities exist between the Mexican American Immigrant communities in the Southwest and the Southeast, but the Southeast does not have as lengthy of a legacy in terms of understanding and responding to the social issues faced by the Mexican American Immigrant population. This study will attempt to gain insight into the accomplishments and failures of the Southwestern States, and to a lesser degree the Southeastern States, in regards to the social needs of this immigrant community, and use this insight to better understand the social needs of the Mexican American Immigrant community in Georgia. As an educator, the hopes of gaining insight into this community helps to build empathy for the school age children in Mexican American Immigrant families, with the intention of offering them a more productive educational experience in public schools.

b. *Identify any potential benefits of this research for humankind in general, e.g. advance our knowledge of some phenomenon or help solve a practical problem.*

The Mexican American Immigrant community is an essential part of the

economy of Georgia and many other states. By further understanding their background and circumstances, a more successful integration of this community into the mainstream American community may be possible. With the growth of this sector of the population of the United States, the immigration topic has risen to the forefront of the news media, from the local to the national. More research into the realities faced by the immigrant in the United States is greatly needed. Adding to the body of literature regarding immigrants in a host community could potentially be applicable to other immigrant groups and other host communities.

8. **CONSENT PROCESS:**

a. *Detail how legally effective informed consent will be obtained from all research participants and, when applicable, from parent(s) or guardian(s).*

Interviewees will be asked to sign a written consent form first. Interviews will also contain an oral request for consent (audio recording), as well as request of consent to use information gathered in interviews for research, under the written and oral assurance of confidentiality and the destruction of evidence after the completion of the study. If an interviewee does not want to be audio taped, I will record notes of their responses, solely, and review these notes with the individual to be sure I recorded responses accurately.

Will subjects sign a consent form? Yes No

If No, request for waiver of signed consent – Yes

Justify the request, including an assurance that risk to the participant will be minimal. Also submit the consent script or cover letter that will be used in lieu of a form.

b. Deception Yes No

If yes, describe the deception, why it is necessary, and how you will debrief them. The consent form should include the following statement: “In order to make this study a valid one, some information about my participation will be withheld until completion of the study.”

9. **VULNERABLE PARTICIPANTS:** Yes No

Minors Prisoners Pregnant women/fetuses Elderly

Immigrants/non-English speakers Mentally/Physically incapacitated
Others *List below.*

Outline procedures to obtain their consent/assent to participate. Describe the procedures to be used to minimize risk to these vulnerable subjects.

Confidentiality will be maintained and assured.

10. **ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES:** Yes No

If yes, explain how subjects will be protected.

NOTE: Some ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES must be reported, e.g. child abuse.

11. **STUDENTS** *The IRB only accepts students as the Principal Investigator (PI) if the research is for a degree requirement, such as a thesis or dissertation. All other projects should be submitted with the advisor as PI or as Class Projects.*

This application is being submitted for :

Undergraduate Honors Thesis

Masters Applied Project, Thesis or Exit Exam Research

Doctoral Dissertation Research

Has the student's thesis/dissertation committee approved this research? Yes

No

The IRB recommends submission for IRB review only after the appropriate committees have conducted the necessary scientific review and approved the research proposal.

Appendix B

**Interview Guide for Study entitled:
"Commonalities between Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southwestern United States and Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southeastern United States".**

Opening statement and questions:

- Introduction of myself as Clarke County, Georgia resident, University of Georgia Graduate School student, and educator.
- Present consent form to interviewee; ask interviewee to read and sign consent form; provide copy to interviewee

Participant/Interviewee Information:

- Name (not to be used):
- Occupation
- Gender:
- English Speaking only/Bilingual
- Relationship to the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia

General Questions for conversational interviews:

- What types of living conditions occur among Mexican American Immigrants in the Clarke County, Georgia area?
- What are the reasons why Mexican American Immigrants have relocated to the Clarke County, Georgia area?
- What cities and states in the Southwest have Mexican American Immigrants in Clarke County, Georgia lived prior?
- What cities and states in Mexico have these residents lived prior?
- Have these residents lived in colonias along the border of the United States and Mexico?
- What types of jobs have Mexican American Immigrants had prior to moving to Georgia?
- What were the working conditions like at these occupations?
- What types of occupations do Mexican American Immigrants fill in the Clarke County, Georgia area?
- What are the working conditions like at these occupations?
- What are the biggest challenges faced by Mexican American Immigrant families in Clarke County Georgia?
- Are there any other issues regarding the Mexican American Immigrant population in Clarke County, Georgia.

Additional topics of interest to be used as possible conversational interview questions:

- What are your opinions on Mexican American Immigrant families' perception of public schools?
- What specific communities have these immigrants have lived in prior to moving to Clarke County, Georgia?
- What are some of the difficulties of being undocumented versus documented?

- What are the responsibilities that school age children in Mexican American Immigrant families have outside of school?
- What other issues do these school age children face in the home?

Close of conversational interview:

- Thanks for talking to me about these issues.
- Follow up in another conversation? (as needed)
- Suggestions for other people to talk to? Materials to look at? Etc.

End interview.

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a research study titled "Commonalities between Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southwestern United States and Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southeastern United States" conducted by Robert Spires from the Department of Elementary and Social Studies Education, under the supervision of Dr. John Napier, (706) 542-6491, at the University of Georgia. I understand that my participation is voluntary. I can stop taking part without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have all of the information about me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to document, describe and compare the current issues facing Mexican American Immigrants living in both the Southwestern United States and the Southeastern United States, specifically Clarke County, Georgia. If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things in an informal interview:

- 1) Describe my working relationship to the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia
- 2) Describe my perceptions of living conditions in the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia
- 3) Describe my perceptions of working conditions in the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia
- 4) Describe my experiences relating to immigrant perceptions of public education in the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia
- 5) Describe my perceptions regarding documented and undocumented members of the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia
- 6) Describe any other major issues that are perceived regarding the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia

No risk is expected but if I experience some discomfort or stress during my conversations or interactions with the researcher, I can ask that the interview/conversation/interaction be ended. I understand that I am under no obligation to offer my opinions, if this makes me feel uncomfortable in any way. I also understand that my participation in this study will contribute to the overall discussion and debate about issues facing Mexican American Immigrants; however, there will be no personal benefit to me. This interview will last no longer than one hour and will be audio taped for accuracy purposes. The audio tapes of the interview will be destroyed on the completion of the study.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission. Anything I say or offer will be kept in the strictest of confidence and my name will not be used in association with the perceptions or opinions I offer. I understand that the investigator is only interested in the issues as they are seen by me as a community member with a working relationship to the Mexican American Immigrant community in Clarke County, Georgia. The investigator will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project (local telephone number in Athens, Georgia (706-354-0398)).

I understand that I am agreeing by my signature on this form to take part in this research project and understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Robert Spires

Name of Researcher

Signature

Date

Telephone: **706 354 0398**

Email: **bspires@uga.edu**

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your rights as a research participant should be addressed to
The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center,
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu

Appendix D



Office of The Vice President for Research
DHHS Assurance ID No. : FWA00003901

Institutional Review Board
Human Subjects Office
612 Boyd GSRC
Athens, Georgia 30602-7411
(706) 542-3199
Fax: (706) 542-5638
www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso

APPROVAL FORM

Date Proposal Received: 2006-06-21

Project Number: 2006-10874-0

Name	Title	Dept/Phone	Address	Email
Mr. Robert Spires	PI	Social Science Education Aderhold Hall	175 Harold Drive Athens, GA 30606 706-354-0398	bspires@uga.edu
Dr. John D. Napier	CO	Social Science Education 629 Aderhold Hall +7177 542-7082		jnapier@uga.edu

Title of Study: Commonalities Between Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southwestern United States and Mexican American Immigrants Living in the Southeastern United States

45 CFR 46 Category: Expedite 6,7
Parameters:
None;

Change(s) Required for Approval:
Revised Consent Document(s);

Approved : 2006-08-21 **Begin date :** 2006-08-21 **Expiration date :** 2007-08-20

NOTE: Any research conducted before the approval date or after the end data collection date shown above is not covered by IRB approval, and cannot be retroactively approved.

Number Assigned by Sponsored Programs:

Funding Agency:

Form 310 Provided: No

Your human subjects study has been approved.

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to inform the IRB:

- ... of any adverse events or unanticipated risks to the subjects or others within 24 to 72 hours;
- ... of any significant changes or additions to your study and obtain approval of them before they are put into effect;
- ... that you need to extend the approval period beyond the expiration date shown above;
- ... that you have completed your data collection as approved, within the approval period shown above, so that your file may be closed.

For additional information regarding your responsibilities as an investigator refer to the IRB Guidelines.

Use the attached Researcher Request Form for requesting renewals, changes, or closures.
Keep this original approval form for your records.

Chairperson or Designee,
Institutional Review Board