In the Eye of the Beholder: Perspectives on Acculturation from White and Black Americans in Emerging Latino/Hispanic Communities

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ABSTRACT

Acculturation is bidirectional and includes not only the process of Latino/Hispanics adaptation to US culture(s) but also the process of US cultural adaptations to Latinos. However, few studies of Latino/Hispanic adolescent adaptation have examined the ways in which US society accommodates or fails to accommodate its Latino/Hispanic immigrant populations. Our study addresses this gap by examining the ways in which non-Latino/Hispanic students, parents, and teachers in an emerging Latino/Hispanic community have acculturated to the Latino/Hispanic adolescents in their community. This study utilizes focus-group data from the Southern Immigrant Academic Adaptation (SIAA) study -- a multi-site, high school-based study conducted in North Carolina between 2006 and 2010. We held 34 focus groups with 139 participants from 2 rural and 2 urban high schools. In each community, at least five focus groups were conducted to include non-Latinos/Hispanics: (1) black students, (2) black parents, (3) white students, (4) white parents, and (5) high school teacher. In each of our high schools, we identified different modes of incorporation linked with mainstream acculturation strategies that included varying degrees of accommodation of heritage cultures and languages as well as cultural exchanges ranging from inclusionary to exclusionary.

INTRODUCTION

As communities in the US have become increasingly diverse and as the Hispanic population of the U.S. has begun to settle outside of states with historically large Hispanic populations, multiple studies have examined how Hispanic adolescents change, or acculturate, as they interact with long-time residents in Emerging Hispanic Communities (EHC). With a focus on the children of immigrants, acculturation research has sought to describe this process, and its effects on adolescent development and well-being.

However, there is another facet of Hispanic youth acculturation that is largely neglected. Acculturation is, by definition, bidirectional which includes not only the process of Hispanic adaptations to US culture(s) but also the process of cultural adaptations to Hispanics made by cultural groups within EHCs (Bourhis et al. 1997). In general, the host or dominant groups shape this bidirectional process via their attitudes, practices, and social structures (Barry 2002). We refer to these as mainstream acculturation strategies. Consequently, the acculturation strategies adopted by immigrant or nondominant groups will, in part, reflect the mainstream acculturation strategies employed by the host or dominant group (Barry 2002). Similarly, new assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003, Alba 2013) highlights the bidirectional nature of socioeconomic assimilation processes, stemming from the possibility that immigrant-origin populations will influence the host society (Jimenez and Horowitz 2013, Orum 2005).

Nevertheless, few studies of Hispanic adolescent adaptation have examined the ways in which EHCs accommodate or fail to accommodate new Hispanic residents and how these accommodations might vary by race and age. Our study addresses this gap by examining the ways in which non-Hispanic students, parents, and teachers in North Carolina's (NC) high schools have acculturated to the Hispanic adolescents in their communities, most of whom are

1

first (i.e. foreign-born with foreign-born parents) and second-generation (i.e. U.S.-born with foreign-born parents) children of immigrants.

We focus on NC as the fastest growing EHC between 1990 and 2000 when the Hispanic population in NC grew 394% from 76,726 to 378,963 (Guzmán 2000). In the next decade, the growth of the Hispanic population slowed (Stepler & Lopez 2016). Nevertheless, 9% (N=890,000) of all NC residents now identify as Hispanic/Latino and approximately, 14% of all K-12th grade students in NC's schools identify as Hispanic/Latino (Pew Research Center 2015). Though many (64%) Hispanics who moved to NC during the 1990s were foreign-born, the majority (56%) now living in NC are U.S. born citizens (NC Institute of Medicine 2003; Pew Research Center 2015). Among Hispanic children (0-18) residing in NC, ninety-three percent are U.S.-born citizens (U.S. Census 2015).

We focus on high schools as the primary context of socialization for adolescents in EHCs. Within communities, the school is the most important institutional environment in the socialization and adaptation of immigrant children (Entwisle 1990; Valenzuela 1999; Portes & MacLeod, 1996). In schools, youth become exposed to the different cultural groups for the first time, interact with immigrant and native children of their same ethnicity, and form beliefs about what society and persons outside of their family expect from them. Schools also provide opportunities for parents and teachers from different culture groups to interact. Moreover, policies and practices within schools can establish norms and expectations that influence how newcomers, in this case Hispanic youth, are welcomed (or not) by peers, parents, and teachers from different cultural backgrounds.

Treating acculturation as a two-way process, our study explores the modes of incorporation adopted by educational institutions in NC and the mainstream acculturation

strategies that they invoke. Ultimately, our study aims to: (1) explore non-Hispanics' perceptions of and attitudes towards Hispanics across different segments of the population (i.e., adolescents, parents and teachers), (2) describe how non-Hispanic students, parents, and teachers interact with Hispanic newcomers in their schools and communities, and (3) understand the systems and structures that are put in place to assist or deter Hispanics' adaptation to their communities.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Three theoretical frameworks inform our analysis. First, we anchor our research in conceptualizations of acculturation as a bi-directional process (Berry 2002). Berry's (2002) conceptual approach to acculturation helps us to classify the context of reception within schools and the mainstream acculturation strategies that non-Hispanic parents, teachers, and students develop. Second, we anchor our research in new assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003, Alba 2013). We show how the migration of Latinos into the U.S. Southeast has begun to re-define the historical white-black divide, "brightening" some boundaries while "blurring" others. Third, we anchor our research in Allport's (1954) and Blumer's (1958) theories of prejudice and intergroup relations (Fussell 2014; O'Neil & Tienda 2010). These theories help us to interpret discussions about intergroup relations between white, black, and Hispanic populations within the four communities/schools studied.

According to Berry (2002), dominant groups generally pursue four types of acculturation strategies after contact with a non-dominant, immigrant population --- multiculturalism, melting point, segregation, and exclusion). The *multiculturalism strategy* is characterized by mutual accommodations which reflect both a high regard for cultural maintenance and substantial opportunities for cross-cultural interactions that facilitate learning and understanding of cultures within the host community. The *melting pot strategy*, sometimes referred to as a pressure cooker

as well, is characterized by cultural inclusion combined with a lack of accommodation. Immigrants and other non-dominant group members are expected to give up their cultural heritage as they fully embrace and adopt the cultural values of the larger, dominant society. The s*egregation strategy* is characterized by accommodation combined with cultural separation from the larger, dominant society. In this case, immigrant or non-dominant group members are allowed to maintain their cultural heritage but are also discouraged from interacting with dominant group members. Various forms of overt racial/ethnic discrimination as well as institutionalized discrimination that lead to segregated residential patterns by socio-economic status and segregated classrooms in schools due to linguistic differences can discourage and inhibit interactions with the dominant cultural group. The *exclusion strategy* is characterized by both a lack of accommodation and separation from the larger, dominant society. Immigrant and other non-dominant groups are expected to give up their cultural heritage and adopt the behaviors and practices of the dominant group but are also excluded from full participation in the civic life of their host communities. In some cases, these exclusions may be forced or codified in the law.

New assimilation theory argues that the adaptations of immigrants to their new homes will be shaped by "institutional mechanisms of monitoring and enforcement" that either "brighten" or "blur" social boundaries between ethnic groups (Alba and Nee 2003; Alba 2103). Boundaries can become bright when institutional mechanism strengthen the power and authority of one group while diminishing another. Local immigration enforcement efforts requiring police officers, public service providers, or employers to inquire about and verify legal status, for example, can brighten boundaries. Boundaries can become blurred when groups who have sustained equal-status contact are "supported by institutional mechanisms enforcing equal rights"

(Alban and Nee 2003:62). Mutual respect, shared understanding, and shared control can diminish racial/ethnic hierarchies. Naturalization and birthright citizenship; shared language usage, multi-lingual public documents, and dual language programs; and shared religious institutions can also blur boundaries for first- and second-generation immigrants (Alba 2013).

Research on prejudice and intergroup relations largely centers around two competing hypotheses – the threat hypothesis vs. the contact hypothesis (Fussell 2014; O'Neil & Tienda 2010). The threat hypothesis suggests that white and black Americans will view Hispanics, especially immigrants, as either a cultural, political, or economic threat. As a result, they will harbor negative attitudes towards them and will seek to exclude them from access to social, political, and economic resources in their communities. In some formulations of the threat hypothesis, the threat is expected to be amplified in communities where Hispanic and/or immigrant populations have increased rapidly. The threat is also potentially amplified in communities where resources (e.g. jobs) are scarce and among population groups that may compete more directly with newcomers for resources. During times of economic decline and among low SES population groups, the theory would predict growing antipathy towards Hispanics and/or immigrants. The contact hypothesis takes a more positive view of intergroup contact, suggesting that positive interactions between groups will decrease prejudice and promote mutual understanding, cooperation, and respect. Thus, positive attitudes towards Hispanics and/or immigrants should grow over time and the context of reception should become more welcoming or accommodating. However, for this to occur, it is critical that interactions be positive, face-to-face interactions that allow groups to pursue common goals with equal status.

Although previous research on intergroup relations and attitudes towards Hispanic newcomers in ECLs is limited, studies to date suggest that responses to Hispanic newcomers

may vary by community and by population group within communities (McClain et al. 2007; Marrow 2008; O'Neil & Tienda 2010; Watson and Riffe 2013). In their early studies of intergroup relations in the urban area of Durham, NC, McClain et al. (2007) found that both whites and Blacks perceived Hispanic newcomers as a threat but this threat was more salient to Blacks. In her study of rural, Eastern NC, Marrow (2008) also found that Blacks felt economically threatened by Hispanic newcomers, especially in the county (one of two studied) where whites were the majority and Blacks had been historically marginalized. Studying a different pair of rural NC counties (Chatham and Parsons), O'Neil & Tienda (2010) found no significant differences between white and black Americans' attitudes towards Hispanic immigrants. However, they did find individuals from higher SES backgrounds, those who socialized and worked with Hispanic immigrants, and those who were born outside of NC had more positive attitudes towards Hispanic immigrants. Similarly, Watson and Riffe (2013) in a large, statewide study of NC, found that older, less-educated whites were more likely to view Hispanic immigrants as a threat.

Based on these studies, we expect to find a mixture of mainstream acculturation strategies adopted within our schools (i.e. the parents, teachers, and students they represent). These strategies will be defined, in part, by institutional mechanisms in the schools which either accommodate or fail to accommodate, brighten or blur social boundaries in the schools. We further expect our qualitative analysis to show schools in urban areas with higher SES whites to be more inclusive of Hispanics and immigrants and more accommodating of different cultural viewpoints. In contrast, we expect schools in rural areas with lower SES whites and black American's to be less inclusive or accommodating.

METHODS

6

Data

This study utilizes focus-group data from the Southern Immigrant Academic Adaptation (SIAA) study -- a multi-site, high school-based study conducted in NC between 2006 and 2010. We held 34 focus groups with 139 participants from 2 rural and 2 urban high schools. In each school, at least seven focus groups were conducted to include non-Hispanic: (1) teachers, (2) black female adolescents, (3) white female adolescents, (4) black male adolescents, (5) white male adolescents, (6) black parents, and (7) white parents.

High schools participating in the SIAA study were selected through a stratified random sample from among high schools with at least 24 Hispanic students enrolled in 9th grade in 2000. The urban strata contained schools in communities where over 50% of the population was living in an urbanized area; whereas the rural strata contained schools in communities were 50% or less of the population was living in an urban area. Four rural and five urban schools were selected with a probability proportional to the number of 9th grade Hispanic students in the school district. Prior to conducting focus groups in each school, the SIAA study team collected survey data from a total 239 ninth-grade Hispanic students enrolled in one of these 9 high school in 2006-07. The majority (67%) of Hispanic youth in the participating schools were foreign-born (67%) or were U.S.-born with foreign-born parents (30%) (Perreira et al. 2010). They identified primarily as Mexican (54%) but many also identified as Honduran (12%), El Salvadorian (10%), and Guatemalan (4%) (Potochnick et al. 2012; Kiang et al. 2011). The SIAA study team also conducted in-depth personal interviews with 18 Hispanic students and their mothers in 2006-07 (Brietzke & Perreira 2016).

Focus groups were conducted one year later in 2007-08. The four schools (2 urban and 2 rural) selected for the focus-group arm of the study represented four of the five school districts

participating in the initial 2006-07 data collection. All 9th- grade teachers in the selected school were invited to participate in a school-based focus group. To identify students and parents to participate in focus groups, researchers visited 9th and 10th grade classrooms to provide brief presentations about the project and handout information for students to share with parents. In a second visit, students interested in participating in focus groups provided their contact information, sex, and race-ethnicity (non-Hispanic black, non-Hispanic white). Focus groups are inherently social contexts (Hollander 2004). We organized the student and parent focus groups by sex and race-ethnicity to facilitate open conversation about stereotypes and racial dynamics in each of our communities (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990; Morgan & Krueger 1993). To accommodate schedules and additional interest in participating, we conducted additional focus groups with parents or students in some schools.

Procedures

The majority of focus groups were conducted in classrooms and conference rooms after school hours in each of the four participating schools. At the start of every focus group session, our participants completed a self-administered questionnaire assessing participant demographics and, with questions adapted from recent Gallup polls, views on immigration. All focus groups followed an open-ended discussion guide and most were conducted by an SIAA team member of the same racial background. Focus groups with non-Hispanic students and parents were designed to identify normative values and beliefs in the reception community and the structure of social relationships in schools, workplaces, and the neighborhood. Focus groups with teachers centered on their attitudes toward immigration, their relationships with Hispanic families in the community, their beliefs about Hispanic cultures and values, their assessments of how new Hispanic families have changed their communities and schools, and their perceptions of the

resource needs of Hispanic families that attend their schools. Focus groups lasted between 45-90 minutes and were digitally recorded and transcribed. Participants were given $15 gift cards for participating in the study. All study procedures were approved by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Institutional Review Board.

Participants

We conducted a total of 34 focus groups over the course of eight months, and, due to participant availability, sample sizes in each group varied with an average of 4 participants per group. The total sample (n=139) included a smaller proportion of males (33%) than females who ranged in age from 13 to 57 (**Table 1, Panel A**). Forty-seven percent of our participants were white non-Hispanic and 46% were blacks. The remaining 7% were teachers from other ethnic/racial backgrounds. Most (64%) focus group participants had been born in NC. A larger proportion of participants in urban versus rural areas were born outside of NC (53% of urban participants versus 18% of rural participants).

Participants had diverse views on immigration, according to preliminary questionnaires (**Table 2**). They were evenly divided between those who felt that immigrants strengthen the country (35%); those who felt that immigrants burden the country (30%); and, those who had not formed an opinion (32%). Although a large segment of our sample felt that the growing number of newcomers strengthens traditional American values and customs (40%), most participants felt that current levels of immigration should be maintained (38%) or decreased (26%). Nevertheless, only 11% listed immigration as the most serious problem facing the country (behind the economy, wars in the Middle East, and healthcare or education). Still, 77% saw illegal immigration as a somewhat to very serious problem for the country, and 57% saw it as a somewhat to very serious problem for their community.

Analysis

The research team conducted preliminary analysis concurrently with data collection (Miles & Huberman 1994). Following each focus group, we met to discuss what we learned and to generate an iterative list of emerging themes and codes. In the first layer of analysis, transcripts were coded independently by each member of the research team, using Atlas.ti Version 6.0. Team members then met to compare and reconcile their coding and to identify important subthemes. Disagreements in coding were resolved as the coding scheme was created.

Upon completing the first layer of analysis, the team came together to identify and map conceptual links between themes. Additionally, the team examined variations and patterns in each theme by comparing across schools. Next, our team evaluated patterns and variations within our themes by race (white versus black, non-Hispanic) and segment of the population (teachers, parents, and adolescents). Each of these layers of analysis lent a greater degree of complexity to our findings and allowed us to address our specific aims from different viewpoints.

While focus group participants' questionnaire data were not used to develop codes and identify themes, they allowed us to gain a broader understanding of each focus group's demographic traits and general opinions. Similarly, data from the 2006-07 surveys of Hispanic students provide insight into Hispanic students' characterizations of sense of belonging and social relations in each school. Items evaluated include: (1) *school belonging* measured by seven items on a 5-point Likert scale (Fuligni et al. 2005) (2) *school climate* measure by five items on a 5-point Likert scale identifying how well respected students feel for their academic contributions (Fuligni et al. 2005) (3) *liking school* measured by four items on a 5-point Likert scale (Fulgini et al. 2005) (4) *adult school encouragement* measured by two items of how often adults at school encourage education, (5) *English language acquisition* measured by four items

indicating how well youth speak, understand, read, and write English (Marin et al. 1987), and (6) the *perceived likelihood of discrimination* measured by responses to four scenarios in which the respondent indicates the likelihood of experiencing mistreatment in their community (Mendoza et al. 2002). We report frequencies and percentages on these selected questionnaire items by school. Due to small sample sizes within each school, differences in percentages between schools were evaluated using Fisher's Exact Tests. Upon completion of the qualitative analysis, we also obtained data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the NC Department of Public Instruction regarding school characteristics in 2007-08 and in 2015-16 (**Table 1, Panel B**). These data informed our discussion of results.

RESULTS

To learn how our participants were adapting to the growing Hispanic population, our focus group discussions sought participants' descriptions of their community's attitudes towards Hispanics, behaviors or interactions with Hispanics, and information on accommodations for Hispanics. These three factors worked together to structure Hispanics' modes of incorporation in schools and the mainstream acculturation strategies adopted by peers, parents, and teachers (**Figure 1**). First, participants identified widely-held attitudes towards Hispanics. These reflected beliefs about the degree of threat Hispanics posed to their communities, Hispanics' ability to function successfully in their communities, and the way Hispanics should behave in their communities (Lee & Fisk 2006). Second, our participants provided insight into the nature of their interactions with Hispanics in their community. This included depictions of interpersonal interactions with Hispanics and wide-spread practices that shaped these interactions (Sam & Berry 2010; Bourhis, et al. 1997). Third, participants described formal and informal systems that could assist or deter Hispanics' adaptation to their community (Sam & Berry 2010; Bourhis, et

11

al. 1997). These included school and community policies, programs, and resource allocations that could help accommodate Hispanic newcomers to their communities.

Our analysis revealed distinct modes of incorporation and mainstream acculturation strategies within each school. Thus, we organize our presentation by school. **Figure 2** shows how each of the schools participating in the focus group arm of the SIAA study could be placed within this Berry's framework along continuums of accommodation of heritage cultures and identities and cultural exchanges ranging from inclusionary to exclusionary.

Though our qualitative analysis revealed stark differences between schools as described below, analysis of Hispanic students' impressions of their schools revealed few significant differences (**Table 3**). Hispanic students in school 1 reported the highest levels of school belonging and school climate. In comparison to the other three schools, they also reported liking school and perceived the lowest likelihood of discrimination. Hispanic students in school 2 reported the highest levels of encouragement from adult teachers and administrators in their school. At the same time, they perceived a greater likelihood of discrimination than students in school 1 and liked school less. The perceived likelihood of discrimination appeared to be highest in our two rural schools (school 3 and 4). Hispanics' sense of school belonging and climate was also lower in these two schools than in the two urban schools (schools 1 and 2).

Cultural Inclusion with Accommodation

Our first high school (School 1) was striving towards multiculturalism. Set in an urban community, many of its students, parents, and teachers had relocated from other states, including Illinois, New Jersey, and New York. They were drawn by the region's low cost of living and employment opportunities in the business, healthcare and education sectors. According to parents, job availability and affordable housing seemed to reduce racial tensions in the city by

allowing various groups to be part of the economic growth that was taking place.

Neighborhoods, however, remained racially segregated. Additionally, parents and teachers in

school 1 believed that school choice policies implemented in the school district were

perpetuating social segregation, as parents and children gravitated towards racially-ethnically

homophilous high schools.

Participants viewed their high school as an exception to this pattern. It was large, racially,

ethnically, and economically diverse, and strived to be culturally aware and inclusive. A group of

parents noted that the school was safe and embraced foreign-language learning:

> *R1: This is really a great school, safe environment. It's a good learning*
> *institution. They have a lot of opportunities. [The school] is keeping up with*
> *the day, what's going on with technology and everything.*
> *R2: My daughter this year has foreign language. She has a course in foreign*
> *language, and she's learning Spanish, Korean. She's learning like four*
> *different languages and I just think that's awesome.*
>
> <div align="right">*(black Parents)*</div>

Like parents, teachers were proud of the school's efforts to meet their growing Hispanic

community's educational needs. These included a well-regarded English as a Second Language

(ESL) program, translators and translated materials available for non-native English speakers and

their parents, and separate remedial courses to support students—many of them Hispanic—not

meeting grade requirements in their core classes. Through collaborations with the surrounding

community, the school had been able to sustain these resources for several years.

At the same time, students and teachers noted that some of these accommodations

reduced opportunities for Hispanics and non-Hispanics to interact during the school day.

Students said that most Hispanics in their school were placed in ESL and remedial courses,

sometimes located in trailers away from the rest of the student body. According to teachers, these

courses often took up much of Hispanic students' schedules, leaving little room for electives and

sports. Reflecting on the small amount of in-class interactions with Hispanics at their school, a group of students noted:

> R1: There's a lot of Hispanics that has the ESL classes.
> R2: I think a lot of it [not having Hispanic friends] is that I don't have classes
> with those people. I think it's because we all go to the same school, but we
> don't really get the chance to interact with each other.
> *(White Female Students)*

As this quote exemplifies, the city and school's segregated social structure trickled down into participants' informal interactions. Young men in one of our focus groups discussed the school's lunch hours, when social groups were most visibly distinguishable:

> R1: [At lunch] kids are in the school somewhere, in the central area of the, um—
> R2: —cafeteria. And you'll see the football team over there, and—
> R1: —and the Hispanics (pause)
> R2: And the Hispanics, where do they sit? I don't know.
> R1: They just, like, disappear.
> *(black Male Students)*

Notably, this school's focus groups consistently stated that the school should do more to promote interactions between Hispanics and non-Hispanics. In general, they valued cultural inclusion. It was thought that providing Hispanic students with more opportunities to participate in sports, electives and extracurricular activities would be a good step in this direction:

> R1: When kids do things together like sports, or band, that sort of thing, is where the
> interactions occur. It's not gonna happen at lunch.
> R2: It would be nice if the school system could take these interests and use that to
> build…Yeah, just an opportunity to reach out to someone outside your group. I think
> most kids would be willing to explore something outside of their culture. They can
> see, "Hey, you're really not that different from me," and help to instill acceptance.
> *(White Parents)*

While most participants in this school said that their limited interactions with Hispanics prevented them from fully forming attitudes and beliefs about Hispanics in their community, they commented on certain widely-held views. Participants believed that Hispanics segregated themselves from the school's social mainstream and that they were using Spanish to establish

and maintain separate social groups. For student and parent focus group participants, Hispanics'

use of Spanish in public raised suspicions that Hispanics were either speaking badly about other

ethnic groups, attempting to be disruptive, or attempting to force other groups to accommodate

them. A group of participating girls noted:

> R1: I feel that they're being treated like they're handicapped…[teachers] end up doing
> their work for them.
> R2: Some Hispanics know what we're talking about [in English]. They might not know it
> all, but they know.
> R3: …They'll be speaking English and if you piss them off, they'll turn around and start
> speaking Spanish! That makes me feel like they're talking about me.
> R4: I think it's disrespectful to speak another language if you do speak English.
> *(black Female Students)*

In addition to this belief that Hispanics were self-segregating, stereotypes and attitudes

concerning Hispanics' place in their community also existed. On the one hand, there was the

view that Hispanics moved to their community to work hard and provide for their families. From

this perspective, Hispanics were seen as hardworking, doing the jobs that other groups were

unwilling to do. One parent noted:

> R3: You know those Hispanic men, they will get out there and work and take care
> of the family… They coming for a better life. They learn how to hustle and bustle.
> *(Black Parent)*

On the other hand, participants repeatedly expressed the view that Hispanics were burdening

their school and community as these entities were forced to accommodate them.

> R1: Teachers hurt other students by taking extra time to help [Hispanics]
> complete assignments…
> R2: I think some people in the community are just as frustrated with Hispanics
> 'cause they come here, and they don't know our language. And, I think that's
> very frustrating.
> *(Black Female Students)*

Consistent with these beliefs and attitudes, participants in this school also believed that Hispanics

in their community should put more effort into learning English, socializing with people outside

of their group, and applying themselves academically.

As a context of reception, participants described a high school that was making a concerted effort to meet students' need for education, while struggling to socially integrate them. Partially resembling Sam and Berry's notion of a multicultural context, from the top down, the school sought to integrate Hispanic youth into their community by providing culturally sensitive educational support, which they hoped would facilitate this process. However, the lack of opportunities for daily interaction with non-Hispanics reduced the cultural inclusiveness of the school. Additionally, concerns expressed about the use of Spanish in school among those who knew English highlighted the limits of support for accommodating the maintenance of cultural heritages. Conflicted feelings regarding whether Hispanics were an asset or burden on the community reflected the potential to view acculturation as a zero-sum game where accommodating the maintenance of heritage cultures could be costly.

Cultural Separation with Passive Accommodation

Our second school (School 2) was striving to build racial/ethnic cohesion amidst a legacy of racial/ethnic and socio-economic segregation. Like School 1, school 2 was set in an urban part of the state where a low cost of living and job opportunities had attracted new residents from other states who lived alongside residents with deeper roots in NC. School 2 was also racially, ethnically, and economically diverse and boasted high standardized test scores. However, the school had experienced substantial turnover in the administration and many of the teachers were younger, newer teachers.

Parents and teachers generally praised the school for its racial/ethnic and socio-economic diversity as well as its high academic quality. All focus group participants considered the neighborhood in which the school was located safe and secure. At the same time, growing racial/ethnic diversity in the school and surrounding neighborhoods was upsetting a historical

balance in what had been a predominately white school. Some parents, teachers, and students

lauded the change indicating that it promoted ethnic mixing and opportunities to learn and

understand different cultures:

> *R3: Caucasians and even some blacks that are so limited in their exposure to the outside world…They grew up in a black community [with] black schools….[or] they grew up in a white neighborhood [with] white schools… and they stay in that little white area…With the influx of Latinos and blacks and Asians, you get a cultural mix. Kids will have to be exposed to other cultures and start learning about other cultures. They can only benefit from that stand point.*
> *R2: There's more cultures mixing together with marriages and …babies coming into the world that are mixed culture. People are not as against them [Latinos] being here as they were before.*   *(Black Parents)*

Other focus group participants expressed concern that these changes would drain public

resources and lead to violence, gangs, poorer quality public education, and segregated schools:

> *R3: If…Hispanics grow year after year after year,…white people are going to leave for private schools. They worry about their white child sitting in a classroom when there's only one or two other white kids in the room. They worry about fights and gangs, and the level of education…I'm personally worried about the financial drain on the resources in the city.*   *(White Parent)*

At least one participant in each focus group expressed the desire for stricter immigration control

or wished that Hispanics would return to their home countries. For example, students indicated:

> *R1: I don't think North Carolina's really cracking down on immigration and all that stuff. But they need to be.*
> *R3: …the Border Patrol needs to do a better job than they're doing right now.*
> *R2: They need to put a huge stone wall.*
> *R3: Yeah.*
> *R2: Like the Great Wall of China.*
>   *(White Male Students)*

Commenting both on the new administration and the increasing diversity in the school,

teachers were becoming increasingly concerned about discipline in the school. They worried

about increased absenteeism, students falling asleep in class, inappropriate and abusive language,

and disengaged parents. According to one teacher (R3), "*[the administration] could really fix*

stuff if they were more strict and more organized." However, black students worried that

17

increasing disciplinary measures would target them. "*They [Teachers]*," commented one black Female student (R5), "*think black or Hispanic equals violence.*" They felt constantly monitored as indicated by another black student (R4) who said, "*They're always watching you.*" They also expressed frustration that teachers provided more support to Hispanic students than to the black students in the school.

When asked to describe their school, teachers and students alike described it with a single word – "*segregated*" but at the same time they indicated that racial/ethnic tensions were not high. Summarizing this sentiment, one teacher stated:

> *R8: It's not really tensions. I mean, everyone gets along, and that's why we're saying it's like a family.…Even in your own family if you think about it, you love each other, but sometimes you get on each other's nerves.…That's what happens a lot of times with these kids, you know. They tolerate each other.*

As discussed by teachers and students, the segregation embodied by the school was rooted in the school's historical design. The school was built when the Jim Crow system was still firmly in place in the South. Consequently, the building had both standard and separate, lower quality facilities (e.g., restrooms, drinking fountains, and cafeterias). The latter were originally designated for the school's black students. Though the practice of segregating facilities in schools is no longer legal, these separate facilities remained in the school to be used by the entire student body. Teachers and students noted that, over the years, as more Hispanics attended the school, they began using the separate, lower-quality facilities as spaces to socialize with other Hispanics. Our focus group student participants reflected on the significance of this practice:

> *R1: The small cafeteria, I'm not even gonna lie!*
> *R2: I don't even know why, but all the Spanish kids use [it]—*
>   *(Everyone talking at once)*
> *R3: Yeah, the school used to be segregated.*
> *R1: It did?*
> *R3: Yeah, that's why there's little and big cafeterias. There's two, you know, the*
>   *bathrooms over there? Those were for the black people and then the ones*

down with the full-length mirror were for the white people. Whenever we had [segregation] back in the day!... It still happens. I think Hispanics all just want to be together. It's not like the Hispanics or the Latinos can't come in the big cafeteria.

(White Female Students)

Practices limiting racial/ethnic interactions in the school and promoting separation were also present in the classroom structures and the structures of extracurricular activities. As described by one black student (R3), "*Honors classes tend to have more white people….Lower class blacks and Hispanics…tend to be in the lower classes.*" In another focus group, a white parent (R1) commented that his daughter told him not to put his son in a regular class because "*that's the lowest level class, and that's all the blacks.*" Although black and white students indicated that they mixed at sporting events, they also indicated that few Hispanics engaged in these events, in school leadership or in school clubs. Teachers could only identify two Hispanic students who engaged in school leadership. And students could only identify one club which included both Hispanic and black students.

Despite the on-going segregation, both students and teachers wanted their school to become more integrated and inclusive of Hispanic students. However, they did not know how best to achieve this. Teachers believed that the school needed to invest in translators:

> *R1: If I want to send a letter home, I don't speak Spanish, so I have to write it out in English!*
> *R2: They should have someone come in part-time, like a translator. If I need to talk to a parent, I always contact the head of the ESL department or the Spanish department to see if they could help.*
> *R3: And it's shameful. It is shameful…Communicating with the parents should be a full-time job for somebody. We have hundreds of students that we cannot reach.*

They also believed that integration would not happen in the classroom. According to one teacher (R6), students are "*scared to push themselves together and to push themselves into getting to know one another.*" Instead, they thought it best to have activities that integrated students after

19

school through clubs and sports. Another teacher (R3) recommended that they needed to invest more time "*understanding the demographic*" and in teacher training:

> *I think we, as a community, have to understand, not just one particular population whether they're from a different…country or not, but also to understand that a lot of these people who are coming in from different countries are also coming in in a more impoverished situation than what we have. We need to understand how to deal with that on top of language barriers [and] on top of, cultural barriers. Once we do that, it'll be a completely different situation.*

The black students believed that teachers needed to learn to "*treat everybody the same way.*" One student (R3) recalled a church conference where the leaders of the churches "*made everyone stand up and go stand with someone of a different race.*" she wondered if the school could help make something like that happen "*to start bridging the gap.*"

Despite the interest in fostering a more integrated school environment, there was little accommodation or support for the maintenance of Hispanic students' heritage cultures and languages. Teachers and students confirmed that it was a common practice for teachers to forbid students from speaking Spanish in class, even during small group discussions. Several teachers and parents felt that providing Hispanic students and parents with more Spanish-language materials would remove an incentive to learn English. Accordingly, the school system required full English immersion for new students and did not support English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for students speaking other languages until they had been enrolled in the school for at least two years. The teachers also indicated that the school had applied for, but not yet received, a grant to offer ESL classes to parents.

Additionally, teachers believed that, rather than having separate, cultural events or clubs to accommodate and celebrate different backgrounds, separate clubs or cultural events reified racial/ethnic divisions.

> *R7: We have two dance clubs. One's predominantly African American and the*

> *other's a Hispanic dance club.*
> *R3: Why can't they both [Hispanics and African Americans] do both [types of*
> *dancing]? Get together and learn all of it.*
> *R2: There you go again. It's a division!*
> *R4: It's just unfortunate that you're never going to be able to get all of that*
> *together. Nobody wants to back down from their heritage.*

While many parents, teachers, and students in our focus group did express empathy for

the social and economic challenges that Hispanic students and their families faced, they also

each strongly emphasized the need for Hispanic students and their families to learn English

quickly, be grateful for the work that they have, and legalize their status. As both students and

parents noted:

> *R1: If they're gonna be here for the rest of their lives, [Hispanics] may as well*
> *   start speaking [English].*
> *R2: It would make them smarter.*
> *R1: They'd sound better and more proper.*
> *R3: It's not really- what really can [teachers] do about it? I mean—*
> *R4: You can't make those kids try. You just can't.*
>
> <div align="right">*(White Male Students)*</div>

> *R3: When the immigrants were coming in from Europe,…they knew they had to*
> *come here and learn the language. That helped them, you know, become*
> *American. I think really we bend over backwards to a point where I think it's a*
> *problem. I think it's costing the tax payers a lot of money and resources.*
> *R2: I just think it would be so much easier on people if they could just, almost be*
> *forced to learn the language*
> *R4: If they're gonna be here, there needs to be a way that they can integrate into*
> *the community rather than just come here and still be with their own kind.*
>
> <div align="right">*(White Parents)*</div>

Overall, school 2, in contrast to school 1, resembled more of a pressure cooker

(Berry 2003). With few school- or community-based systems to facilitate cultural

exchange and only passive accommodations for language or cultural maintenance,

Hispanic youth and their families bore the burden of learning to fit in on their own.

Cultural Inclusion with Limited Accommodation

Our third school (School 3) might best be characterized as a melting pot, but one close to boiling over. Described as "small" and "overcrowded", school 3 was set in a racially diverse, poor, rural town. The small town offered ample factory and agricultural jobs but few activities for adolescents to enjoy outside of school. While a few of the focus group participants had moved to the town from other states, most were from families who had been in the area for generations. Both black and white participants indicated that the white farmers controlled the governance of the town and school. They could identify few Hispanics or blacks that were considered leaders in the town or school.

According to focus group participants, the Hispanic population began moving into and settling in the county about 15 years ago (i.e. 1992). They were beginning to work in local factories, opening small restaurants, and starting soccer leagues. Prior to this time, most Hispanics in the town had been migrant laborers who lived seasonally in camps outside of town and interacted little with local residents. Though many of our focus group participants lauded the Hispanic newcomers for their strong family and religious values, standing up for one another, and willingness to do the dirty or hard jobs that others in town were unwilling to do, the increasingly visible presence of Hispanics in the town and high school made many others uncomfortable. As one student explained:

> *R3: They [Mexicans] are everywhere, like in all the halls at school. If I turn right here, they're there, or right there, or in front of you…They…be like trying to take over.*
>
> *(Black Female Student)*

All focus groups – teachers, parents, and students -- uniformly associated the increasing presence of Hispanics in the town with rising gang activity, drugs, and violence. In contrast to the other three schools we visited, they discussed several recent cases of shootings in the town and fights in the school. Some of these fights were within

the Hispanic community; others were between black and Hispanic students. Because of concerns about gang colors and symbols, clothing restrictions had been adopted by the school. The school also had a security guard and our focus group of black parents thought that the school needed a metal detector.

However, when asked about what could be done to improve their school, gangs were not the primary concern of teachers. Teachers wanted more ESL resources for students and trained translators. Additionally, they expressed concern over the use of fellow students as translators:

> *R1: It's been in the last 12 years…The first time we had an ESL student here a little girl came in from Mexico…and the ESL teacher was not there, so they sent her to my room. We communicated with sign language. And from there it just blossomed every year, and we got more and more students until we finally got a full-time ESL person. But the sad thing is now we're back down to a one-period a day person.*
> *I: And why is that?*
> *R2: Funding*
> *R3: That and not enough qualified teachers.*
> *R2: And, like you said, you have a student translating for another student, and that's taking away from the first student's, the translators', education.*

Because the school was relatively small with limited resources and no advanced placement classes, classrooms were racial/ethnically integrated. Hispanics rarely attended separate ESL classes, many were U.S.-born and/or spoke primarily English, and they interacted with the rest of the student body on a daily basis. However, race/ethnic interactions in the classroom were not always positive. black parents noted that their children were sometimes treated "disrespectfully" and faced discrimination in the process of selecting kids to participate in prestigious activities or to win awards. In their group, black female students indicated that some teachers were "*prejudiced against black people (R2)*", "*You want to learn, but you feel like they ain't trying to teach you* (R3)." They felt that white students received special treatment and that

23

teachers "talked down" to "people of color."   A group of white male students also spoke with

frustration about teachers and students who were "judgmental" or "stereotyped."

> R1: Some people here are cool, but
> R3: They judge
> R1: Yes, they are so judgmental here
> R4: Some people stereotype….. People make fun of what they don't understand. They
> don't understand why they [Hispanics] came. Some people think that because they're
> Hispanic, they're bad people. Some of the Hispanic kids are really cool. You just have to
> get to know them. The same with black people.
> R1: mmmhmmm
> R2:…They [Hispanics] are hardworking….But a few of them, they write stuff on walls,
> they fight. And people think that the whole race that comes here is like that. They're not.

In commenting on racial/ethnic relationships in the town and school, students, teachers,

and parents noted that the community had historically been segregated and inter-racial dating had

been frowned upon by the older generation. However, the younger generation was changing

things. As one black female student said, "*We can date anybody we want. We can see outside of*

the box more than older people in their 30s and 40s." While many students commented on their

interracial friendships and dating, they also observed that these relationships could lead to

conflicts: One set of students reported:

> R4: They look good, some of those [Honduran] girls…I'm a ladies man…Yeah!
>   That's the problem.
> R3: He had a problem last week about that situation.
> R4: Some little Mexican dude tried to fight me because, uh [pause], something
>   happened…He said some racist comments. So, I was about to fight him.
> R6: All the Hispanic guys I know don't like their sisters or friends to date outside
>   their race. But, I mean, that's pretty much like everybody else I talk to. A lot
>   of people don't like seeing dating outside their race.
>   (Black Male Students)

Despite these conflicts and racial/ethnic tensions, the school had taken steps to

celebrate different cultural backgrounds. Teachers felt it was important to provide an

opportunity for students to take pride in their ethnic identity:

> R1: When we put together the Hispanic day, we wanted to show the school about
>   the Hispanic culture…

> *R2: When you're involved in their [Hispanic] culture, it makes the classroom environment more smooth. You try to see what's going on with them to make the classroom environment more enjoyable and you have less discipline problems.*

Several students commented on the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month in school.

> *R1: We had this... program...to celebrate Hispanic Heritage month....*
> *R1: I liked it.*
> *R2: I did too.*
> *R4: I learned something from the Mexican cultural heritage month.*
> *R3: Yeah...Some of what they went through, we went through*
> > *(Black Female Students)*

> *R2: As well as Hispanic Heritage Month, I think there should be a Black Heritage Month and a White Heritage Month.*
> *R3: I think everyone should have one.*
> *R6: Everyone likes to feel included, to feel like part of a group.*
> > *(White Female Students)*

Students, Teachers, and parents also mentioned that they or someone they knew was trying to learn Spanish. Unlike in schools 1 and 2, parents, teachers, and students also recognized that the Hispanic community was increasingly heterogeneous including individuals of Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Honduran heritages. For example, one teacher commented:

> *R1: One day in my classroom, somebody said something about a Mexican, and I said "I'm sorry, they're not Mexican guys." Just because they all speak Spanish doesn't mean they're all from the same country. And my kids were so excited because I know the difference.*

Each of these accommodations valuing Hispanic heritage and backgrounds were important. Nevertheless, as in school 1, efforts to seek cultural understanding and make accommodations for the growing Hispanic community had limits. Students were upset by the use of Spanish, especially by English-speaking Hispanic students, and by overt displays of ethnic pride:

R3: When they {Hispanics] are around me, they speak English…I get mad when somebody's sitting, and I feel like they're talking about me [in Spanish]. If you're going to say something, say it in my language.
R5: Yeah, you feel like they're talking about you [when they speak Spanish].

<div align="right">*(Black Female Students)*</div>

R6: I think if you come to America, you should speak English. They should not be allowed to sit there and speak "Hey, Hey Audios!" Just words like "Thank you," I can understand, but if they're sitting there having the whole conversation in Spanish, usually it's talking about something [they shouldn't].
R3: I think whenever you're little, they should teach you both languages.
R6: Some people move over here when they're 13 or 14.
R2: But then they should learn it [English].

<div align="right">*(White Female Students)*</div>

R4: I only call them 'beaners' … if I'm upset with them. And if I'm upset with one of them, it's because I don't like how they're acting. Like some people from those countries, specifically from Honduras, they think they can show that pride and feel better than everyone else at the same time.
R3: We show our American pride, but we don't blow it up in their face.

<div align="right">*(White Male Students)*</div>

Parents complained about Hispanic families utilizing public assistance programs and

requiring additional attention in school.

R1: The blacks feel that the Hispanics are coming in and taking their food stamps and taking their Medicaid, and taking their A[F]DC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children] that they were entitled to because the whites pay taxes….
R1: The white people don't feel that they have taken their stuff, their benefits like the Medicaid, or um, food stamps or AFDC, because I would say the majority of white people work.
R2: If my child is just, is speaking English, and understands it the first time, they [teachers] are going to move to something else. But if you have children…who don't understand… and you're trying to show them, it's almost like it's taking time out from my child…. If that is the case, you know, then I would hope, I just hope that doesn't affect my child's opportunity to learn.

<div align="right">*(White Parents)*</div>

Additionally, teachers expressed a desire to see Hispanic students adapt to the existing

culture and speak in English:

R1: I think if you move to this country, you should think more openly to the culture that you're moving into. And you should go with that culture. If I move to Mexico, I'm going to be more like Mexican culture.

<div align="right">26</div>

R2: They don't see it that way.
R3: And it hurts our school, it hurts our other students, and frustrates the
teachers...
R4: When they walk in that room, and I look at my Hispanic students, and I have
no idea what they're saying [pause] I don't think they're talking about me,
but I say, "You're in English class now. Speak English!"
R1: I have to constantly ask my students not to speak Spanish!
(Everyone laughs)

Overall, school 3 might be best characterized as a boiling pot. The Hispanic population in the community and school had grown more rapidly than in the urban school districts where schools 1 and 2 were located. This led some participants to characterize the high rate of growth of the Hispanic community in school 3 as a "takeover" that threatened the town's existing cultural fabric. At the same time, the rurality and poverty of the school forced daily racial/ethnic interactions throughout the community and limited the resources available to invest in services (e.g., translation services) to assist newcomers. This led to empathy, efforts to promote cultural understanding and Spanish-language acquisition, and inter-racial dating in some cases. In other cases, it led to racial tensions, vocal concerns about racial/ethnic discrimination and bias, as well as physical violence.

Cultural Exclusion without Accommodation

Located in a rural, agricultural community, focus group participants characterized our fourth school (School 4) as being small, poor, and with a largely black student body, which had been historically marginalized. Hispanic newcomers to the community were seen as a burden that the school did not have the resources to accommodate.

The vast majority of focus group participants had deep, local roots in NC. In every focus group held at the school, people reflected on the difficult financial and social climate that students, parents and teachers faced. In the decades preceding our study, factory closings in the

town left behind limited job opportunities, mainly in agriculture. This created competition for the few desirable retail and service jobs in the area.

Some believed that increasing minority presence in their county reduced the town's attractiveness. In one parent focus groups, participants noted:

> *R1: It's gotten decidedly more Latino, and well even, even a little more black. A lot of the [white] people I know that have moved away from here, they've moved away from here for those reasons. We may have laws against segregation, but that doesn't mean people don't segregate themselves anyway…They [elected officials] don't have the ability to attract anyone to town, at this point…*
>
> *R2: Since nobody comes here, you don't have the support and the school system stays low. I mean, it's kind of a cycle. The last community-wide meeting that I went to (pauses), I have never heard these people— I've known them all my life—they sound like somebody from the dark ages! "I do* not *want my child to go to [School 4], and I do* not *want them to go to school with any [School 4] students!"… I even had a co-worker, who is black, she said, "You know why the other [white parents] don't wanna join with you all?" She said, "Because they don't wanna go to school with all the [racial slur]."*
>
> <div align="right">*(White Parents)*</div>

Attitudes were particularly negative toward undocumented Hispanic immigrants who they perceived as taking advantage of public assistance programs and breaking laws without repercussions:

> *R1: We can't send back 12 million illegals. Simply because they're, you know, by definition they're off the radar. They get a license to do almost whatever they want to… If one of them commits murder, if they can't catch him directly, all he's got to do is shed his ID and get a new one.*
>
> <div align="right">*(White Parent)*</div>

White students were aware of the racial tensions that existed among adults, had adopted them, and also perceived the growing Hispanic presence as a threat. They commented:

> *R1: They come over here, they're taking advantage of our social security, food stamps, and stuff, and programs like that because they want to live off the government for free…I think that we should stop them illegal immigrants from coming over and crack down on getting them out of here so our economy can go back up…*
>
> *R3: The elderly and stuff, they don't like it [demographic changes in their town].*

Most of them are racist and stuff, and I'm racist to a point. I'm racist against
some black people, because they try to act like something they're not...
R2: *I'm a racist person against Hispanics, because I don't like them coming over*
here and trying to steal our country from us, and that's the relationship I got
with them. I don't like them too much.

(White Male Students)

Black parents and students also expressed concern that Hispanics were "taking over." At

the same time, they expressed appreciation for their work in agriculture and empathized with

Hispanics who shared their experiences of racism in the community.

R2: *They've taken over...When I worked there at [the factory,]...mostly people were*
black there, and then they started bringing in Hispanics, and then they were taking over.
R1: *Fast food restaurants.*
R3: *All of them Hispanic, every one of them.*

(Black Parents)

R6: *They come over for our jobs and they don't got to pay taxes....*
R3: *People say they take the jobs but we don't want those jobs. We're not doing 'em [the*
jobs]. So why can't they have the jobs... You have people in the United States, they don't
want to work in the fields all day. But the immigrants, they don't mind.
R6: *If they weren't doing...all the stuff in the field, then we'd never have nothing to eat.*
R2: *They're taking over*

(Black Male Students)

R1: *I think whites are [more accepting of Hispanics]. Black people don't have*
that [acceptance into white society]. So it's like we're both [blacks and
Hispanics] trying to be accepted at the same time.
R2: *Most places you go to, it's like all white people in there. Like a fancy*
restaurant or something like that, it's mostly white people. So if some black dude
or Hispanic dude walks in there, everybody's gonna look at you.

(Black Male Students)

R2: *Because of those negative impacts people put on them, that makes them[Hispanics]*
stick together even more....When people talk bad about you because of a certain race or
a certain color, then you're always going to go back to your own culture. You are going
to be like, 'We have to stick together, because these people over here are saying all this
negative stuff about us, so we need to stick together and stand up for what we believe in.'
(Black female Student)

Racial/ethnic tensions in the community manifested as racial/ethnic segregation in the

school. Parents, teachers, and students commented on how each racial/ethnic group in the school

"rarely meshed." Hispanic students also appeared to segregate themselves by country of birth.

29

R3: They [Students] are separated in groups. They rarely mesh.   (Teachers)

R2: Hispanic kids, they don't mingle a lot of them, because a lot of them because Mexicans don't like Guatemalans, Guatemalans don't like Mexican, so they don't hang with one another. You got a group of Mexicans that hang together, a group of Hondurans, that's how they separate themselves. But they hang with all the blacks....They date the black girls, some of the...Hispanic guys.
R1: [The whites] send all their kids to [a different public school] or to private schools, so they don't have to mingle with the black students.
                                                           (Black Parents)

Students' perceptions differed somewhat from their parents. Explaining why Hispanics

may choose to hang out with whites and not blacks, students commented:

R1: They [Hispanics] probably be like, "That's a black dude. He's not that smart,"... "That's a white boy. They know everything."
R3: They [Hispanics] think that blacks try to start a lot of trouble.
R2: Black people know that [the way they are perceived], too. White people don't know everything.
R3: They think they know everything.
(Silence. The room becomes still and quiet)
                                                           (Black Male Students)

R1: They [Hispanics and Blacks] always argue, all the time...
R4: It's like you just look at them and they're like "What do you want?" "Why are you looking at me like that?"
R3: They just don't like each other.
                                                           (White Female Students)

These racial tensions in the school were reinforced by "white flight" from the school that,

according to parents, had preceded the influx of Hispanics. Parents believed that the resources in

the school declined as the percentage of whites in the school declined. Teacher turnover had

increased and many of the teachers were less-experienced substitutes who, according to students,

would "leave at the end of the of the semester" and, according to parents, "don't care."

Commenting on the high teacher turnover in the schools, one teacher indicated that:

R2: *The number one reason why people leave is really not about the money. Teachers knew that teaching salary is low when you start with. It was about lack of support... It's about them not having support from the administration, or not having support of their coworkers, or their peers. Then going into the classroom feeling isolated, feeling alone.*

black students characterized the school as "boring", "cheap", and without opportunities. White students characterized the school as "poor, very poor" and "underprivileged." They characterized the teachers as "mean" and "racist" telling Hispanic students to "Talk in English, now" without appreciating that they are just learning English. They commented that the town lacked tax revenue for the school and the school lacked basic supplies and books. Both groups of students discussed how the school was "low performing" and endanger of being shut down.

In this community with high levels of racial/ethnic conflict and low levels of resources, accommodating Hispanic students was not a priority. As in school 2, accommodation was seen as a costly zero-sum game. One white parent explained:

> *R1: If they don't have that base education, then whenever you get to high school they'll just flounder. Well that's still gonna go against your No Child Left Behind. So we start taking a bunch of resources to help that kid...So while the teacher's over there for the 19th time... trying to explain to Jose that 2+2=4 ... that time, that extra time that she spends away from my child...[My] child there has nothing to do.*

Black parents focused on the need to improve the quality of resources in the school more generally. In their opinions, "*The school needed to communicate with parents more often*" and hold PTA meetings on the weekends when parents "don't have to work." The teachers noted that there was only one ESL teacher in the school. However, peer tutoring was available to provide time for one Hispanic student who might understand the teacher to explain the material to another Hispanic student who did not understand the teacher. In thinking about what the school needed to assist with their growing Hispanic population, they emphasized:

> *R2: If we could get some more finances and hire some assistants to be in the classrooms with the teachers, and some more who did have bilingual skills. That would be good.*
> *R1: Bilingual teachers. If we are going to continue having a high population of Latino students, all of the teachers should be trained in Spanish --all of the teachers. We should at least have conversational Spanish.*

31

More generally, teachers agreed with the parents that the school needed to improve communication with students, provide more discipline, and give students more incentive to try harder.

If accommodations were to be made for Hispanic students, they were likely to come from students. In particular, some students expressed a willingness to accommodate Hispanics by challenging stereotypes and seeing opportunities for cultural understanding, Spanish language acquisition, and empathy for their situation:

> *R2: It's a stereotype that if you're Hispanic you've got to be a gang member. But not everybody thinks like that. Some people are just ignorant in that they think all Hispanic people are Mexicans.… even though they could be from Guatemala.…We've had Hispanic students in our classrooms with us, from as long as I've been here, so it was never really a big deal to me.*
>
> (*White Female Student*)

> *R2:My opinion is sometimes it's [growth of Hispanic population] actually good cause you actually get more culture out of it…I've learned a lot more out of different cultures from different races -- black and Hispanics.…I've actually learned a lot more. …I've learned a little Spanish.…*
> *R2: The people that came here illegally…that were born here or. .. if they're illegal and have kids born here and going to school, those people shouldn't be going [i.e. sent back].*
>
> (*White Male Student*)

> *R2: Some people might look at them [Hispanics] and say "Well they're taking my job, they're taking this, they're taking that," but they're actually putting initiative in to do all these things, to do what it takes to get a job, to come to school.*
> *R3: To me, it's a positive thing…It's good, like educated, to learn another culture, another language, especially by a different country.*
>
> (*Black Female Student*)

Though there were signs of the potential for change, the overall mainstream acculturation strategy adopted by School 4 was one of exclusion. Blacks, whites, and Hispanics attended the same school and shared the same classrooms but, unlike in school 3, rarely interacted. While there appeared to be a normative view that Hispanics were hardworking, participants expressed beliefs that Hispanics were unwelcome and contributing to the town's economic decline. Feeling

impoverished and burdened by a history of exclusion and racism, participants' accounts point to a school that lacked the resources and collective will to accommodate the growing Hispanic segment of the town's population.

DISCUSSION

Consistent with Berry's (2002) framework on mainstream acculturation strategies, this study identified four distinct patterns of cultural inclusion/exclusion and accommodation for heritage cultures in the schools we visited. The two urban schools tended to provide more accommodations for Hispanic students than the rural schools. At the same time, they had distinct approaches to cultural inclusion/exclusion. School 1 was viewed as inclusive; whereas school 2 was viewed by parents, teachers, and students as "segregated." Student of different racial/ethnic groups attended the same school but had limited contact with one another. Hispanic newcomers' customs and traditions were accommodated but not integrated into the school or broader community. Similarly, among the rural schools, school 3 could be characterized as inclusive though the high degree of racial/ethnic interactions sometimes led to physical conflicts. On the other hand, School 4 had an entrenched, historical pattern of racial/ethnic separation that was extended to include Hispanic newcomers. Moreover, the broader community perceived Hispanic newcomers as a threat to their way of life.

Across the schools, we also identified a variety of institutional practices and student or teacher behaviors that helped to "brighten" rather than "blur" racial/ethnic boundaries. In school 1, Hispanic students in ESL classes were physically located in trailers set apart from the rest of the school. In school 2, separated restrooms and cafeterias build during the Jim Crowe era had become a safe haven for Hispanics. In school 3, the use of Spanish and overt displays of ethnic pride had become sources of resentment and suspicion among students, and sometimes, teachers. In school 4, English-only classroom requirements and a lack of translation services prevented

communication between Spanish-speaking parents and students and English-speaking teachers, parents, and students.

Comparing racial/ethnic group responses to Hispanic newcomers across schools, we found that blacks expressed political solidarity with Hispanics while also perceiving an economic threat from Hispanics. They repeatedly commented on their shared minority status and Hispanics willingness to engage in the agricultural jobs that blacks had left behind. At the same time, they worried about school resources being re-directed towards Hispanic students and whites privileging Hispanics in service sector jobs. The attitudes of whites differed by socio-economic status and location. Higher SES whites in our urban areas expressed little sense of economic treat from Hispanics, but also limited social interaction with Hispanics in their schools or communities. They talked about Hispanics using stereotypical and sometimes unintentionally demeaning tropes. Lower SES whites in rural areas, by contrast, expressed a strong sense of both cultural and economic threat. It was only some of the younger generation of students (rather than parents or teachers) that seemed to value the potential for cultural exchanges and interactions that could enrich their lives.

Statistical data on these schools revealed that some of these differences in school's modes of incorporation might be partially explained by the availability of resources in the schools. The urban schools potentially had more resources available to accommodate Hispanic newcomers than the rural schools. They had had higher percentages of white students than the rural schools, lower teacher turnover, lower percentages of students receiving free/reduced price lunches, and lower percentages of Hispanic students. Overall, graduation rates in the two urban schools were higher than graduation rates in the two rural schools. Among Hispanic students, graduation rates were highest for those in school 1 and lowest among school 4 suggesting that racial/ethnic

separation in the school did not necessarily hinder students' success when accompanied by some accommodations respecting their cultural strengths and resources targeted towards their needs. However, high school graduation rates are only one measure of academic achievement and do not necessarily capture students' college and career readiness.

Differences between schools may also reflect enduring patterns of racial/ethnic interaction and accommodation which persists today. Newspaper and public opinion reports suggest a stronger commitment to accommodating immigrants and racial/ethnic minorities in urban areas of North Carolina and continued fears about the economic and social impact of Hispanic immigrants in more rural areas (Gergen & Martin 2015; ITTF 2015; O'neil and Tienda 2010; PRRI 2013; Watson & Riffe 2013). The rural areas of North Carolina, including those in this study, voted overwhelmingly in favor of President Trump and the immigration policies he espoused during his campaign (Politico 2016).

Overall, this study provides new insights into the modes of incorporation and process of mainstream acculturation within schools in emerging Hispanic communities in the Southeastern United States. However, it is only a beginning. Future research should seek to extend the study of mainstream acculturation to other areas of the country with emerging Hispanic communities. Future research should also aim to unpack the relationship between mainstream acculturation strategies and the subsequent acculturation strategies and assimilation outcomes adopted by Hispanic newcomers. The adaptation of immigrants and their children does not take place in a vacuum. As we develop federal, state, and local policies and practices, we must remember that our choices will not only shape the futures of immigrants and their children but also the future of our entire community.

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Table 1. NCES School Data and Focus Group Demographics by School										
			Urban				**Rural**			
	Total		**School 1**		**School 2**		**School 3**		**School 4**	
Panel A. Focus Group Demographics, by School, Frequency (%)										
	N	**(%)**	**N**	**(%)**	**N**	**(%)**	**N**	**(%)**	**N**	**(%)**
Sample N	139	100%	31	100%	40	100%	36	100%	32	100%
Male	46	33%	11	35%	14	35%	11	31%	10	31%
Age - Mean (SD)	24	13%	26	15%	24	13%	24	13%	21	11%
Born in NC**	89	64%	17	55%	16	40%	31	86%	25	78%
Race										
White	64	47%	15	48%	25	64%	13	38%	11	35%
African American	62	46%	14	45%	14	36%	16	47%	18	58%
Other	5	4%	- -	- -	- -	- -	3	9%	2	6%
Less Than HS	79	57%	17	57%	24	60%	18	50%	20	63%
Employed	63	45%	15	48%	20	50%	13	36%	15	47%
Panel B. 2007-08 School Data[a]										
School Size	- -	- -	N=1500		N=2000		N=500		N=600	
Latino Growth 2000-15	- -	- -	Low		Medium		High		High	
% Latino	- -	- -	10%		15%		20%		25%	
% White	- -	- -	45%		55%		50%		25%	
% Reduced Lunch	- -	- -	40%		25%		70%		62%	
Student/teacher ratio	- -	- -	18:1		15:1		16:1		22:1	
Teacher Turnover	- -	- -	10%		15%		20%		40%	
Graduation Rate: All	- -	- -	70%		80%		65%		60%	
Graduation Rate: Hispanics	- -	- -	50%		70%		55%		35%	
Graduatrion Rate: LEP	- -	- -	35%		75%		20%		25%	

**p<0.05 fisher's exact test. Note(s): [a] Data has been modified to protect the identities of schools. Data on schools were not known at the time schools were selected. They were also not known at the time focus groups were analyzed.

Table 2. Focus Group Opinions by School, Frequency and Percents[a]									
			Urban				Rural		
	Sample (N=139)		School: 1 (n=31)		School: 2 (n=40)		School: 3 (n=36)		School: 4 (n=32)
Attention Participant Pays to Politics and Government									
A Lot	16	12%	7	23%	2	5%	5	14%	2	6%
A Fair Amount	60	43%	13	42%	20	50%	12	33%	15	47%
Not Much or Not At All	59	42%	10	32%	17	43%	16	44%	15	47%
Most Important Problem Facing the Country[b]									
The Economy	39	28%	9	29%	13	33%	8	22%	9	28%
Wars in the Middle East	33	24%	6	19%	13	33%	9	25%	5	16%
Other/Unkown	28	20%	7	22%	6	15%	9	25%	6	19%
Healthcare and/ or Education	17	12%	5	16%	4	10%	4	11%	4	13%
Immigration	15	11%	4	13%	3	8%	4	11%	4	13%
The Government	14	10%	4	13%	4	10%	2	6%	4	13%
Racism and Discrimination	10	7%	- -	- -	2	5%	6	17%	2	6%
Do Immigrants Strengthen or Burden the Country?									
Strengthen	47	35%	12	40%	16	43%	12	33%	7	23%
Burden	41	31%	9	30%	9	24%	10	28%	13	42%
Don't Know	43	32%	8	27%	12	32%	12	33%	11	35%
Do Newcomers Strengthen or Threaten Traditional American Values/Customs?									
Strengthen	55	40%	18	58%	14	37%	15	42%	8	25%
Threaten	39	28%	5	16%	11	29%	11	31%	12	38%
Don't Know	40	29%	7	23%	13	34%	8	22%	12	38%
Should *Legal* Immigration Increase Decrease or Remain Unchanged?									
Increased	18	13%	6	20%	5	13%	4	11%	3	9%
Kept at Present Level	52	38%	14	47%	17	43%	12	33%	9	28%
Decreased	36	26%	5	17%	10	25%	9	25%	12	38%
Don't Know	28	20%	4	13%	7	18%	9	25%	8	25%
Seriousness of *Illegal* immigration for Country									
Very Serious	46	33%	8	26%	11	28%	18	50%	9	28%
Somewhat Serious	58	42%	13	42%	17	43%	13	36%	15	47%
Not Too Serious or Not Serious	27	19%	8	26%	10	25%	3	8%	6	19%
Don't Know	3	2%	- -	- -	2	5%	- -	- -	1	3%
Seriousness of *Illegal* Immigration for Your Community									
Very Serious	32	23%	7	23%	5	13%	13	36%	7	22%
Somewhat Serious	46	33%	8	26%	16	40%	11	31%	11	34%
Not Too Serious or Not Serious	52	37%	14	45%	14	35%	10	10%	14	44%
Don't Know	7	5%	1	3%	5	13%	1	3%	- -	- -

**p<0.05 fisher's exact test. Note: [a] Multiple responses per participant.

Table 3. Hispanic Adolescent Perceptions by School, Frequency and Percents			Urban				Rural			
	Total Sample (n=239)		School: 1 (n=26)		School: 2 (n=40)		School: 3 (n=12)		School: 4 (n=36)	
Demographic Characteristics										
Mexican Background	129	54%	18	69%	8	20%	10	83%	9	24%
Foreign-Born	163	68%	21	81%	24	60%	7%	58%	18	50%
School Belonging										
Low	27	12%	1	4%	7	18%	2	17%	6	17%
Medium	81	37%	14	54%	26	65%	9	75%	25	69%
High	113	51%	11	42%	7	18%	1	8%	5	14%
School Climate/ Respect **										
Low	28	12%	2	8%	8	20%	4	33%	8	22%
Medium	145	61%	12	46%	27	68%	7	58%	23	64%
High	66	28%	12	46%	5	13%	1	8%	5	14%
Likes School**										
Low	41	17%	3	12%	11	28%	2	17%	8	22%
Medium	140	59%	10	38%	28	70%	9	75%	24	67%
High	58	24%	13	50%	1	3%	1	8%	4	11%
Adult School Encouragement										
Low	105	47%	9	43%	12	30%	5	42%	18	50%
High	120	53%	12	57%	28	70%	7	58%	18	50%
English Language Acculturation **										
Low	116	52%	11	46%	12	33%	2	18%	12	34%
High	109	48%	13	54%	24	67%	9	82%	23	66%
Perceived Likelihood of Discrimination										
Low	42	18%	7	27%	7	18%	0	0%	3	8%
Medium	146	62%	16	62%	23	58%	11	92%	26	72%
High	48	20%	3	12%	10	25%	1	8%	7	19%

Note: **p<0.05 fisher's exact test. Data are from the 2007-08 SIAA survey of Latino youth. The total sample includes results from other schools that were not included in the focus group arm of the SIAA study. Values categorized using sample mean ± 1 SD. Adult Encouragement at School and English Language Acculturation dichotomized into high (value of 5) and low (values less than 5).

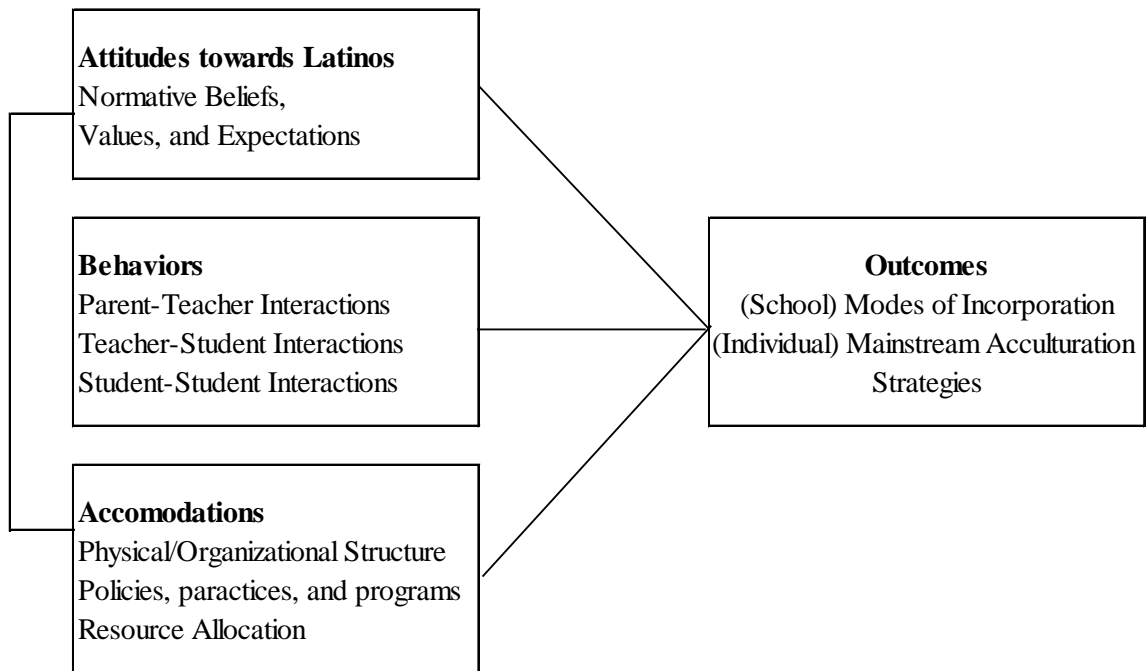**Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Factors Influencing the School Context for Latinos**

Figure 2. Cultural Inclusion and Accomodation within NC Schools.