

Hispanic Clusters and the Local Labor Market: Preliminary Analysis from North Carolina

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Over the past decade the Hispanic population has been the fastest growing race/ethnic group in the United States. North Carolina is one state that has experienced a Hispanic population boom. However, this growth is not evenly distributed throughout the state. Some counties have experienced large increases in the number of Hispanics, while Hispanics are almost non-existent in other counties. This research questions the driving forces that determine the location and growth mechanisms of Hispanic population clusters in the state. North Carolina has a long history of providing agricultural and manufacturing jobs and has experienced a recent construction boom. Such low-skill, low-wage jobs typically attract unskilled workers. This paper hypothesizes a correlation between the percentage of manufacturing, construction, and agricultural jobs available in selected counties and the location of Hispanic migrant enclaves in the state. Our research shows that there is a strong relationship between Hispanic population and worker clusters and agricultural jobs, and to a lesser extent with manufacturing jobs. The correlation between construction jobs and Hispanic population is weaker than that expected.

“Mexicans and other Hispanics have come here to stay, contribute to the economy, and be part of the NC Landscape for many generations to come” – Enrique Gomez Palacio

Introduction

For two decades the Hispanic population has been the fastest growing race/ethnic group in both the United States and North Carolina (Fig 1). According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Hispanics surpassed the African American population (which makes up 12.3 percent of the U.S. population) and became the largest minority in the U.S., comprising 12.5 percent of the nation's total population. Unlike the African American population, the Hispanic population is growing both through high birth rates as well as by immigration to the U.S. In addition, there has been a significant movement of Hispanics within the U.S. away from areas such as the Southwest U.S. (where Hispanic occupancy began long before these areas were part of the U.S.) and from the larger cit-

ies of states such as Florida, California, and New York (where the recent immigrant population has had a tendency to settle). The combination of both trends has been the rapid growth of Hispanic populations throughout the country as smaller and more rural states have begun to receive an influx of Hispanic migrants (Torres et al. 2003). North Carolina in particular has experienced a large influx of Hispanics, with a 394 percent increase between 1990 and 2000 (U.S. Bureau of Census 2000). If this trend continues 15-20 percent of North Carolina's population will be Hispanic by 2010 (Johnson-Webb 2002; CNN 2004).

However, North Carolina's Hispanic population increase is not evenly distributed across the state, and varies widely from county to county. Some ar-

eas have received large numbers of Hispanics who have grouped into large clusters, while other counties have few Hispanics (Palacio 2003). Although the influx of Hispanics into North Carolina has received much attention in the media over the years, little scholarly research has focused on how this phenomenon affects local labor markets and the availability of jobs. This issue can be contentious, as Hispanics may be incorrectly identified as foreign immigrants, leading to speculation about whether immigrants displace native born Americans from jobs. Thus, it is essential to understand the relationships between this clustering process and local labor markets.

Until recently much of our understanding of ethnic labor market operation comes from studying the process in such major cities as New York, Los Angeles, and Miami. However, that knowledge is not adequate to explain the consequences for North Carolina's cities and rural areas, because they typically do not have well developed ethnic enclaves or gateways for immigrants. Therefore, it is essential to learn in which sectors Hispanic migrants gain entry into the workforce, how and where ethnic niches develop, and if the migrants displace natives in the state's workforce. This research explores the associated factors that contribute to the formation of Hispanic population clusters in North Carolina. It is expected that the growth processes of this population is similar to previous migrant waves, and that

Hispanics concentrate in areas that are associated with particular jobs markets. This can lead to prediction of future Hispanic growth patterns and concentrations within the state.

This paper is divided into four sections. The first section considers the existing literature on ethnic migration and settlement. The second section includes an analysis of the study area and the research methods and data sets. The results of the analysis are presented in the third section. The last section provides our conclusions, commentary and ideas for further study.

Ethnic Migration and Settlement

Our understanding of ethnic clusters and labor markets come from work that has focused on these phenomena in major urban areas, such as Atlanta, Detroit, Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. Many of those studies have attempted to link Hispanic clusters to several related factors including ethnic employment niches, labor market segregation and discrimination, and Hispanic enclaves. Implicit in this work is the fact that geographic or occupational clusters of a particular racial or ethnic group are not random, but can be linked to particular social and spatial processes. These processes can result in clusters or enclaves of a particular ethnic group, as well as associations with ethnic groups and particular industries or occupations called ethnic niches. These issues have been extensively studied. Although this work is typically based on large cities, it provides insights for the smaller cities and rural areas of North Carolina.

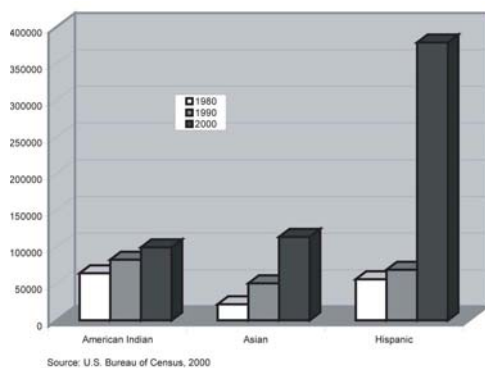


Figure 1: Population Growth from 1980-2000 by Selected Ethnic Groups in NC

What is an Ethnic Enclave?

Immigrants often cluster together in a neighborhood, district or suburb, which come known as enclaves. Miami, Florida provides a prime example of urban ethnic enclaves. Known especially for its Cuban population, many other ethnic groups are clustered in Miami's neighborhoods. Wilson and Portes (1980) explain that enclaves occur when immigrants arrive with similar social and economic status, find similar jobs, and therefore stick together. Subsequent immigrants of similar backgrounds are drawn to the "opportunities offered by a preexist-

ing immigrant colony abroad” (p. 302), and settle in the same neighborhoods. For that reason, enclaves offer a sense of stability and community to the newly arrived immigrants and provide a set of declining costs and risks for them in the destination communities (Massey, *et al.* 1994). The enclaves also may form from discrimination in the housing market (Ihlandfeldt and Sjoquist 1998). In this case, immigrants face restrictions in the housing market and they are segregated in an enclave, which may be distant from employment opportunities. Additionally, because recent immigrants will not likely have much money to allocate on housing, they will be forced to live in poor quality housing, also resulting in the concentration of co-ethnics.

Theoretical Perspective on Emergence of Ethnic Niches

Just as migrant groups may end up in a particular self-perpetuating geographic location, they may also end up concentrated in a particular occupation or industry, called an ethnic niche. Wang and Pandit (2003) have described ethnic niches as “occupations or industries that are dominated or over represented by a particular ethnic group” (p. 159). A niche may arise from the activities of entrepreneurs, acting as separate entities or jointly, or from the activities of workers, possibly in conjunction with entrepreneurs. In general, a niche is related to the concentration and specialization of an ethnic group’s labor market activities. This is based on members’ ability to meet labor demand through the formation of social network and community ties, and in some instances, based on their possession of special skills, experience, or other attributes that employers consider relevant to productivity (Wilson 2003). Los Angeles, Miami, and New York, are urban areas with both a large number of immigrants and a long history of supporting ethnic niches. Migrant enclaves in other areas have a more recent history. Atlanta has recently experienced a surge in immigration and is beginning to see ethnic niches emerge among immigrant groups (Wang and Pandit 2003). Similar developments can be expected in other growing metropolitan areas, such as those of North Carolina.

Much research suggests that labor market niches are associated with the flow of migrants from a single origin to a particular destination (Wilson 2003). Migrants do not select destinations randomly, rather they move to places where there is an existing social network (either through friends or relatives). In this view pioneer migrants establish a presence in a given labor market and others of similar backgrounds quickly follow the trend. The functioning of the ethnic social network in the creation of an ethnic employment niche can be seen through referral hiring. Elliot (2001) states that “members of a particular ethnic group concentrate in particular jobs, and when new employment opportunities become available at their workplace, they pass this information along to social contacts, often of the same race and ethnic background” (p. 401). In turn, the greater “the concentration of the group’s employment in specific industries, the greater the likelihood that ethnic contacts will channel newcomers into these industries” (Ellis and Wright 1999, p. 28). A recent example of niche specialization is that of Hispanic workers in slaughterhouses in Great Plains’ states, particularly in Colorado (Schlosser, 2001). The miserable working conditions and low pay attract few workers who have employment alternatives. Thus, slaughterhouse management recruits large numbers of workers from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The majority of the workers are illiterate, are often undocumented, and have very high turnover rates. While an extreme example, even in these cases ethnic niches may provide both a secure environment for vulnerable newcomers as well as leading an ethnic group into a particular labor market.

Job Segregation involving Hispanics

Another aspect of employment niches is the issue of job segregation. This is common among Hispanic immigrants and has been occurring for some time, as evidenced by the widespread employment discrimination experienced by Hispanics during the 1920s in Detroit and its environs (Clete 1996). More recently, the United States passed stringent laws regarding the granting of work visas, based primarily on the stated occupation of the immigrant.

Wilson and Portes (1980) found that those who worked in the professions of “physicians and surgeons, nurses, speech therapists, pharmacists, and dieticians” (p. 299) were more likely to be admitted rapidly into the United States than those in the secondary labor force. Hispanic immigrants to the United States are traditionally in the latter class. Thus, employment discrimination exists before many immigrants even enter the country.

Once Hispanics have arrived in the country or a region, labor market discrimination against migrants may also lead to formation of ethnic niches. In this sense, niches may emerge not just through self selection or discrimination but rather because certain groups are more or less forced to accept whatever jobs are available. Because Hispanic migrants tend to have lower levels of education, they may find it difficult to compete for skilled jobs, and so can remain in manual or lower skilled occupations and take the jobs that others do not want (NCIOM, 2003, Wang and Pandit 2003). Catanzarite (2002) found that in Los Angeles “Hispanics are vastly overrepresented in a set of low-skilled occupations....and occupational segregation of recent immigrant Hispanics from natives is pronounced and rising” (p. 302), especially in manufacturing. Hispanics often comprise almost the entire work force for certain manufacturing companies, such as construction, services, and agriculture. Gonzales (2004) states that almost 80 percent of the agriculture workers, 67 percent of the dishwash-

ers, 58 percent of the cooks, and 53 percent of the housekeepers in California are Hispanics. According to Jeter (2004), Hispanics account for 25 percent of construction workers nationally. F.L. Crane and Sons Construction Company in Mississippi is a prime example of this phenomenon, as 75 percent of its workers are Hispanics (Jeter, 2004).

Similarly, in Atlanta, Wang and Pandit (2003) noted that in 1990 there were no Hispanics employed in the following sectors: mathematical-computer, social scientists/urban planner, social /recreation/religious worker, lawyer/judge, artist/athlete, and health services. They noted that Hispanics were significantly represented in food services (5.1 percent), farm/forestry/fishing (2.3 percent), construction (6.1 percent), and operators/fabricators/laborer sectors (2.3 percent). In Atlanta Hispanics are segregated from the mainstream white collar work force, and generally relegated to lower skilled and lower paying blue collar jobs. It can be expected that similar processes have been at work in North Carolina.

Study Area and Data Analysis

The study area for this paper is the state of North Carolina (NC), whose Hispanic population has quadrupled since 1990. Such a rapid rate of growth is primarily the result of in-migration of Hispanics from other parts of the country (particularly California, New York, Texas, and Florida) or foreign countries, though during the early 1990s only about 18 percent were likely to be foreign citizens (Johnson et al. *Sultana & Miller* 1999). Despite this rapid growth, Hispanics currently comprise only 4.7 percent of the state’s population, compared to the national average of 12.5 percent. This population is unevenly distributed, as only one quarter of North Carolina’s 100 counties have a population that is at least 5 percent Hispanic (Table 1).

According to the Census Bureau (2000), the median household income for Hispanics in NC is \$32,353, which is below the state’s median household income (\$39,184) (Table 2 and Figure 2), and marginally higher than the African American and American Indian median incomes. Even though Hispanics have the lowest unemployment rate in

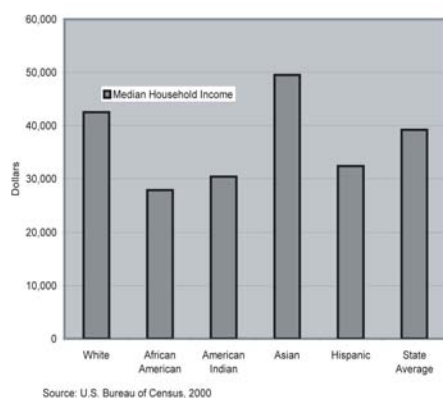


Figure 2: Median Household Income by Ethnic Groups in NC, 2000

NC (NCPB, 2001), 25 percent of Hispanics live at or below the poverty line, a greater percentage than any of NC's other ethnic groups (Table 2 and Figure 3). Like other states in the U.S., fewer Hispanics in NC have undergraduate or graduate degrees (7.22 percent), which is 13 percentage points below the state average and 36 percentage points below the Asian average. Similarly, about 55 percent of NC's Hispanics have not graduated from high school, which is almost three times higher than the state average (Table 2 and Figure 3).

North Carolina has a strong agricultural and manufacturing history. Each year, agriculture contributes \$46 billion to North Carolina's economy, and manufacturing jobs, (especially apparel, textiles and wood), employed 45,000 people in 2001 (NCPB, 2001). The state has also recently experienced a boom in construction work as a result of the rapid economic and population growth throughout the state. However, North Carolina is trying to break away from its traditional economy based on primary and secondary sectors. Many jobs are being created each year in high-technology industries such as computers and biotechnology. In fact, 31,100 high technology jobs have been created since 1994 (NCPB, 2001). The creation of highly skilled jobs does not eliminate low-skilled agricultural, construction, manufacturing, cleaning, and food service positions. It is to these jobs that low skilled workers are attracted.

Because the Hispanic population is overrepresented in primary sector activities at the national level, this makes North Carolina a good place to analyze Hispanic population clusters and their employment behavior. This paper hypothesizes that there is a strong correlation between the percentage of manufacturing, construction, and agricultural jobs available and the existence of Hispanic concentrations in twenty five of North Carolina's counties. It is expected that this population will concentrate in areas that are associated with these particular job markets. As this research focuses on concentrations of Hispanics, the 25 counties that are at least 5 percent Hispanic are used in this analysis (Figure 4 and Table 1).

The demographic and industrial classification data for this research came from the Census 2000

Summery File 3 (SF3), which was downloaded from the Census Bureau web page. Occupations are classified into three groups using standard census-defined categories. The primary sector includes farming jobs such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, as well as extractive industries such as mining. Construction jobs are defined as construction and maintenance occupations. Manufacturing jobs are defined as activities such as production, transportation, grading and hauling. All types of professional jobs are defined here as other job types.

Results

Hispanic Enclaves and Labor Markets

Figure 4 shows the Hispanic population distribution by county in North Carolina. Although Hispanics comprise about 5 percent of North Carolina's total population (Bureau of Census 2000), they are not evenly distributed across the state. It was expected that the highest Hispanic percent would be found in metropolitan counties, such as those including Charlotte or Raleigh-Durham. However this was not the case. Rather, the highest percentages of Hispanics were found in Duplin, Lee, Samson, Montgomery, Chatham, and Greene counties (Figure 4 and Table 3), which are rural in character and also have the largest proportion of farming sector jobs. This is therefore an early indication of an association between Hispanic concentrations and jobs within a particular economic sector, and therefore of niche employment. It is also important to note that Hispanic concentrations are found as well in those counties (e.g., Montgomery, Randolph, Lee, Surry, and Yadkin) that have the highest proportion of manufacturing jobs (Table 3). Additionally, counties with higher mean percentages of construction jobs appear to attract Hispanics at above the state average. While in the mid 1990s the Hispanic population was said to reflect the location of military communities and the I-85 corridor (Johnson et al. 1999), by 2000 this was no longer the case, and Hispanics are more widely distributed in the state.

Figure 5 and Table 4 show mean value of selected variables for the top 25 counties by Hispanic population in North Carolina. While an average of six percent of workers in these 25 counties are His-

panics (U.S. Census Bureau 2000), it is notable that of all Hispanic workers, 58 percent of them entered the farming, construction and manufacturing labor market sectors. Obviously, many Hispanics are not working in these traditional niche jobs, but these numbers clearly indicate that a very large number are. Those counties have an average of one percent of employment in the farming sector, 10 percent in construction, and 16 percent manufacturing jobs. While the farming sector comprises one percent of total jobs in 25 counties of North Carolina, 0.2 percent of these jobs are done by Hispanic workers. However, of all Hispanic workers, almost four percent of them are involved in farming occupations. In some counties, such as Sampson and Greene, about 30 percent of Hispanics work in agriculture (Table 3).

Similarly, in NC 10 percent of the workforce is in construction and 16 percent in manufacturing jobs, but Hispanic representation in these sectors is important as they constitute almost two percent of the labor force for both of these sectors. Among Hispanic workers, 26 percent work in construction and 29 percent are in manufacturing jobs (Table 4 and Fig. 5). In many counties these values are much higher. For example, in Johnston County over 45 percent of Hispanics work in construction (though only 15 percent of all workers do), while in Montgomery, Randolph, and Lincoln counties at least 60 percent of Hispanics are employed in manufacturing jobs (although no more than 32 percent of all workers are) (Table 3). These numbers clearly support the idea of ethnic niches, as well as concentrations or enclaves.

Jobs Associated With Hispanic Enclaves

A measure of association was conducted to explain what types of jobs are associated with Hispanic concentrations (Table 5). The Spearman rank correlation coefficient is used here as the variables are not normally distributed. The association between percent of farming sector jobs and the percent of Hispanic population is .715, showing a strong and positive correlation with a significance level of $p = .01$. This result is consistent with our expectations and with other research (Torres et al. *Sultana & Miller* 2003). Therefore, the growth of the Hispanic

population in North Carolina is certainly associated with its large agricultural sector, and the uneven distribution of these jobs. Therefore, although Hispanic migrants in North Carolina are more likely to be employed than members of other ethnic groups, they appear to often occupy less desirable, low-skilled farming jobs.

It is also notable that there is a positive association between the concentration of manufacturing jobs and Hispanic enclaves, even though the relationships are not that strong. This may result from the recent trend of industrial jobs disappearing from the state (Johnson-Webb 2002). It is surprising however, given the large Hispanic presence in construction jobs in many counties throughout the state, that our results do not find any significant positive relationship between construction jobs and Hispanic population clusters. It may be that while the construction industry has a large Hispanic component, the constantly changing geographic locations of construction jobs overrides any strong correlation with residential population and employment. There is a strong negative association (-.605) between the location of other job types, which are mostly high status to moderately high status jobs, and Hispanic population concentrations. This result is consistent with our expectations that Hispanics are overrepresented in low status jobs. The long-time residents and native-born working and middle classes are finding greater opportunities for employment advancement. As their careers evolve, they leave behind the less glamorous and low-paying jobs for more prestigious and profitable jobs, making way for a new working class, the Hispanic migrants (Wilson 2003).

Population concentration is not the only factor to be considered when relating Hispanic enclaves to employment. Because economic activities such as farming and manufacturing vary considerably by county, the concentration of Hispanics in the workforce in counties may be a strong indicator of ethnic niche formation. Therefore, this research also tested whether Hispanic workers were strongly associated with primary and secondary occupations in those counties where they comprise larger percentages of the total workforce (Table

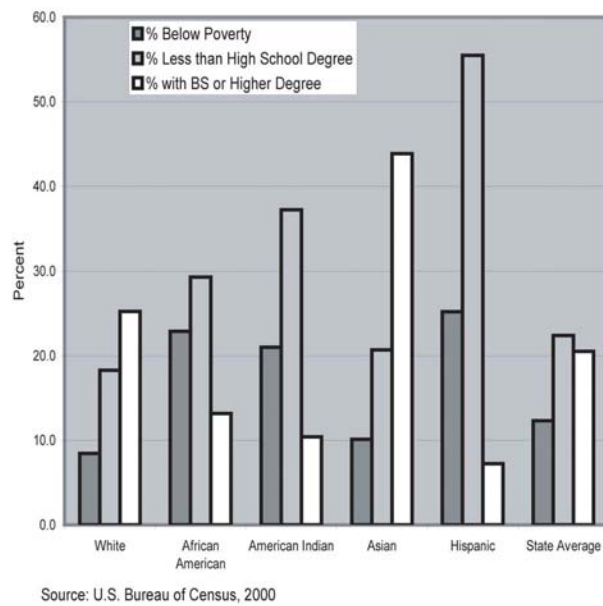


Figure 3: Poverty and Educational Attainment Status by Ethnic Groups in NC, 2000

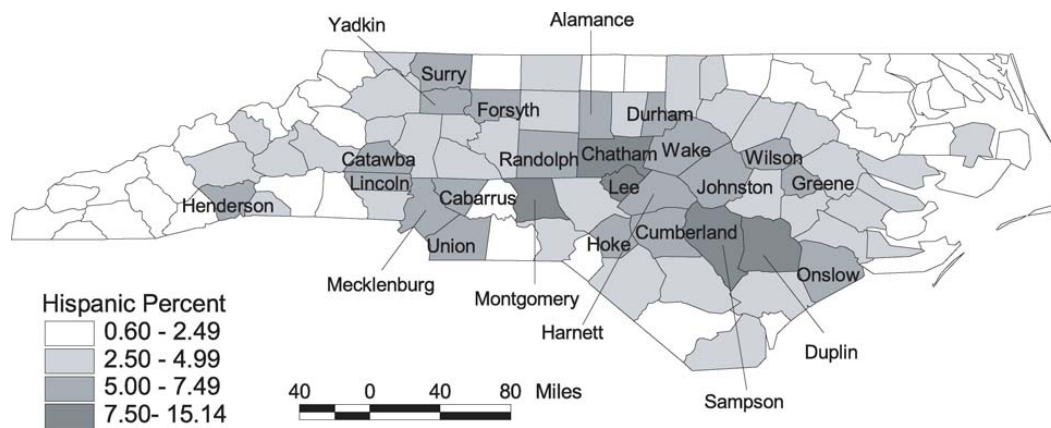
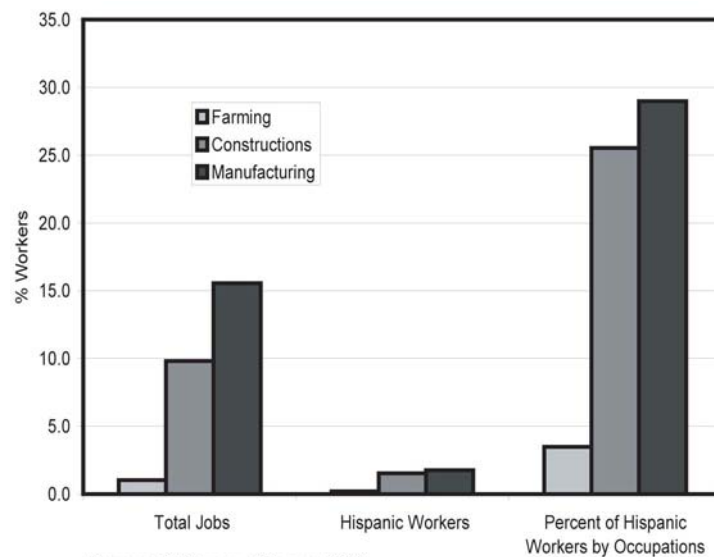


Figure 4: Percentage of Hispanics by County in North Carolina, 2000

Table 1: Counties of North Carolina with Five or More Percent Hispanics, 2000

Counties	Total Population	Total Hispanic	PCT Hispanic
Duplin	49,063	7,318	14.9
Lee	49,040	5,665	11.6
Sampson	60,161	6,390	10.6
Montgomery	26,822	2,729	10.2
Chatham	49,329	4,813	9.8
Greene	18,974	1,524	8.0
Durham	223,314	16,994	7.6
Johnston	121,965	9,014	7.4
Onslow	150,355	10,766	7.2
Hoke	33,646	2,357	7.0
Cumberland	302,963	20,637	6.8
Alamance	130,800	8,759	6.7
Yadkin	36,348	2,432	6.7
Randolph	130,454	8,593	6.6
Mecklenburg	695,454	44,954	6.5
Forsyth	306,067	19,687	6.4
Union	123,677	7,726	6.2
Surry	71,219	4,378	6.1
Harnett	91,025	5,179	5.7
Wilson	73,814	4,122	5.6
Lincoln	63,780	3,517	5.5
Catawba	141,685	7,812	5.5
Henderson	89,173	4,882	5.5
Wake	627,846	34,135	5.4
Cabarrus	131,063	6,623	5.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, 2000

Figure 5: Percentage of Hispanic Workers in three Job Sectors in NC, 2000

Table 2: Socioeconomic Status of Hispanic Population compared to Other Ethnic Groups in NC, 2000

Race	Median Household Income (\$)	% Live Below Poverty Level	% Less than High School Degree	% With BS or More Degree
White	42,530	8.4	18.3	25.21
African American	27,845	22.9	29.3	13.15
American Indian	30,390	21.0	37.3	10.40
Asian	49,497	10.1	20.7	43.88
Hispanic	32,353	25.2	55.5	7.22
State Average	39,184	12.3	22.4	20.53

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 3: Percent of Hispanic Workers by County in Selected Occupation Sectors in NC, 2000

Counties	% Hispanic	% Hispanic Workers	% Farming Jobs	% Construction Jobs	% Manufacturing Jobs	% Hispanic Workers in Farming of all Hispanic Workers	% Hispanic Construction Workers of all Hispanic Workers	% Hispanic Manufacturing Workers of all Hispanic Workers
Duplin	14.9	14.9	45.5	13.4	24.7	18.5	18.8	45.1
Lee	11.6	11.1	0.6	13.6	25.3	1.4	17.7	59.1
Sampson	10.6	9.1	5.9	11.4	25.3	29.0	13.8	37.5
Montgomery	10.2	9.4	1.6	12.4	32.7	4.2	10.5	64.8
Chatham	9.8	9.6	1.1	11.4	20.4	1.3	16.5	59.5
Greene	8.0	8.5	4.9	12.3	25.0	30.2	8.3	38.5
Durham	7.6	7.3	0.2	8.3	9.0	1.0	42.3	14.7
Johnston	7.4	5.2	0.7	15.5	16.4	6.5	45.4	21.6
Onslow	7.2	4.9	1.2	14.1	11.4	3.3	19.7	9.0
Hoke	7.0	7.7	1.6	12.8	25.1	3.7	20.5	42.4
Cumberland	6.8	5.0	0.4	10.5	16.6	0.9	12.1	17.6

5). As expected, farming and manufacturing jobs are positively correlated with high percentages of Hispanic workers, while high status jobs are negatively correlated with large concentrations of this group in the workforce (Table 5).

As noted above, there is a weak positive relationship between Hispanic population and construction work, but this changes to a weak negative relationship when the percentage of workers who are Hispanic is measured. It is also noteworthy that the relationship between Hispanics and both farming and other jobs weakens when employment percentages are used. This suggests that Hispanics have created an ethnic niche in manufacturing, but their residences are dispersed among several counties. In contrast, farm workers reside in agricultural areas in greater numbers than their workforce participation suggests. This indicates that agricultural counties serve as source areas for workers in other sectors, especially manufacturing. Niche theory suggests that new migrants are likely to settle where there is an already defined Hispanic population, so this pattern may continue even if Hispanic workers shift away from agricultural employment.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research examined Hispanic population growth in North Carolina. Our research shows a strong relationship between Hispanic population and employment clusters and agricultural and, to lesser extent, with manufacturing jobs. This is not surprising as North Carolina counties have strong agricultural and manufacturing traditions (Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 2002). An abundance of farm and factory work is available in North Carolina in comparison to other states, making it an attractive destination for unskilled and semi-skilled labor. These jobs are generally rejected by affluent, well-educated workers (Leiter and Tomaskovic-Devey 2002), and are increasingly filled by Hispanic workers. These results are consistent with the expectations of the ethnic enclave/niche literature, although they apply here to rural populations rather than the large urban enclaves typically studied.

North Carolina is also experiencing rapid development in many counties with a concomitant construction boom that has created many new jobs that are appealing to newcomers with limited skills. However, our results did not find a strong correla-

Table 4: Percent of Hispanic Workers in NC in Selected Occupation Sectors, 2000

Types of Jobs	% Total Jobs	% Hispanic Workers	% Hispanic Workers by Occupation
Farming	1.0	.2	3.5
Constructions	9.8	1.5	25.5
Manufacturing	15.5	1.8	29.0
Others	73.6	2.5	42.0
Total	100	6.0	100

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

tion between construction jobs and Hispanic population, and there is actually an inverse relationship with worker concentrations. These do not appear to be niches for this population, though they may be elsewhere in the country. The fact that over a third of the Hispanic population works outside these occupations does not invalidate the niche idea, as they may still end up in low wage and low skilled urban service occupations that could serve as ethnic niches. The concentrations near Fort Bragg, along with an over-representation of Puerto Ricans in the area (Johnson et al. 1999), suggests the possibility that the military also serves as an ethnic niche, or helps to create ethnic enclaves. Because Hispanic migrants tend to settle in established enclaves, each county's history of increase in Hispanics should be investigated to more fully understand how these concentrations were formed and sustained.

Hispanics will become an increasingly important part of the state labor market, but due to their background they will not likely expand evenly throughout the labor force, or geographically within the state. Because they are tied to particular sectors, they run the risk of being vulnerable to the

decline of particular economic activities in the state or to the savage cost cutting strategies of firms, which have been well documented for low wage/low skill industries (Schlosser, 2001). There is therefore a vital need for understanding the potential impact on families within these niches. As the Hispanic population of North Carolina is more likely to live in poverty than other groups, each county's standard cost of living index and mean personal income data should also be considered when examining concentrations.

Also, because Hispanics are not necessarily concentrated in easily identifiable neighborhoods in large cities they, and the social networks that sustain them, may be easy to overlook. This is especially true for manufacturing workers, who appear to be residentially dispersed to a greater extent than others. These are particular concerns as strong negative attitudes towards Hispanics have already been documented in North Carolina (Johnson et al. 1999). These are unfortunately most common in the Piedmont area where many of the largest population concentrations are located. Allowing the exclusion of the most rapidly growing component of the population from wider participation in the state's

Table 5: Spearman's Correlation Coefficient of Hispanic Clusters and Job Types in NC, 2000

	% Hispanics	% Hispanic Workers
% Farming Jobs	.723**	.429**
% Construction Jobs	.125	-.117
% Manufacturing Jobs	.235*	.443**
% Other Jobs	-.605**	-.459**

** Correlation is statistically significant at the .05 level

* Correlation is statistically significant at the .10 level

economy would clearly be disastrous. Steps should be taken by state and local governments to encourage greater opportunities for Hispanic beyond current established ethnic niches.

The growth of the Hispanic population of North Carolina appears to fit many of the expectations of the geographic literature, including an association between the kinds of jobs available and the presence of Hispanics. Because the literature on niches and enclaves allows for a range of processes to create similar outcomes, it is not possible to definitively state that enclaves are responsible for these associations. However, this correspondence suggests that geographic analysis is very useful for understanding the future growth and economic potential of this population, and provides a promising method for conceptualizing and assessing changing population and employment trends in the state.

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