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BEING BROWN IN DIXIE

Race, Ethnicity, and Latino Immigration in the New South

edited by
Cameron D. Lippard
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To our families,
who carry us forward

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Intergroup Relations: Reconceptualizing Discrimination and Hierarchy

Helen B. Marrow

Several features distinguish the racial context of reception currently greeting a host of nonwhite and nonblack newcomers in the "traditional" U.S. South—defined here as the former 11 confederate states minus Florida and Texas, which have greater experience with "Hispanics/Latinos" (Mohl 2002a; Bankston 2007; Saenz 2000). First, natives of the traditional South, especially ones living in rural areas and small towns, have been the most isolated from both historical and contemporary immigration (Bankston 2007; Eckes 2005; Marrow forthcoming; Odem and Lacy 2009; Reimers 2005; Schmid 2003). Second, blacks are present in higher absolute and relative numbers in many areas of this region than they are elsewhere. Third, the American racial "binary," which has long served to divide superordinate whites from subordinate nonwhites, remains strongest here (Lee and Bean 2007; McClain et al. 2007). Indeed, when we hear that immigrants are now settling in rural areas of the traditional South, it is precisely the region's lack of immigrant history, large populations of African Americans, and binary racial structure that piques our concern about how newcomers will fare, get along with local residents, and ultimately become integrated into local social life.

In this chapter, I analyze Hispanic newcomers' patterns of social interactions with whites and blacks in rural eastern North Carolina in 2003-04, focusing on the extent to which they reported experiencing discrimination and exclusion, the axes along which they perceived such discrimination to operate, and the degree to which they saw their own racial identities as nonwhites or nonblacks to be blocking their full incorporation into rural southern society. Overall, Hispanic respondents

perceived better interpersonal relations with whites than with blacks. They perceived that whites treat Hispanics better than whites treat blacks, and many also perceived that Hispanics are "discriminated" against more by blacks than by whites. This often came as a surprise to them, since upon arrival in eastern North Carolina their expectations were that that blacks and Hispanics would be treated poorly by whites, not that Hispanics would treated poorly by blacks.

These results complicate our traditional conception of white-on-nonwhite racial discrimination and hierarchy it has historically operated in the rural South, since they show that in the mid-2000s, Hispanic newcomers reported feeling most excluded from full incorporation into rural southern society not as *racial subordinates* by whites, but rather as *undeserving outsiders* by blacks as well as whites. As such, Hispanic newcomers' experiences with what they saw as discrimination and exclusion were not necessarily engendering close affiliation or identification with African Americans, even though some Hispanics also identified as nonwhites, acknowledged negative treatment by whites, and admired African Americans' struggles against white domination. I discuss the implications of these results for the changing contours of the rural southern color line in the concluding section.

A few notes on terminology are in order before proceeding. *Hispanics:* I employ the general term "Hispanic newcomer" throughout this chapter for two reasons. First, it provides a convenient way to capture the experiences of both foreign- and U.S.-born individuals in eastern North Carolina who fit the U.S. Census' official definition of Hispanics/Latinos. More importantly, it reflects how the terms Hispanic and Latino were used in eastern North Carolina during the time of my field research—largely interchangeably and referring to both foreign- and U.S.-born individuals, the latter of whom include many internal migrants from other parts of the United States—while maintaining consistency by using only one term as much as possible. Thus, while I recognize that the term Hispanic is controversial, especially in other parts of the country, it acknowledges the dominant racializing discourse operating both in major public institutions and on the ground in eastern North Carolina during the time of my research.

Blacks: Next, I also employ the terms "black" and "African American" interchangeably. In 2003-04 local discourse in eastern North Carolina followed the common institutional practice of separating Hispanics from nonHispanic blacks, despite the U.S. Census' acknowledgment that these groups are not mutually exclusive (Patterson 2001). Furthermore, with few foreign-born members yet among the local black population in this eastern part of the state, the terms black and African American still referred largely to a cohesive group of individuals who share a collective history of slavery and racial subordination in the United States.

Whites: Finally, I employ the term "white" throughout this chapter, noting that neither "Chicano" nor "Anglo" are commonplace terms in the traditional South. As with the terms black and African American, local discourse in eastern North Carolina tended to follow the common institutional practice of separating Hispanics from nonHispanic whites, despite the U.S. Census' acknowledgment that these groups are not mutually exclusive. Elsewhere I discuss several cases of Hispanic respondents who either self-identified or appeared as "whites" to rural southern natives, and thus who challenged this clear distinction (Marrow 2009). However, when most people used the term white in this region more abstractly, their references were almost always to native-born, nonHispanic whites. Thus, while it is possible that the identifications of some Hispanic newcomers as "whites" may engender a rethinking of the boundaries of whiteness in eastern North Carolina in the future, in the mid-2000s this had not happened yet.

The Rural Southern Racial Binary in Local Context

Data come from 129 individual semi-structured interviews and additional ethnographic research that I conducted between June 2003 and June 2004 in Bedford and Wilcox counties, pseudonyms for two rural "new immigrant destination' counties in eastern North Carolina. North Carolina was the premier new immigrant destination state in the 1990s, posting the highest growth rates in its Hispanic/Latino (394 per cent) and immigrant (274 per cent) populations among all states. Bedford and Wilcox are located in the rural eastern part of the state, where poverty is more acute than in the central piedmont region, and where the black-white binary is extremely sharp (on eastern North Carolina, see Griffith 1993; 2005; Key 1984; Torres, Popke, and Hapke 2006).

Slightly over half of the 129 interviews (N=70, 54 per cent) were conducted with Latin American immigrants of varying nationalities, in either Spanish or English. These foreign-born respondents hailed primarily from Mexico (N=39), but also South America (N=16), Central America (N=14), and Cuba (N=1). Many were direct migrants from abroad, and they included 12 naturalized U.S. citizens, 12 legal permanent residents, 7 "nonimmigrant" workers employed under temporary contract visas or work permits, 33 undocumented immigrants, and 6 immigrants whose legal status I was unable to determine. An

additional one seventh of the interviews (N=18, 14 percent) were conducted with U.S.-born Hispanics, mostly Mexican and Puerto Rican Americans, in both Spanish and English. These native-born Hispanic respondents were from New York (N=6), Puerto Rico (N=4), Texas (N=2), Florida (N=2), and "other states" (N=4), and all but two were "newcomers" to the traditional South. Finally, approximately one third of the interviews (N=41, 32 percent) were conducted with "key native-born informants," in English. These native-born respondents were both white (N=27) and black (N=14), and served to triangulate my findings among Hispanic respondents, on whose views I concentrated. The high proportions of Mexican- followed by Central and South American-origin respondents among Hispanic respondents reflects their dominance among North Carolina's Hispanic population, which was 65.1 percent Mexican, 8.2 percent Puerto Rican, 1.9 percent Cuban, and 24.8 percent "other" Hispanic in the 2000 Census.

Interview respondents were located by combining theoretical and snowball sampling designs across four institutional arenas in both counties: workplaces, elementary school systems, courts and law enforcement systems, and politics. Interviews ranged from thirty minutes to three hours, and respondents were asked a battery of questions regarding their migration history; family background; racial/ethnic identification; employment history; views on race, immigration, and life in the rural south; and political participation. Employers, school and legal personnel, and political leaders were asked additional questions about their experiences with the local Hispanic community. I supplemented these interviews with various forms of participant-observation research over the course of the year (see Marrow 2008). To ensure anonymity, all names and identifying characteristics of respondents and places have been changed.

The strong binary racial context is evident in Bedford and Wilcox counties in several key ways. First, minority groups other than African Americans have little historical presence in either county, with Hispanics arriving since the 1980s. Second, like many other places in the "lowland" or "Deep" South, the population of African Americans is large in both counties (58 percent in Bedford and 29 percent in Wilcox in the 2000 Census). Third, the separation of blacks from whites runs deep in both counties. Whites are internally divided along several lines, especially class status; they generally belong either to the middle class or to the poor and working classes. In contrast, blacks' socioeconomic position is weaker; in both counties most belong to the poor and working classes, while only a few belong to the middle class. In this way, Hispanic newcomers to both counties enter local rural contexts that

are very heavily structured by the historical legacy of the racial binary and its resulting inequalities. They encounter a native population starkly divided by both race and class, including a native black population that is almost entirely poor and working class.

Yet they also enter rural contexts where population sizes are small enough that "everybody knows everybody" and complete racial isolation is not possible (Jiménez 2005: 31). That is, broad tensions between racial and ethnic groups do exist, blacks are socioeconomically disadvantaged compared to whites, and there is visible residential and social segregation between blacks and whites in both counties (which Hispanic respondents saw and remarked on). Still, unlike the situation in many highly segregated gateway cities, what Erwin (2003) calls the "limits of space, resources, and opportunities for segregation" in rural areas also force members of all groups to interact in workplaces, neighborhoods, public spaces, and public schools. Consequently, almost everyone I interviewed reported having come into contact with someone outside their own group, usually in these spaces, and even if they did not know many people outside their own group personally, they at least knew something about one another (Jiménez 2005: 165). The one exception could be contracted seasonal farmworkers, who were often isolated on farms with little interaction with other residents (see Griffith 2005). However, even the Hispanic agricultural workers I interviewed had some contact with whites and blacks within their workplaces.

Negative Black-Hispanic Relations

The big picture of intergroup relations and responses to Hispanic newcomers that I uncovered in eastern North Carolina in the mid-2000s is "mixed," characterized by both cooperation and conflict. Even still, Hispanic respondents in Bedford and Wilcox counties reported better interpersonal relations with whites than with blacks. Not only did many perceive that whites treat Hispanics better than whites treat blacks (Marrow 2009), but many also perceived that Hispanics are "discriminated" against more by blacks than by whites (see also Griffith 2005; Rich and Miranda 2005). Álvaro, a formerly undocumented immigrant from the city of Saltillo in Coahuila state, Mexico, who migrated directly to North Carolina in 1990 and then became a legal permanent resident in 1997, aptly illustrated many Hispanic respondents' view that whites respond to them in more bifurcated ways than do blacks, who respond to them more negatively overall:

> Álvaro: I see more white people, Caucasians, doing or trying to do, positive things to the Hispanic community versus the African American people. With a better attitude, with a better approach. Whites are being more kind. I can't say [the relationship between Hispanics and blacks] is good. Because my opinion is that a big part of the African American population, they really doesn't accept the Hispanic community. We are intruders. Just a small part, one probably quarter of the population, they are the ones who realize or can see us as allies.

This distinction may seem surprising, given the legacy of white-on-nonwhite discrimination in the traditional South, the larger gap separating the material positions of Hispanic newcomers from whites than from blacks in the region, and the relative lack of resources with which rural black southerners can truly "discriminate" against other groups. Yet one reason is that rural southern blacks and Hispanics have met under more competitive structural conditions than have rural southern whites and Hispanics, due to how race and class structure continue to interact in the lowland rural South. In other words, Hispanic newcomers perceived that education and class strongly structure natives' responses to their presence, with better-educated and higher-class natives responding more positively than less-educated and lower-class ones (Fennelly 2008; Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2005; Mindiola, Niemann, and Rodríguez 2002; Vallas and Zimmerman 2007). By this class-based logic, since blacks in eastern North Carolina are poorer than whites, at both the group and individual levels, Hispanics respondents perceived that blacks' reactions to newcomers are more negative, as African Americans respond to greater fears of being displaced or "leapfrogged" by Hispanics, not only economically in low-wage workplaces but also socially in lower-class neighborhoods and public schools (Marrow 2008). As expressed by Alicia, an immigrant from Santiago, Chile, who migrated directly to Bedford county in 2000 and was currently in the process of naturalizing through her white American husband, discrimination is perceived to come mostly from black Americans "and the white people that here you call 'rednecks.' It's social class that accounts for it."

In this way, the structural conditions affecting Hispanic newcomers and blacks in the rural South create a context in which Hispanics' interpersonal relations with blacks are more heavily shaped by symbolic—if not actual—economic competition than are their relations with whites (Dunn, Aragones, and Shivers 2005; Erwin 2003; Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2005; Rich and Miranda 2005; McClain et al. 2007; Marrow 2008). In such competitive situations, negative tensions between minority groups carry great potential for misinterpretation as group rejection (Rockquemore 2002), or even discrimination (Kasinitz et al. 2008), such as when a college-educated, undocumented Colombian respondent working in a textile mill in Bedford county said "I feel the blacks don't like us. And that it is worse than with the whites," or when a poor, undocumented Guatemalan respondent working in a food processing plant in Wilcox county said that "the black race does not like Hispanics very much because they think that we are taking away their jobs," reporting that this thing "you could even call racism, right?" makes him feel "humiliated" and "made fun of" by some blacks.

Nonetheless, the serious black-Hispanic tensions I uncovered are not solely reducible to the different groups' relative positions in the local class structure, although class structure is indeed a major part of the story. Another central factor is citizenship, which creates lines along which Hispanic newcomers perceive blacks as well as whites to be acting as agents of "nonracial" discrimination and cultural exclusion against them. These experiences run counter to what we might expect would be the case in the binary rural South.

Racial Discrimination and the Minority Group View

To explain, there are several reasons to think that Hispanic newcomers might experience discrimination in the traditional South in ways reminiscent of African Americans' historical experience, and therefore, that they might interact with and identify more closely with African Americans than with whites. Elsewhere in the United States, researchers have speculated that discrimination from whites against Hispanics, as "nonwhites," will lead the former to develop interests and outlooks more in common with African Americans than whites over time, as Hispanics start to confront the various barriers to economic, social, and political incorporation that African Americans confronted in the past. This perspective is usually referred to as the "minority group" or the "rainbow coalition of color" view, since common experiences of racial discrimination are envisioned as the basis on which various groups of nonwhites can unite despite their other internal differences (for concise overviews, see Lee and Bean 2007 and Rogers 2004). In this view, the growth of a new subordinate group (here, Hispanics) is predicted to activate threat among the superordinate group (here, whites), such that the latter will begin to react negatively toward the former, as has been

African Americans' historical experience relative to whites (Fossett and Kiecolt 1989; Glaser 1994; Key 1984; Taylor 1998).

In the traditional South, especially in its rural areas, such speculations are compounded by the tenacity of the region's adherence to the racial binary and its ugly history of racial discrimination and conflict (Saenz 2000). As Duchón and Murphy (2001:2) phrase it, we would probably expect immigrants to have a hard time in the South since "after all, the South has a history of racial intolerance, xenophobia, and poverty" that might work to keep Hispanic newcomers on the nonwhite side of the color line, alongside blacks. Such speculations are also supported by similarities between African American and Hispanics' low socioeconomic positions in the region relative to those of whites and Asians. These might give African Americans and Hispanics in the rural South—especially Mexicans and Central Americans, who are both the largest in number and most socioeconomically disadvantaged among them—a set of common experiences through which to filter and interpret their experiences of racial discrimination.

Indeed, some Hispanic respondents did recount instances of mistreatment by whites based on race or skin color. And when they recognized such discrimination—whether against African Americans or themselves—as "racial," it could serve as a powerful tool for developing a sense of nonwhite identity or racial solidarity with African Americans. Two examples illustrate this potent force, the first stemming from an instance of explicit white-on-Hispanic discrimination interpreted partially in racial terms, and the second stemming an instance of explicit white-on-black racial discrimination.

First, in October 2003, in Alexandria county (a pseudonym for an immediate neighbor to Bedford county), a white county Board of Education member whom I will call "Michael Henry" incited great controversy at a local school board meeting by making a recommendation to separate the English- and non-English-speaking students in a small rural elementary school. Located in a rural portion of Alexandria county heavily dependent on migrant agricultural labor, by 2003 Alexandria Rural Elementary School had seen its non-English-speaking student population grow to more than one third of the school populace, the great majority of whom spoke Spanish as their primary language. Two Hispanic officials affiliated with the Alexandria county school system—Isabel García, the Hispanic ESL Program Coordinator in the Alexandria county school system, and Esperanza, the Migrant Education Program Recruiter/Parent Facilitator in the Alexandria-Archer Bluff municipal school system—quickly responded to Mr. Henry's comments, calling them "ignorant" and "racist." Isabel called

them ignorant because she did not think Mr. Henry acknowledges how much progress that non-English-speaking students are making in learning English at the school, something she argued was assisted by contact with (not separation from) English-speaking students. Isabel also called them racist because she thought Mr. Henry's call for "segregation" of the English- and non-English-speaking students violates the federal Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (which "prohibits specific discriminatory conduct, including segregating students on the basis of race, color, or national origin") as well as N.C. state law (in which "each school district must ensure that limited English proficiency students are 'educated in the least segregative manner based on the educational needs of the student'") (*Archer Bluff Times* [a pseudonym], October 23, 2003).

While both Isabel García and Esperanza acknowledged that Mr. Henry's intentions toward the non-English-speaking students may have been misguided rather than intentionally racist—and also that separating students by language ability is not necessarily equivalent to separating them by race, color, or national origin—both held firm in their view that Mr. Henry would not have called for separation of these two groups of students if he were truly concerned about the linguistic progress of non-English-speaking students. Instead, Isabel and Esperanza thought that the terms "English-speaking" and "non-English-speaking" became codewords for "whites" and "Hispanics," and that Mr. Henry's recommendation to separate the two groups concerned not the latter's English language ability, but rather the racially exclusive interests of white students at the school (including his own son, whom he had already transferred to another school).

Consequently, through this experience both women have developed a deeper sense of connection to African Americans. In fact, Isabel reported that their African American coworkers stood in coalition with them against the recommendation, at least in private (both women clarified that few of their African American coworkers were willing to extend this show of support in public), interpreting it as a white attempt to exclude Hispanic students from full participation in the public school system in a way that reflected their own historical experience:

> Isabel: I realized that I had a problem here with the Board of Education member, because the blacks were like, "Oh, good for you! Thank you, thank you." They were thanking me. Because they felt attacked when Michael Henry attacked me. Because he really did. The black people felt that, too. Because they were like, "You can see the way whites treat us, because they're treating you the way they treated us so many years ago."

Likewise, Esperanza has come to sense a connection between whites' ability to exclude Hispanics from full participation in American public schools and their ability to exclude other racial minority groups and low-income students in general. The incident has helped her to develop a sense of nonwhite identity and racial solidarity with African Americans that is informed by class as well as racial exploitation (Guinier and Torres 2002; Jennings 1997; Smith 2009).

Such solidarity can also be encouraged by clear examples of white-on-black racial discrimination. Horacio, an outgoing man from Honduras who attended the Hispanic Leadership Course in Wilcox county in Fall 2003, recounted a troubling experience at work when his direct white superior actively tried to "divide and rule" black and Hispanic construction workers on the job by using Hispanics as a tool to intimidate African Americans:

> I work in construction, doing soldering and bricklaying in Warner, and there were five of us Latinos there. I came back from lunch, and I saw the [confederate battle] flag hanging there. This white guy I work with, he is a contractor. He works for our employer and brings his own equipment with him. And he had the Latinos hang the flag up for him. He had them put it up on his own crane. And when I came back from lunch I saw the flag flying up there, and I went over to the other Latinos and I asked them, 'Why did you put that flag up?' And they didn't know better. They didn't know what it meant. They just put it up there because the white guy told them to. And I said to them, 'Don't you know that it's racist?' And they said, 'No, we didn't know. 'Racist to whom?' And I said, 'To the blacks.' And so then I went over to the white contractor, and I asked him why he put that flag up. And he told me, 'Because I don't like blacks. And some of those black guys working over there are messing up on stuff, so I decided to put up this flag so they'd know.' And I thought about it for a while, it made me feel really bad, and then I looked at him and I said, 'Well if you don't like the blacks very much, you probably don't like us Hispanics very much either, right?' And he laughed and looked back at me and said, 'Nah, I like y'all just fine. You're really good workers.'

> And then a black guy saw the flag and he came up to me, he was going on and on saying a lot of bad things to me, asking me why the hell we Latinos put that flag up. I explained to him that, 'First of all, it wasn't me who put it up. And second, the other Latinos had no idea what the flag meant. They didn't know and they just did it because the white guy had told them to. They thought they were following directions like always (fieldnotes, Horacio, Hispanic Leadership Course, Module 4, October 15, 2003).

After the class ended, Horacio told me that the black man had eventually come to understand how the Hispanic workers had not been trying to actively discriminate against him. Horacio also said that this experience has given him a better understanding of how whites discriminate against African Americans by viewing them as the moral inferiors of Hispanic newcomers, whom whites "like" and view as sharing in whites' commitment to the value of "hard work."

Together, the two examples illustrate how there is indeed some potential for Hispanic newcomers to identify closely with African Americans in the rural South. But they simultaneously emphasize how such identification often hinges on Hispanic newcomers' recognizing that whites actively discriminate against either blacks or Hispanics in clearly racial ways (Uhlaner 1991). This recognition can produce black-Hispanic cooperation either by fostering an awareness among Hispanics that blacks harbor their greatest resentment toward whites, not Hispanic newcomers, or by fostering, as illustrated by Juan, an undocumented immigrant from Guadalajara, Mexico, a shared sense of "what it is to discriminated against."

> Juan: I would say there are more common interests [than tension and problems] between African Americans and Hispanics. Because the majority of black people that I know, it's like they have a vision of what it is to be discriminated against. Like they know what it is to be discriminated against [by whites], and they know that Hispanics are doing through that. So they don't bother us Hispanics.

Minority Group Views of Nonracial Discrimination

In practice, however, recognizing racial discrimination is not so clear. In fact, the minority group view does not adequately capture the *multiple* dimensions along which Hispanic newcomers perceived discrimination and exclusion to operate in eastern North Carolina in the mid-2000s. In other words, it is significant that Horacio was the only Hispanic whom I encountered over the course of a full year who described such an

explicit example of an attempt by white employers to "divide and rule" black and Hispanic workers. Allegations of such a strategy are frequently invoked by labor and political activists (including members of the *Farmworkers Labor Organizing Committee* and the *North Carolina Coalition on Black and Brown Civic Participation* in my field research) as well as academic scholars (see, for examples, Alvarado and Jaret 2009; Jennings 1997; Stuesse 2009), all of whom are deeply concerned about continuing racial discrimination and the structural constraints placed on American minority groups' prospects for upward mobility and political incorporation. Yet they were not common among my Hispanic respondents. In fact, many Hispanic respondents did indeed perceive that they are discriminated against, but they did not perceive such discrimination to be "racial." Instead, they spoke about discrimination along "nonracial" characteristics such as English language ability, class status, personal appearance, nativity, legal status, and so forth, and they frequently distinguished such discrimination from that based on race or skin color.

To illustrate, Neida is an immigrant from Michoacán, Mexico, who traveled for a long time throughout the United States on the agricultural circuit with her parents before settling down in North Carolina in 1988 and later naturalizing as a U.S. citizen. Neida could not recount any discrimination based on race or skin color, but she did draw a clear link between discrimination and personal appearance and class status:

> Interviewer: Have you ever been discriminated against for being Hispanic or being an immigrant in this country?
>
> Neida: Well, no. Look, right now, today, no. When I first got here to North Carolina, I did notice that [white] Americans looked at us in a pretty ugly way. But afterwards, a [white] American friend told me that what you have to do in order to not be discriminated against by Americans is when you go to apply for a job, always look presentable. When you go into an office—whatever office it is, maybe a clinic or a hospital or whatever, she told me—you should always look presentable, because Americans treat you according to how you look. Therefore, I had a very good experience from then on. Now if I go out with my children on the weekends, I try to have them be very clean. Well, more than anything, to go out nicely dressed so Americans don't say anything to me or my children!

Interestingly, Neida also reported learning how to avoid discrimination in the United States by dressing in a more "presentable" fashion through advice she received from a *white* female friend.

Other Hispanic respondents reported instances of discrimination linked primarily to their lack of English language ability or their poor English accents. One was Lidia, a legal permanent resident from Oaxaca, Mexico, who despite having moved up from her first job working in American agriculture to become an influential Hispanic community organizer and transnational political leader, reported once having been turned down as a volunteer for the Girl Scouts due to linguistic discrimination against people with foreign accents:

> Lidia: Another discriminatory experience that I had was when I applied to the Girl Scouts as a volunteer. I feel that because I had a very strong accent back then, they never called me back. I filled out an application, and for the simple fact that my name was Latina and I had a strong accent, they didn't give me the opportunity to be a volunteer.

Likewise, Stephanie, a legal permanent resident who migrated illegally to California from Guanajuato, Mexico, in 1991 before settling down in North Carolina with her husband in 2001, also reported having experienced discrimination by Americans due to not speaking English well, while she did not report any similar incident of discrimination due to race or skin color. In her words, she "feels al little bad" because natives have told her "that I speak English badly, that I don't know many things," and because one even told her "that I could confuse the kids" when she volunteers at her children's school.

Still other respondents reported instances of discrimination linked primarily to their foreign place of birth or foreign cultural practices. In this way, Alfonso, an undocumented immigrant originally from Querétaro, Mexico, who lived all over the East Coast before settling down in Wilcox county, thought that discrimination negatively affects all people who are "not from here" irrespective of their race or skin color:

> Interviewer: Have you ever been discriminated against for being Hispanic or being an immigrant in this country?
>
> Alfonso: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: How so?
>
> Alfonso: For example, when you aren't from here, you don't have the same opportunities as the people from here, the Americans.

And finally, as illustrated by Eduardo, an undocumented immigrant from Quetzaltenango, Guatemala, discrimination based on foreign place of birth or cultural practices often includes many Hispanic newcomers' reports of being discriminated against due to lack of legal status, whether it is real or simply presumed:

> Interviewer: Have you ever been discriminated against for being Hispanic or being an immigrant in this country?
>
> Eduardo: Honestly, I think for being an immigrant.
>
> Interviewer: How so? Can you give me an example?
>
> Eduardo: Like if Like if I go and I want to get my ID. They don't give me the right [to get a North Carolina ID] because I'm not legal. That's what I have felt. Not for being Hispanic, or for being anything else. Like if I am not legal, I can go to whatever office and they aren't going to pay any attention to me, because I don't have identification to present
>
> Interviewer: So you think it has more to do with being an immigrant, not with being Hispanic?
>
> Eduardo: Yes.

For Alfonso, Eduardo, and many other Hispanic respondents, discrimination based on these characteristics associated with "foreignness"—especially discrimination based on lack of citizenship or legal status—trumps that based on race or skin color. And it is perhaps the most hurtful to them because it is legally and institutionally sanctioned by the U.S. government, which violates their moral expectation that Hispanics should be justly recognized for the positive contributions they are making to the United States through their "hard work."

Such quotes are significant because they illustrate how Hispanic newcomers reported experiencing discrimination and exclusion not just due to racial discrimination, wherein white natives can mark them as racially inferior along a *vertical skin color axis*. They also experienced discrimination and exclusion along other dimensions that, when viewed together, comprise what Kim (1999) calls a *horizontal (non)citizenship axis* wherein both white and black natives can mark and ostracize them as undeserving civic and cultural "outsiders" (see De Genova 2006 and Kim 1999 on the historical and contemporary racial triangulation of

Native, Asian, and Hispanic Americans as "outsiders" to the American nation-state, versus the inclusion of African Americans as "insiders," albeit of a subjugated racial status). This second horizontal axis is theoretically important because it serves to distinguish Hispanics' experiences of discrimination from those of African Americans, rather than allying the two groups' experiences together as is generally predicted by the minority group view. As Smith (2006:243) insightfully points out, it often generates tension between Hispanics and African Americans in the South because blacks' experiences are more strongly oriented around the vertical skin color axis, whereas Hispanic immigrants often consider their citizenship and immigration statuses to be "far more powerful determinants of their own unequal treatment."

In fact, in many instances Hispanic respondents only implicated their physical features or skin colors as factors in how they experience discrimination insofar as such traits serve to denote or signal civic and cultural "outsiderness" instead. Such is the case for Roberta, a 1.5 generation immigrant youth who accompanied her parents to North Carolina from Oaxaca, Mexico, in 1994. Roberta reported being discriminated against by her white American peers for her "ugly" appearance. But like other Hispanic middle school students who respondents described as being "teased" by their native peers and told "that they don't belong here and that it's not their country," Roberta explained that whites rely on Hispanic students' physical features and skin colors primarily as a proxy for marking them as "not from the United States." "They see your color," she told me, "and they tell you that you're not from the United States. And they can tell you where you came from by the way your color is, and they always are like, 'Your color skin is so ugly.' They make fun of you."

Such is also the case for many Hispanic newcomers who reported being stopped by policemen or highway patrolmen for "driving while Mexican" or "driving while Hispanic." These respondents understood that law enforcement officials often identify them as "Hispanic" according to their physical appearances, yet they thought that this is primarily because their "Hispanic" features are associated with probable undocumented immigrant status, which is something that ultimately serves to ostracize them along civic and cultural lines as undeserving "foreigners" instead. As Jiménez (2008) argues, in the contemporary era of unprecedented Mexican immigration, race has become so tightly conflated with nativity and citizenship that having dark skin, indigenous features, or Spanish surnames often serves the purpose of implying that Hispanics are foreign-born and likely also undocumented, even if they are U.S.-born citizens. By this logic, Hispanic newcomers in eastern

North Carolina are undergoing a complex process of racialization, yet it is one in which perceived that "nonracial" discrimination (particularly along the lines of noncitizenship) is most important, with "racial" discrimination playing a supporting role.

Greater Nonracial Discrimination by Blacks than Whites

Interestingly, while Roberta reported being discriminated against by her white schoolmates, she also reported facing discrimination from her black schoolmates—but for things other than her skin color, such as her accent and foreign culture. Indeed, not only did the horizontal (non)citizenship axis frame Hispanic respondents' experiences of exclusion most strongly, but they often perceived blacks rather than whites to be its worst perpetrators. Such is the case for Merced and Octavio, a working-class undocumented immigrant couple from Sinaloa, Mexico, who migrated to Bedford County in 1999 after their initial attempt to settle down with extended family on the West Coast "didn't work out." Together they expressed great frustration with local blacks who "ignore them" when they attempt to communicate in English, whereas they noted that whites "try to help" them more:

> Merced: Even though some blacks do understand you, they say they don't.
>
> Octavio: Right. They say, "I don't understand what you are saying. What do you mean?" And if there is someone around who speaks a little Spanish, they'll say, "Wait a moment." But if there isn't, the bad thing is that they will just ignore you. They'll say, "I don't understand you."
>
> Merced: Exactly! It's even happened to me! Sometimes I go up to our English teacher, and I'll ask him, "How do you say X thing?" And he says, "You say it like this." And then I say it back to him like he said it to me, and he tells me, "Yes, you've got it!" So I ask him, "How come some black people tell me they don't understand what I am saying to them?"
>
> Octavio: Almost the majority of *gringos* ask me to talk, and they will try to understand me. And they help me. I will say it, and they will try to understand and if there is a problem, they will correct it and say, "No, say it this way." However, there are other people who make fun of you. There is some difference [between whites and blacks] there.

Like Merced and Octavio, other Hispanic respondents perceived that whites are more "open-minded" toward them and their "foreign" cultures than blacks, whom they perceived as "staying more separate" and attempting to exclude Hispanics more strongly. Raquel, a 1.5-generation undocumented youth originally from Honduras, who dropped out of her high school in Tennessee after the tenth grade, recalled severe rejection by black schoolmates who ostracized her according to her "foreign" dress and personal appearance, compared to whites, who came to form her close circle of friends. Laura, an immigrant from Chihuahua, Mexico, who migrated to eastern North Carolina in 2001 via Texas and New Mexico, thought that there is "more communication and common interests" between Hispanic newcomers and whites than between Hispanic newcomers and blacks. Perhaps this is because, she mused, "whites try to strike up more conversation with Hispanics" in order to get to know more about them and their backgrounds, while "blacks, well, not as much." Similarly, Stephanie, the legal permanent resident from Guanajuato, Mexico quoted earlier, thought that "Hispanics and the white Americans get along better" than Hispanics and blacks do "because the blacks put up a barrier that you can't get across. Maybe because of their color. Because they feel like they are another race. And they just want to preserve their group."

Together, these quotes demonstrate how many Hispanic newcomers—even some of the most socioeconomically disadvantaged Mexican and Central American labor migrants among them, many of whom are also undocumented—often felt more excluded by blacks than by whites, rather than vice versa. And even when Hispanics did not perceive whites as particularly "open-minded," that did not mean they necessarily saw blacks as more so. For example, despite the fact that Silvia, a Puerto Rican American from Spanish Harlem, thought that whites in eastern North Carolina and the American South are close-minded and racist, she reported getting "more hostility from African Americans than anyone else." Likewise, Eugenio, a 1.5-generation undocumented youth from Oaxaca, Mexico, thought that while whites ostracize Hispanics as "dirty" and undeserving foreigners, blacks do so even more strongly. Here, Eugenio tapped not only into the acute threat of socioeconomic disenfranchisement that lower-class African Americans feel in the face of rising immigration, but also into their sense that they, like whites, are the kind of "real Americans" that Hispanics are not:

Eugenio: They always look at you and they say, "Well, you know, he doesn't speak English." Because I've been in restaurants and I've had black people sitting next to me, or white people. And they're just talking fast. They just keep on yapping, yapping, yapping... "Look at that. He's dirty. And all these Hispanics come and steal our jobs." And this and that. Well, one time I turned around, I said, "Excuse me, what did you say? Because I couldn't hear you exactly. And I would like to hear what you said again." Those people just stood up and left. Because that's what I like doing. I like sitting down. I don't say a word, and I want to hear what people say about us. That's how I know what problems Hispanics have in this country. They'll sit there and, man, they'll just keep on talking trash about you.

Interviewer: This negative treatment, this talking trash—do you think Hispanics get it mostly from white Americans or black Americans?

Eugenio: They get it mostly from blacks.

Interviewer: And why?

Eugenio: Honestly, I don't know. Like one time, during Hurricane Floyd, all the lights went out. And the Salvation Army, or the soldiers would come over here to Bedford Mobile Home Park with dump trucks. And they would drop clothes off here, or water, or canned foods. In the center of the Mobile Home Park. And I overheard a conversation that a black lady had. She said, "You know, look at 'em. They come over here to our country, to our land, steal our jobs, steal our money. And now they even want to steal our needs *[i.e, donated relief items]*. Those needs are for us, the Americans." You know, I was just listening to that. They were saying this and that about us.

Expectations of Versus Encounters with Discrimination

Finally, Hispanic newcomers' perceptions of whites as more "open-minded" than blacks are exacerbated by the difference between their expectations about prejudice and discrimination versus their actual encounters with it upon arrival in eastern North Carolina. On one hand, many Hispanic respondents reported that despite having expected to encounter significant discrimination by whites, they have generally been surprised by the positive ways that many (but not all) whites in eastern North Carolina treat them on an interpersonal level. Take the following quote by Marta, for example, a legal permanent resident from Hidalgo, Mexico. Based on her knowledge of U.S. immigration policy and anti-immigrant vigilante activity on the U.S.-Mexico border, which she has acquired primarily through watching television, as well as one very

negative personal experience with a white man in Chicago, Marta thought that whites in the United States harbor a lot of anger toward Hispanics:

Marta: Whites have anger toward us Hispanics! There are many laws. More than anything, we Hispanics have problems with whites.

Interviewer: Like what?

Marta: Well, for example we see on the television that on the border there are a lot of illegal people that cross farms. And there are white people who mistreat them. Or we see in the news that the farmers, or the contractors, mistreat them. They hit them, they cheat them, they humiliate them. And with the blacks, not really. They don't get into problems with Hispanics like that. The majority of what you see in the news is with whites.

Interviewer: Why do you think this is?

Marta: Well, we think that whites think that we're coming to take away their jobs. They've said that. And once I was in a park in Chicago, with my children, and a little white girl came over to talk with my son. And her father grabbed her, and he took the girl away. And they left the park. So we learned how that man was racist. He didn't want his American girl hanging out with my Hispanic son. That was the first time that I saw that racism.

Continuing, Marta speculated that blacks probably do not discriminate against Hispanics as much as whites do because they see Hispanics struggling against racial discrimination like they did in the past. However, couched within her description of common racial experiences between Hispanics and African Americans, Marta mentioned something important: she had not yet encountered "this type of discrimination" from whites in eastern North Carolina, where she reported that Hispanics and whites "talk normally" together:

Marta: So the problem is this. I have talked with the whites, but I haven't seen this type of discrimination here. We talk normally. But in the national news, in the reports, you realize that whites say that we come here to take away their things. Their jobs, their culture, their rights. That's what we've heard that they've said.

In fact, Marta then reported having received a lot of personal assistance from local white residents, including from a close white

friend who was currently helping her and her husband finance the purchase of their own trailer, and also from a white stranger who once lent her a cellphone to use after a car accident. She also reported good interpersonal relations with both whites and African Americans at her children's schools and in her job in Poultry Processing Plant, Inc. (a pseudonym), as well as having seen whites becoming closer friends with Hispanics outside the plant.

Marta's case, like those of several other respondents, is instructive. It demonstrates how even while Hispanic newcomers may acknowledge racial discrimination from whites at a structural level, or report negative interpersonal relations with whites elsewhere, many also report positive interpersonal relationships with whites in eastern North Carolina, which has helped to improve their perceptions of white-Hispanic relations overall. In contrast, very few respondents expected to experience prejudice or discrimination from blacks. Many of those who were born abroad reported not knowing anything about African Americans at all before migrating to the United States (see also Stuesse 2009 on the lack of understanding of African Americans' history of racial oppression and economic exclusion among Hispanic poultry processing lineworkers in rural Mississippi), while others reported knowing something about blacks' historical subordination in the United States, often mentioning slavery or the Civil Rights Movement. Thus, Hispanic respondents said that the expectations they have about blacks' relationship to prejudice and discrimination upon their arrival in eastern North Carolina—if they have one at all—is that blacks will be treated poorly by whites, not that Hispanics will be treated poorly by blacks. In this context, the negative treatment that many reported coming from blacks has hardened their perceptions of black-Hispanic relations overall.

Such is the case for Inés, a middle-class undocumented immigrant from Medellín, Colombia, who reported being most surprised at encountering discrimination by blacks against Hispanic newcomers, not by whites against either blacks or Hispanics. Such is also the case for Mauro, a poor undocumented immigrant from Guatemala City, Guatemala, who despite having heard about the KKK and anti-immigrant vigilante activity on the U.S.-Mexico border before migrating to the United States, reported being surprised to encounter interpersonal discrimination not from whites, but from a black coworker who refused to return his smiles and greetings each morning at work. In contrast, "From what I have gotten to know of white Americans, they have always been very friendly. I have never felt any discrimination from them."

Conclusion: Connections to the Future of the Colorline

In this chapter, I have analyzed Hispanic newcomers' patterns of social interactions with whites and blacks in eastern North Carolina in 2003-04, focusing on the extent to which they reported experiencing discrimination and exclusion, the axes along which they perceived such discrimination to operate, and the degree to which they saw their own racial identities as nonwhites and nonblacks to be blocking their full incorporation into rural southern society. Hispanic newcomers in eastern North Carolina reported that, on the whole, they are treated better by whites than by African Americans. Not only did they perceive that whites treat Hispanics better than whites treat blacks (Marrow 2009), but many also perceived that Hispanics are "discriminated" against more by blacks than by whites.

One reason for this perception of greater discrimination and exclusion by blacks than whites has to do with the continuing interaction between race and class in the contemporary rural South. Racialized class structure is fundamental because it places Hispanics and blacks in more competitive situations, at both the individual and group levels, than it places Hispanics and whites. Consequently, Hispanic and white respondents alike noted that rural southern blacks perceive, in academic parlance, greater socioeconomic and symbolic "threat" from Hispanic immigration than do rural southern whites. In response to this threat, these respondents perceived the reactions of African Americans to Hispanic newcomers to be more negative than those of whites, exacerbating black-Hispanic tensions in both counties (Marrow 2008).

Yet another reason has to do with Hispanic newcomers' expectations about, and multiple interpretations of, the meaning of "discrimination," particularly along the lines of citizenship. Hispanic respondents interpreted discrimination predominantly in terms of characteristics associated with their "outsiderness" (particularly noncitizenship), not race or skin color per se, and they were particularly surprised to encounter it from blacks, whereas they had expected some racial and nonracial discrimination from whites. This complicates our traditional conception of white-on-nonwhite racial discrimination and hierarchy it has historically operated in the traditional South. According to the minority group view, Hispanic newcomers entering the rural South, a region with a well-earned reputation for racial and cultural intolerance, are expected to develop a "rainbow coalition of color" sense of identity with African Americans, wherein common experiences of racial discrimination vis-à-vis whites serve to unite the two groups, as nonwhites, despite their other internal distinctions. This may well have

been happening among small groups of political elites and black-brown coalition-builders, or as I have shown, during specific instances when Hispanic newcomers do perceive mistreatment by whites based on race or skin color, whether against African Americans or themselves. But it was not generally the case among the masses.

Rather, via perceptions of greater class-based competition with and greater nonracial discrimination and horizontal exclusion by blacks than by whites, many Hispanic newcomers—including those with dark skin colors, low socioeconomic statuses, and undocumented legal statuses—had come to perceive that the boundaries separating themselves from whites, although existent, are somewhat more permeable than those separating either themselves from blacks or whites from blacks. Elsewhere I argue further that these perceptions combine with two other mechanisms frequently highlighted in the scholarly literature on immigrants' racial incorporation—immigrant newcomers' own anti-black stereotypes and whites' preferences for immigrants over African Americans—to facilitate racial distancing from blacks and blackness (Marrow 2009). This in turn suggests a classic pattern of racial assimilation, and it lends tentative support to predictions that a new black/nonblack color line (Gans 1999; Lee and Bean 2007; Yancey 2003) may be developing in the rural South—the very region where African American populations are still the largest, where the uniquely American racial binary has reigned most supreme, and where the pressures to divide whites from nonwhites have always been strongest.

Of course, racialization processes depend on a multitude of factors, and intergroup relations stemming from them have been shown to vary across both place and time (Montejano 1987). Thus, more research will be needed to determine how stable the patterns that I uncover in eastern North Carolina are, and how applicable they may be to places elsewhere in the South. This will be especially important in places that have larger middle-class African American and Hispanic communities, since poverty and lower-class status are central in fueling black-Hispanic tensions, and places which have smaller black populations, since the boundaries separating whites from Hispanics have historically been least salient in places with large populations of other racial/ethnic groups.

Other questions emerge as to how the patterns that I uncover in eastern North Carolina might develop over time and over generations, particularly as immigration continues and anti-immigrant sentiments sharpen, as they have since I conducted my research. On one hand, we might imagine that such trends could lead first-generation Hispanic immigrant to perceive greater discrimination from whites, particularly if they also perceive blacks to begin exhibiting more solidarity and empathy rather than exclusion in the context of everyday interactions. On the other hand, we might also imagine that such trends could exacerbate tensions between first-generation Hispanic immigrants and blacks, increasing perceptions of economic and symbolic threat and the salience of noncitizenship more generally.

Looking beyond foreign-born Hispanic immigrants to focus on later generations of Hispanics currently coming of age in the rural South will be even more telling. In my research, few of the 18 U.S.-born Hispanic respondents reported significantly better relations with blacks than did foreign-born Hispanic respondents, and the 1.5-generation Hispanic youth I interviewed expressed acute perceptions of discrimination from blacks, often in the context of negative experiences attending American middle and high schools. However, it is still possible that new generations of U.S.-born children of immigrants may begin to acknowledge more discrimination from whites, or to conceive of the discrimination they do experience more in terms of race or skin color than other nonracial factors. Such changes would indeed alter the landscape of intergroup relations from what I have described here.

A final area ripe for research will concern Hispanic newcomers' reactions to African Americans' efforts to include them in race-based "coalitions of color." Smith (2006) offers a nuanced analysis of the promises and pitfalls of coalition-building practices in the traditional South, cautioning against natives' tendency to subsume new immigrants within pre-existing southern social identities and political frameworks, such as race-based "community of color" or class-based "worker" coalitions. While in her view this tendency is not wrong, it still "avoids the particularity of Latino immigrants' status as *immigrants*, who challenge and potentially alter our regional sensibilities and strategies" (Smith 2006:253, my emphasis).

Based on my research, such cautions are sage. While many Hispanic newcomers in eastern North Carolina resented the discrimination and exclusion they perceived from blacks in the mid-2000s, some were equally skeptical of early attempts being made by some African Americans to include them in "black-brown" coalitions. To be sure, some Hispanics did appreciate such efforts, especially when they were searching for ways to challenge racial discrimination from whites, or when they perceived that blacks are genuinely trying to get to know them better and to represent their interests within a common framework. However, other Hispanic respondents perceived these efforts less positively. They wondered—some quietly, others vocally—if African Americans are simply trying to co-opt them into an existing African American agenda that will ultimately be resistant to substantive change,

or if African Americans are simply reacting out of a selfish fear that the country's changing demographics will threaten their own status and power if Hispanics do not join them in a race-based coalition against whites

In this respect, Hispanic newcomers in eastern North Carolina resembled Afro-Caribbeans in New York City, who often perceive that African Americans' appeals to common racial experiences are "half-hearted, begrudging, and lukewarm" (Rogers 2004: 296), and in my research, a few of them were beginning to distance themselves away from African Americans' political appeals and agendas in response. Consequently, future research will do well to examine how and why such efforts are being extended by African Americans in the rural South, especially since 2005 as anti-immigrant sentiment has sharpened. It will also do well to examine how Hispanic newcomers are interpreting and responding to them in return, and not just at the elite level among political and community leaders, but also on the ground among everyday workers and residents, where the tensions borne out of strong economic competition remain most salient.

4
Racialized Histories and Contemporary Population Dynamics in the New South

Eileen Diaz McConnell

A recent and well-documented shift occurring since 1980 is the movement of foreign-born individuals to areas of the United States that had previously had few immigrants (Durand, Massey, and Charvet 2000; Singer 2004; Zúñiga and Hernández-León 2005). This change has been particularly remarkable vis-à-vis Latin American migrants, especially those from Mexico. While just 14 percent of Mexican migrants arriving in the U.S. between 1985 and 1990 went to states other than California, Florida, Illinois, New York, and Texas, fully 39 percent arriving between 1995 and 2000 chose these other destinations (Massey and Capoferro 2008). A rapidly growing academic literature examines the causes and consequences of this trend, particularly the movement to smaller and medium-sized destinations across the country (Gożdziak and Martin 2005; Hernández-León and Zúñiga 2000; Kandel and Parrado 2005; Massey 2008; Millard and Chapa 2004; Stull, Broadway, and Griffith 1995). This work has been useful for documenting the diversity of migration streams and the challenges and opportunities of migrant incorporation and community vitality across U.S. contexts.

Many scholars contend that research focusing on contemporary international migration should be situated within a historical context that recognizes the centrality of race and the larger racial/ethnic context (Fitzgerald 2006; Winders 2005). For example, according to Winders (2008b), the lack of extended discussion about the connections of Latin American migration and race in academic research, particularly in the American South, reflects "a general haziness about Latino migration's effects on racial formations, categories, and intergroup relations…" (p.