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Title: “Inhospitable Welcome – Hispanic Immigration to the Atlanta, Georgia metropolitan area since 2000”

The explosive growth in Hispanic immigration from Latin America to the southeastern United States has created tensions between the English-speaking, native populations and the incoming Hispanic population. The crux of the issue stems from budget costs and social impacts that state and county governments must bear (Williams and Wright 2). To discourage undocumented Hispanic immigration, these local governments have instituted several anti-immigration laws and policies that have created an inhospitable environment (Williams and Wright 4). For instance, county governments in Atlanta's Gwinnett and Cobb counties imposed restrictive zoning ordinances to close day labor centers, which were associated with Hispanic immigrant workers (Sabia 5). This paper will answer the research question: "What issues are affecting Hispanics in Atlanta, Georgia since 2000?" The paper will review the demographic/population changes affecting Hispanics in Atlanta. In addition, this paper will discuss English proficiency issues affecting the Hispanics groups. Lastly, the paper will examine the impact of higher educational attainment issues on the Hispanic populations.

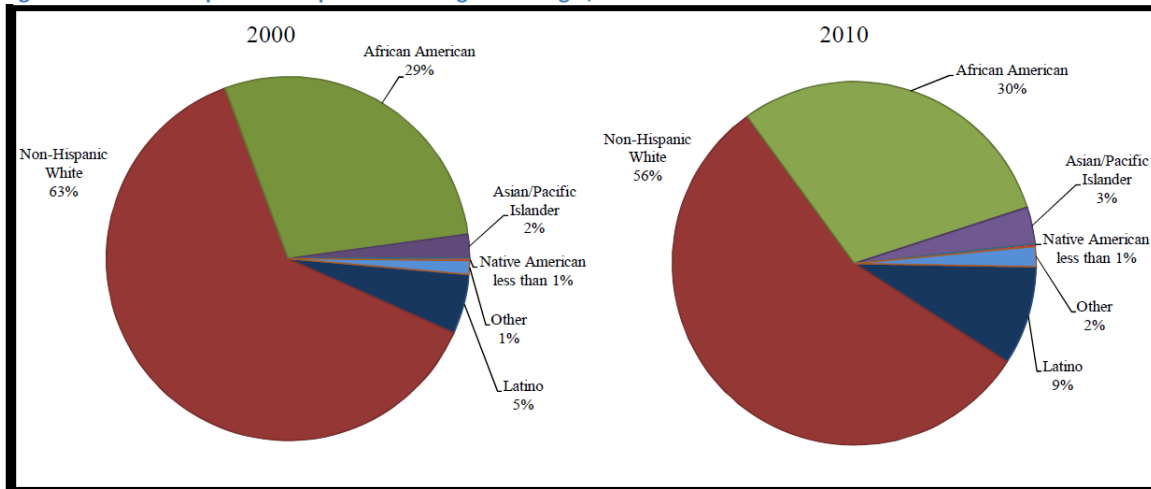
Background:

Several push factors have led to the massive increase in the Hispanic immigrant population growth in the southeastern region of the U.S. These factors are strict immigration enforcement policies, and labor saturation in the traditional immigrant growth poles of California, Texas, and Arizona; and big city issues such as poor schools, and youth gangs (Kandel and Parrado 257). In contrast, the pull factors that have attracted Hispanic immigrants to the southeastern U.S. consisted of plentiful jobs, cheaper standards of living, and the appeal of small town/suburb locales (Lopez and Brown 8). In the late 1990s, Hispanic immigrants filled countless jobs in the agriculture, construction, and manufacturing industries in the southeast

(Odem 115). For example, poultry consumption gradually increased with the rise of the fast food industry, particularly Kentucky Fried Chicken, and McDonalds (Kandel and Parrado 259). In addition, Americans fueled poultry demand when more people switched to eating poultry rather than beef due to health risk concerns (Kandel and Parrado 259). In reaction, poultry processing factories experienced fierce competition for available workers. Exacerbating the small labor pool, the English-speaking native populations associated poultry jobs with harsh working conditions, low-skill, and low pay. Therefore, the poultry industry initiated massive recruitment drives to hire Hispanic immigrants on temporary work visas (Zuniga and Hernandez-Leon 36). Due to ongoing labor shortages, these employers also accepted undocumented workers that immigrated in search of work. The recruitment effort was successful because economic, political, and social conditions in Mexico and the Central American countries were turbulent and unstable (Kandel and Parrado 272).

The 2000 U.S. Census estimated that Georgia's Hispanic population was 435,227 or 5.3% of the total population (Williams and Wright 9). From 2000 to 2010, Georgia's Hispanic population increased significantly by 96% (Gold 1). During the period, Georgia's huge spike in Hispanic population numbers originated from immigration. Figure 1 highlights the growth of Georgia's Hispanic population for the years, 2000 to 2010 (Gold 2).

Figure 1: Ethnic Composition Population Change in Georgia, 2000-2010



Source: (Gold 2)

The Latino or Hispanic population was about 9% of Georgia’s total population, which was approximately 9.6 million (Gold 1). Foreign-born Hispanics made up 47% of Georgia’s total Hispanic population (Lopez and Brown 22). Figure 2 shows the Hispanic demographic break down according to the 2010 U.S. Census (QT-P10-2010).

Figure 2: Geography-Georgia: Hispanic or Latino by Type: 2010 Census Summary

QT-P10-Geography-Georgia: Hispanic or Latino by Type: 2010		
2010 Census Summary File 1		
Note: This is a modified view of the original table.		
Subject	Number	Percent
HISPANIC OR LATINO		
Total population	9,687,653	100.0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	853,689	8.8
Not Hispanic or Latino	8,833,964	91.2
HISPANIC OR LATINO BY TYPE		
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	853,689	8.8
Mexican	519,502	5.4
Puerto Rican	71,987	0.7
Cuban	25,048	0.3
Dominican (Dominican Republic)	14,941	0.2
Central American (excludes Mexican)	106,987	1.1
Costa Rican	3,114	0.0
Guatemalan	36,874	0.4
Honduran	20,577	0.2
Nicaraguan	4,787	0.0
Panamanian	8,678	0.1
Salvadoran	32,107	0.3
Other Central American	850	0.0

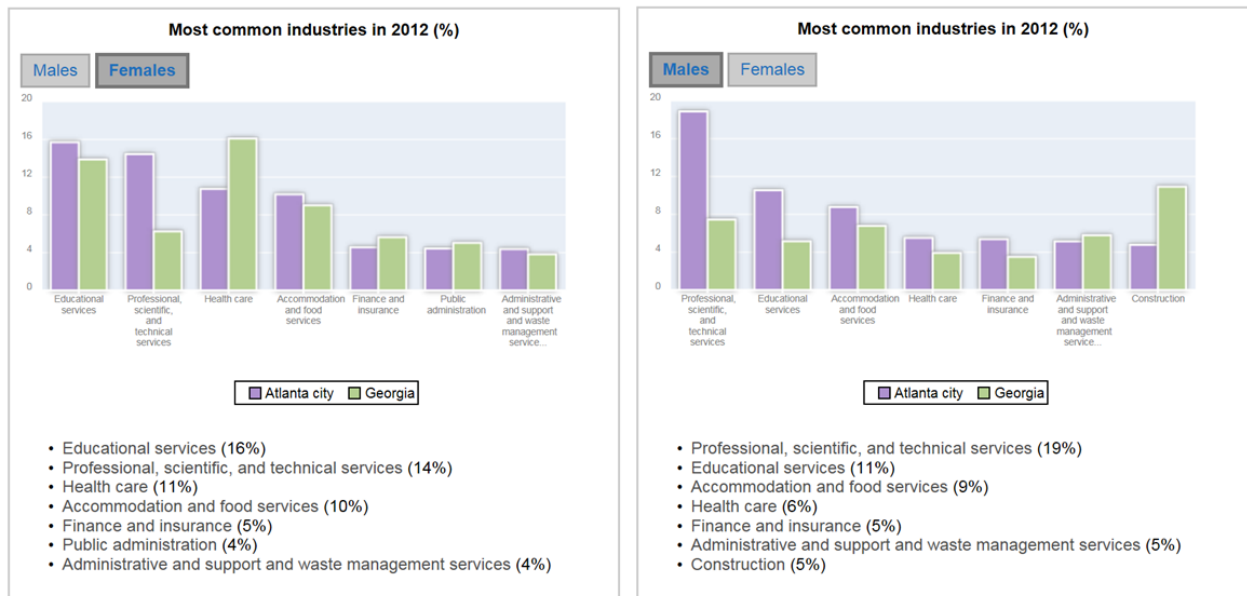
Source: (QT-P10-2010)

Statewide, Hispanics of Mexican origin represented the largest Hispanic population at 5.4%.

Yet, the population totals for immigrants of Mexican origin may be considerable higher because the U.S. Census does not account for illegal workers (Williams and Wright 11). So, the exact number of undocumented Mexican immigrants is unknown.

Atlanta, Georgia is a Mecca for entrepreneurship, innovation, and high tech careers because of its highly trained workforce. Atlanta’s dynamic, diverse labor market draws businesses and workers to its metropolitan region. For instance, Atlanta is home to several major colleges and universities, including the Morehouse School of Medicine and Georgia State University (15 U.S. Cities' Emerging Downtowns). The most common industry careers are in the educational and professional, scientific, and technical services. Figure 3 highlights common industries and occupations in Atlanta as of 2012 (Advameg 8).

Figure 3: Common Industries and Occupations in Atlanta, Georgia



Source: (Advameg 8)

In addition, Atlanta’s low cost of living, low taxes, and cheap labor attract various other blue-collar industries, including food-processing (poultry, pork, and seafood), carpet production, and manufacturing (Introduction xiv). For example, Atlanta experienced a construction boom in the early 2000’s. The job market attracted and employed thousands of Hispanic immigrant workers. Figure 4 displays the selected economic characteristics for Whites, Blacks, and Mexicans in Atlanta’s Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett Counties from the year 2006 to 2010 (DP03).

Figure 4: DP03-Selected Economic Characteristics, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

Subject		Clayton County, Georgia						Cobb County, Georgia						Gwinnett County, Georgia						
		White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)		White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)		White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)		
		Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	
EMPLOYMENT STATUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																			
Population 16 years and over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	44,721	44.721	122,433	122.433	14,671	14.671	342,103	342.103	120,044	120.044	29,341	29.341	332,542	332.542	120,595	120.595	50,497	50.497	
OCCUPATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																			
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24,471	24.471	77,855	77.855	9,282	9.282	226,225	226.225	84,617	84.617	19,945	19.945	223,780	223.780	81,985	81.985	34,692	34.692	
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5,323	21.8%	19,910	25.6%	493	5.3%	109,677	48.5%	30,491	36.0%	1,565	7.8%	94,670	42.3%	29,333	35.8%	2,160	6.2%	
Service occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3,983	16.3%	14,369	18.5%	1,617	17.4%	24,415	10.8%	14,018	16.6%	4,822	24.2%	26,430	11.8%	11,030	13.5%	8,840	25.5%	
Sales and office occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6,692	27.3%	23,922	30.7%	1,069	11.5%	61,362	27.1%	26,266	31.0%	2,190	11.0%	61,348	27.4%	27,244	33.2%	4,237	12.2%	
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	4,760	19.5%	5,024	6.5%	4,228	45.6%	17,386	7.7%	3,767	4.5%	7,491	37.6%	23,378	10.4%	4,327	5.3%	14,179	40.9%	
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3,713	15.2%	14,630	18.8%	1,875	20.2%	13,385	5.9%	10,075	11.9%	3,877	19.4%	17,954	8.0%	10,051	12.3%	5,276	15.2%	
INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																			
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24,471	24.471	77,855	77.855	9,282	9.282	226,225	226.225	84,617	84.617	19,945	19.945	223,780	223.780	81,985	81.985	34,692	34.692	
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	143	0.6%	145	0.2%	91	1.0%	380	0.2%	62	0.1%	10	0.1%	562	0.3%	39	0.0%	139	0.4%	
Construction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	3,825	15.6%	2,911	3.7%	4,172	44.9%	17,890	7.9%	2,735	3.2%	7,234	36.3%	22,300	10.0%	2,590	3.2%	14,101	40.6%	
Manufacturing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,621	6.6%	5,110	6.6%	888	9.6%	18,410	8.1%	6,710	7.9%	2,086	10.5%	21,327	9.5%	5,604	6.8%	3,528	10.2%	
Wholesale trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,127	4.6%	2,076	2.7%	529	5.7%	10,760	4.8%	2,354	2.8%	286	1.4%	12,044	5.4%	3,477	4.2%	687	2.0%	
Retail trade	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,848	11.6%	8,923	11.5%	738	8.0%	24,928	11.0%	11,739	13.9%	1,751	8.8%	27,909	12.5%	12,174	14.8%	2,470	7.1%	
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	2,951	12.1%	12,255	15.7%	339	3.7%	10,717	4.7%	6,867	8.1%	554	2.8%	8,016	3.6%	6,586	8.0%	477	1.4%	
Information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	385	1.6%	2,063	2.6%	16	0.2%	9,103	4.0%	3,378	4.0%	264	1.3%	8,335	3.7%	4,499	5.5%	217	0.6%	
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,432	5.9%	5,480	7.0%	111	1.2%	20,710	9.2%	7,378	8.7%	403	2.0%	17,965	8.0%	7,953	9.7%	817	2.4%	

Source: (DP03)

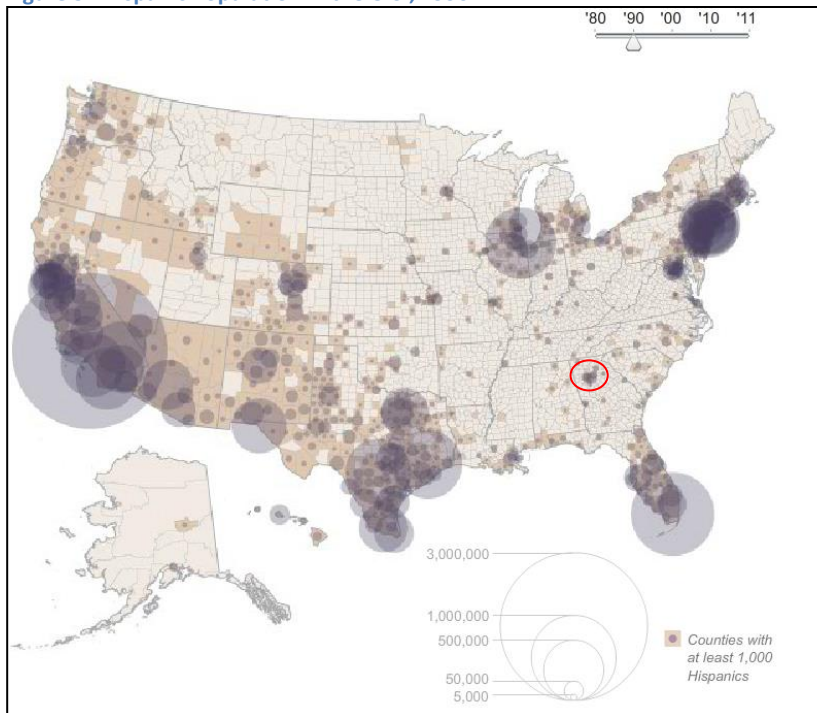
Mexican laborers filled 45.6% of the natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations in Clayton County, 37.6% in Cobb County, and 40.9% in Gwinnett County (DP03).

In the construction industry, the percentage of Mexican workers remained consistent at 44.9% in

Clayton, 36.3% in Cobb, and 40.6% in Gwinnett (DP03). Hispanic of Mexican origin far outnumbered the percentages of Whites and African-Americans in the construction sector for the three counties. So, Mexican workers as well as other Hispanic groups were able to fill many these manual labor jobs.

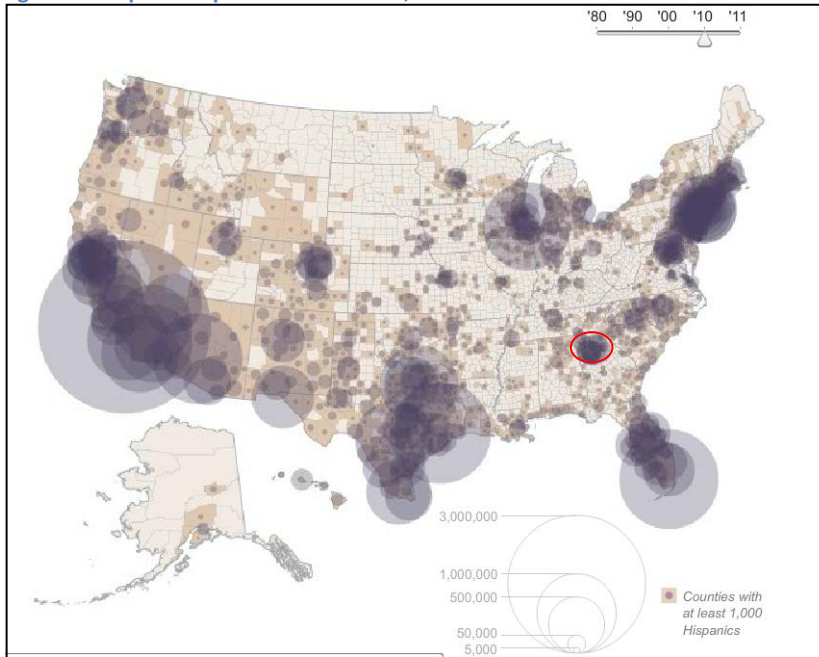
Atlanta is an Emerging Gateway metropolitan area, which is a region that has experienced rapid Hispanic immigrant growth during the past 25 years (Singer 8). Many cities in Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina also share Emerging Gateway status. Atlanta's Hispanic nationalities include Cuban, Mexican, Guatemalan, Honduran, Nicaraguan, Panamanian, Peruvian, and Brazilian, and Colombian. Figure 5 and Figure 6 show the dramatic Hispanic population growth in the U.S. from the year 1990 to 2010 (Center).

Figure 5: Hispanic Population in the U.S., 1990



Source: (Center)

Figure 6: Hispanic Population in the U.S., 2010



Source: (Center)

Circled in red, Atlanta's Hispanic demographic doubled within the two decades.

Atlanta has fourteen metro area counties (GeoPlatforms). Within the fourteen counties, Hispanic population distributions are uneven. Figure 7 highlights the geographical relationship of each county to the City of Atlanta, which is shown as a red star.

Figure 7: Atlanta's fourteen metro area counties

North West Counties	North East Counties	North Side Counties	Metro South Counties
Cherokee	Gwinnett	N. Fulton	Coweta
Cobb	Hall	Fulton	Clayton
Douglas	DeKalb	Forsyth	Fayette
Paulding	Rockdale		Henry
			S. Fulton

COUNTY PROFILES

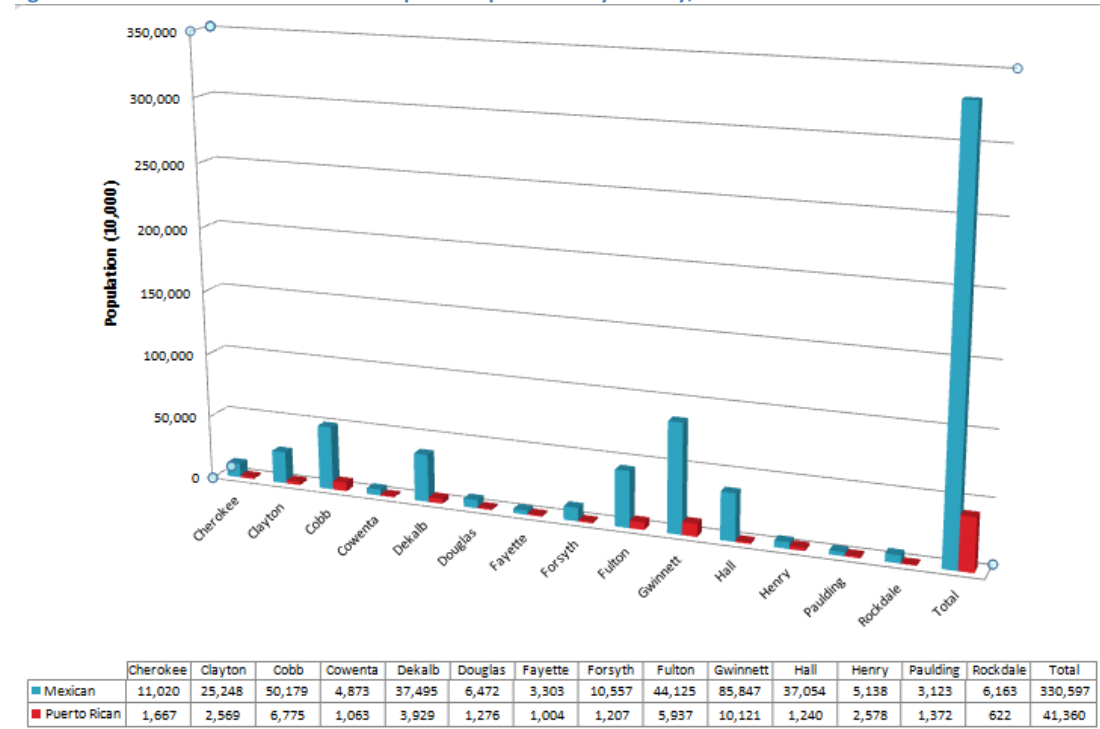


There are 14 metro area counties that encompass over 50 municipalities and the metro area spans nearly 50 miles in all directions. So where do you start? It is important to know that Atlanta can be divided into four distinct, geographic regions. The counties (and the cities) within each region are considered part of the metro area. The actual City of Atlanta is located in Fulton County, with a portion falling in DeKalb.

Source: (GeoPlatforms)

In the Atlanta metropolitan area, the top two nationalities are of Mexican and Puerto Rican origin. Figure 8 shows the population numbers of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans by County (PCT1-2010).

Figure 8: Mexican and Puerto Rican Hispanic Populations by County, 2010



Source: (PCT1-2010)

Mexican populations within each county far exceeded the second largest group, Puerto Ricans, by a huge amount. The Mexican population is the largest Hispanic group in the region. In 2010, Atlanta’s population of Mexican origin was 64% percent of Georgia’s total Hispanic population (PCT1-2010).

Most of the growth in the Mexican population occurred in Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties. Atlanta’s Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties had the largest Mexican populations on Georgia’s Top 10 Counties List for 2010 (Gold 3). Hispanics of Mexican ancestry corresponded to 71% of the Latino population in Clayton; 60% of the 84,330 Latino population in Cobb; and 53% of the 162,035 Latino populations in Gwinnett County (Gold 3). From 2000 to 2010, the population increase for the Mexican population was 133% in Cobb County, 181% in Clayton County, and 222% in Gwinnett County (PCT1-2010).

As the largest immigrant group in the Atlanta area, Mexicans have created an economic revival in many towns by paying taxes, and buying consumer goods. Hispanics of Mexican origin have changed the cultural spaces of Atlanta in various other ways. They have resurrected retail spaces and shopping malls, which were in decline due to poor attendance and low revenue. Hispanics retailers in Latino markets sell “everything from quinceañera dresses to Western wear to religious statues” (Cortese 1). Three Mexican owned radio stations broadcast in Spanish in Atlanta’s metropolitan area (M. W. Rees 38). In addition, eleven Mexican-owned, Spanish language newspapers provide news and information to the Hispanic community (M. W. Rees 39). Mexican immigrants have also brought their love of soccer to Atlanta. The Mexican National Soccer team has played several pre-World Cups at the Georgia Dome with an average game attendance of 52,000 fans (Creditor).

Demographic Change Issues – Legal Status and Employment Anti-immigration Laws:

Across Georgia, these demographic changes have created a significant hostile reaction from the English-speaking native population toward the Mexican immigrants and other smaller populations of Hispanics. Many biases against Hispanic immigrants abound because of misconceptions that they are illegal, steal jobs, do not pay taxes, commit crimes or live on welfare. The reality is far from the stereotypes, but the hostility festers. For instance, Georgia passed the Illegal Immigration Reform and Enforcement Act of 2011, also known as House Bill 87 (HB87) (G. Rees). Georgia’s state legislature enacted the repressive anti-immigration law to discourage illegal Hispanic immigration to the state. HB87 denies undocumented immigrants access to employment and public benefits. In addition, the law closes loopholes in employers and companies’ accountability for hiring illegal immigrants. Contractors and individuals, who

conduct contractual business with any state department or agency, must verify their workers' legal status through E-Verify (G. Rees). The Department of Homeland Security runs E-Verify, which confirms if an employee is eligible to work in the U.S. For violating E-verification requirements, contractors, subcontractors, and individuals are subject to civil and criminal penalties (G. Rees).

HB 87 also authorizes police officers to detain an individual and request proof of legal status/residency if the person is suspected of a crime. Those crimes can include speeding or driving without proper equipment (Valencia and Tripp). In Georgia, 88% of children, under 18 years of age and who were born in the U.S., had at least one immigrant parent (2012) (Institute). So, many children and their parents of Hispanic origin are afraid that undocumented parents will be stopped on a minor traffic violation and deported (Simmons). For example, between 2007 and 2011, Cobb County deputies turned over approximately 6,000 illegal immigrants to federal authorities for deportation (Simmons). Also, legal Hispanic workers on work visas have faced issues because of HB 87. They have been harassed, arrested, lost work productivity and wages from being detained, and accumulated legal costs (Council). Cobb County's law enforcement practices have generated apprehension among legal and undocumented Hispanic immigrants. As a consequence, Hispanic immigrants have left Cobb County in droves. While Cobb County's school enrollment has declined, counties surrounding Cobb County have noted significant school enrollment increases, especially for English to Speakers of Other Languages students (Simmons). Hispanic immigrants are settling in new, friendlier locations. Yet, many Hispanic immigrants may not have money reserves. So, they may face economic instability and increased poverty.

Cobb County leaders also initiated shut down of day laborer centers (Odem 116). Undocumented Hispanic day laborers typically gathered daily in known outdoor locations where employers picked them up to work in construction and lawn care. Numerous Cobb County local merchants and customers complained about the congregating day laborers and perceived link to crime (Odem 115). Therefore, Cobb County's legislators passed "no assembly" laws on private property to deter the presence of the day laborers (Odem 116). In other counties, churches and other support groups have opened day labor centers, which offer employment assistance and shelter from the elements. In reaction to one such center in Gwinnett County, protesters wrote angry letters to legislators. To discourage patronage of the center, Gwinnett County local police conducted numerous immigration arrests and closed down the publicly financed day laborer center (Odem 116-117). The center shut down within a year of opening in 2001. In Georgia, English-speaking, native populations have created a hostile and unwelcoming environment for Hispanic immigrants.

HB 87's intent was to discourage illegal immigration to Georgia, prevent undocumented workers from using state social services such as education and welfare, and stop the employment of illegal immigrants. Despite the intent, HB 87 has been detrimental to local businesses and tourism in Georgia. The decades of Hispanic population growth meant economic revitalization for local businesses and towns with decreasing native populations. With the mass exodus of legal and illegal Hispanic immigrants, local businesses that catered to these patrons closed because of lost revenue. Local area churches also saw revenues drop as Hispanic attendance plummeted (Simmons). In addition, the housing and rental sector may be hurt due to low demand in some of Georgia's counties (Council). Hispanic workers filled labor shortages in many industries such as agriculture and construction. For the 2011 growing season, Georgia's

agriculture industry could not find enough workers. The financial loss was staggering at between \$300 million and \$1 billion (Council). With a loss of Hispanic laborers, many businesses may move to other states with larger labor pools. In 2010, Mexican tourists spent \$8.7 billion in the U.S.; however, many Mexican and other nationalities from Latin America may not visit Georgia because of its anti-immigration policies (Council).

Demographic Change Issues – Education Access Anti-immigration Laws:

All of the anti-immigration rhetoric, laws, and policies have created an atmosphere of persecution and fear for Hispanic immigrants. In 2012, Georgia Senate Bill (SB) 458 was defeated, which would have denied water and sewage services to illegal immigrants (ACLU 10). SB 458 also required parents to provide proof of citizenship for children to attend elementary school. Another SB 458 provision banned enrollment for undocumented students to all public colleges and universities in Georgia (ACLU 10). Despite SB 458's defeat, the University System of Georgia Board of Regents approved Policy 4.1.6 in 2010 (Umana 13). Policy 4.1.6 prohibited public higher education institutions, such as The University of Georgia, Georgia Tech and Georgia State from enrolling undocumented students (Umana 13). The policy also has ramifications for public college funding. Typically, undocumented students normally pay out-of-state tuition and fees, which can be four times as much as in-state tuition (Umana 10). Without the undocumented students' tuition payments, Georgia's public colleges/universities may have to replace these revenue losses with higher tuition and fees for in-state students.

The anti-immigrant sentiment in Georgia has also affected legal Hispanic residents, who already have degrees. In 2011, the Georgia Board of Nursing implemented license renewal policies, requiring proof of legal status (Burress). Georgia's medical board passed a similar

measure for doctors and other health care professionals (Burress). Unfortunately, the boards did not fund the increased staffing to deal with the new requirements. Due to the enormous backlogs for citizenship verification, approximately 1,300 doctors, nurses, and other medical personnel could not practice medicine because their medical licenses expired (Burress). For 2011, another 41,000 medication practitioners lost work productivity and wages due to the new licensing requirements, requiring proof of citizenship (Burress).

In targeting medicine professionals for proof of legal status, the nursing and medical boards created unnecessary obstacles for Hispanic medical practitioners. Policy 4.1.6 policy affected legal, professional Hispanic groups such as Cubans, living in Georgia. In Georgia, the Cuban total population is 25,048 (QT-P10-2010). The U.S. dry feet immigration policy ensures Cubans possess legal status (Peters 8). In 2006, 40% of Cubans, living in Atlanta, were employed in management and professional jobs, such as medical practitioners (Walcott and Murphy 162). In contrast, the majority of undocumented Hispanic immigrants do not have the prerequisite educational attainment or English proficiency to obtain medical licenses. For example, the median educational level of undocumented Mexican immigrants is nine years or lower of schooling (Lacy 4). Also, most illegal Hispanic immigrants do not proficiently speak or read English to attend college and pass medical bar exams (Lacy 4). Policy 4.1.6 is addressing an issue of undocumented workers that really does not exist in the medical field. With the harassment and delays for licensing renewals, medical professionals of Hispanic origin may choose to leave Georgia.

English Proficiency Impacts:

For Hispanic immigrants, the major pull factor is jobs in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Despite the numerous jobs, many Hispanic immigrants are qualified for only low-skilled, low-pay occupations in industries, such as hotel and restaurant services, landscaping, and janitorial services. A managerial divide exists along ethnic lines (Kandel and Parrado 269). Whites and Blacks fill managerial positions while the majority of Hispanic workers hold manual labor jobs. For instance, Figure 3 shows Whites held 21.8% and Blacks filled 25.6% of the management jobs in Clayton County (DP03). In contrast, Mexican immigrants occupied only 5.3% of the management positions (DP03). The same pattern existed for Cobb and Gwinnett Counties. Although some may be undocumented or lack seniority, many Hispanic immigrants, who have legal status, have lived in the Atlanta metropolitan region for years. The primary reasons for the limited occupational mobility to management positions for Hispanics are two-fold -- a lack of English proficiency, and low levels of educational attainment. These two factors prevent Hispanics from advancing into the higher echelons of management (Kandel and Parrado 270).

The most important factor for occupational advancement, however, is English proficiency. English is the language of unity in North America rather than an official language. Low English proficiency isolates Hispanic members from the broader society. In addition, anti-immigrant activists criticize the inability of Hispanic immigrants to speak English. These activists perceive a threat, and condemn the Hispanic groups' unwillingness to assimilate (Cafferty and Engstrom xiv). The activists' suspicion leads to ill-conceived policies. For example Georgia's Senate introduced a 2014 resolution to declare English as the official state language, (Kavanaugh 1). The resolution also required English-only driver's license exams.

In the U.S., English is the primary language of commerce and business (Advameg). If Hispanic immigrants speak English poorly or not at all, they will be limited in conducting day-to-day business, especially in managerial roles. When business owners and senior managers speak only English, Hispanic immigrants are at a disadvantage. Figure 9 shows the top languages other than English spoken in the U.S. (Bureau).

Figure 9: Top Languages Other than English Spoken in 1980 and Changes in Relative Rank, 1990-2010

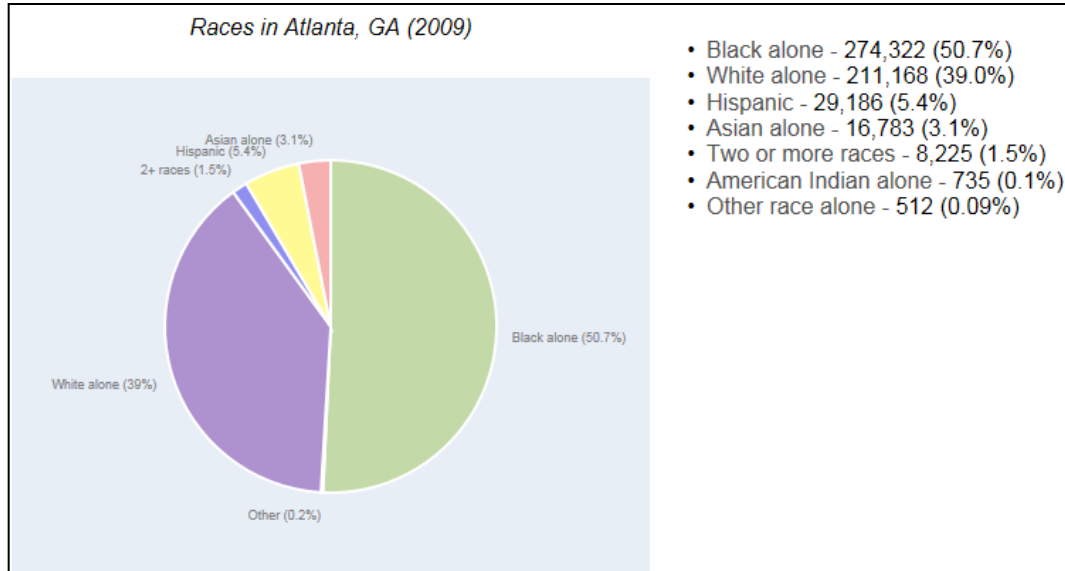


Source: (Bureau)

Although Spanish is steadily growing in use, non-Hispanic immigrant groups actively learn English as a second language (Cafferty and Engstrom 88). For this other immigrants groups, the incentives to speaking English proficiently are jobs, higher wages, and occupational mobility. Therefore, the U.S.'s lingua franca is English.

In the U.S., most of the English-speaking native population only speaks English. Figure 10 displays Atlanta's demographics as of 2009 (Advameg).

Figure 10: Races in Atlanta, GA, 2009



Source: (Advameg)

According to the 2009 chart, 50.7% of the population was Black alone, and 39.0% was White alone in Atlanta. Hispanics were only 5.4% of the Atlanta's population (Advameg). So, the expectation is that Hispanic immigrants will imitate other immigrant groups to the U.S., and learn English. Figure 11 shows U.S. Census data of language spoken at home for Whites, Blacks, and Mexicans, as the largest Hispanic group, in Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties from the year 2006 to 2010 (B16004).

Figure 11: Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5 Years and Over – 2006 - 2010 American Community Survey

B16004: AGE BY LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME BY ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH FOR THE POPULATION 5 YEARS AND OVER - Universe: Population 5 years and over

2006-2010 American Community Survey
 Note: This is a modified view of the original table.

	Clayton County, Georgia			Cobb County, Georgia			Gwinnett County, Georgia		
	White alone	Black or	Mexican	White alone	Black or	Mexican	White alone	Black or	Mexican
Total:	50,413	154,537	19,943	399,382	151,149	39,640	400,994	157,616	67,565
5 to 17 years:	6,753	38,769	5,836	68,594	37,302	11,743	81,122	43,786	19,196
Speak only English	3,872	36,867	362	59,051	34,371	1,125	61,789	40,269	1,546
Speak Spanish:	2,832	618	5,474	6,795	639	10,559	14,639	1,426	17,575
Speak English "very well"	1,696	479	3,871	5,462	562	7,766	10,712	1,163	13,058
Speak English "well"	742	30	885	665	13	1,648	2,830	178	3,212
Speak English "not well"	352	81	594	587	64	828	1,013	85	1,116
Speak English "not at all"	42	28	124	81	0	317	84	0	189
18 to 64 years:	34,355	109,785	13,864	283,200	108,081	27,491	281,354	108,454	47,670
Speak only English	26,070	101,682	758	248,353	95,205	1,922	223,972	93,215	2,601
Speak Spanish:	7,709	2,473	13,079	21,450	2,023	25,538	40,758	2,819	44,993
Speak English "very well"	1,732	2,065	2,325	8,204	1,536	5,668	14,658	2,159	10,123
Speak English "well"	1,516	170	2,645	4,313	254	5,000	9,166	322	11,234
Speak English "not well"	2,620	176	4,851	5,918	233	11,160	11,375	273	15,356
Speak English "not at all"	1,841	62	3,258	3,015	0	3,710	5,559	65	8,280
65 years and over:	9,305	5,983	243	47,588	5,766	406	38,518	5,376	699
Speak only English	8,625	5,769	0	45,153	5,377	71	35,081	4,748	114
Speak Spanish:	563	16	243	1,108	39	335	1,635	85	581
Speak English "very well"	93	16	13	554	25	73	631	32	41
Speak English "well"	55	0	53	140	0	64	365	36	78
Speak English "not well"	223	0	20	248	14	74	392	17	119
Speak English "not at all"	192	0	157	166	0	124	247	0	343

Source: (B16004)

For 18 to 64 years old, only 2% of Blacks, and 22% of Whites spoke Spanish in Clayton County (B16004). In Cobb County, 2% of Blacks, and 8% of Whites spoke Spanish for 18 to 64 years old. For Gwinnett County, 3% of Blacks and 14% of Whites spoke Spanish (B16004).

According to Figure 11, Mexican population numbers for speaking English “well” are very low. For Clayton County, 13,864 of Mexican origin from the ages 18 to 64 years old spoke Spanish (B16004). Of these, 4,851 spoke English “not well” and 3,258 speak English “not at all.” In Cobb County, 11,160 Spanish speakers did not speak English “well,” and 3,710 did not speak English “at all” out of the 25,538 Spanish speakers (B16004). 32.2% of Mexicans in Gwinnett County did not speak English “well,” and 17.4% did not speak English “at all” (B16004). Despite a desire to learn English, many Hispanics do not have the opportunity. Long work hours, lack of transportation, lack of access to classes, and illiteracy in Spanish are cited as reasons for the lack of English proficiency (Lacy 6). Other immigrant groups, such as the Vietnamese, were forced to leave as political, social or economic refugees and could never return

to their home countries. They had to learn English to live and work long-term in the U.S. In contrast, many Hispanic immigrants have a desire to and can eventually return to their countries of origin. Having access to Spanish language newspapers and television networks, Hispanic immigrant groups can function without learning English. In addition, many Hispanics reside within social enclaves that have churches, clubs and associations, catering to their needs. While residing in the U.S., the need for Hispanic immigrants to speak English is not immediate or dire. Thus, English proficiency can be a discriminator for career advancement and managerial position access.

Low Education Attainment Impacts:

Low educational attainment is an issue for Hispanic immigrants. Illiteracy in Spanish is widespread among foreign-born Hispanic populations. A 2010 Pew Research report noted that “more than half of Hispanic immigrants do not have at least a high school diploma” (Fry 6). For example, Mexican immigrants typically have a median education level of nine years or lower of schooling (Lacy 4). Low educational attainment can become generational. Economic and cultural issues make it very difficult for Hispanic immigrant children to achieve success in high school. Typically, Hispanic immigrant males work in the labor force to earn extra income for their families. They may not have the time to devote to studying, particularly if there is a language barrier. Due to cultural traditions, Hispanic families may encourage females to drop out of school after high school in favor of marriage or family care giving (Walcott and Murphy 162).

Research has shown that parental involvement often leads to students with higher grades, better school attendance, increased motivation, and lower rates of suspension (Education 1).

Hispanic immigrant parents, who do not speak English, may not check their children progress in school because of non-bilingual school administrators and teachers. Undocumented Hispanics may be apprehensive about dealing with school administrators for fear of deportation. In addition, Hispanic immigrant parents may not be proficient or comfortable in helping their children with homework assignments (Luna 70-89). In and around Atlanta, students are bused long distances to attend school. Normally, Atlanta's public mass transportation is limited in scheduling and routes. Atlanta's lack of public transportation availability may restrict Hispanic parents' ability to travel to their children's schools. Thus, Hispanic immigrant parents may not have adequate transportation to participate in parent-teacher activities.

Hispanic immigrant children have other obstacles to educational attainment. Language barriers may cause impediments to educational progress and achievement (Crowley, Lichter and Qian 12-14). Funding may limit schools' ability to pay for bilingual teachers for students, and interpreters to communicate with parents (Kandel and Parrado 272). School age Hispanic immigrant children without English proficiency skills increase the need for middle and high school *English to Speakers of Others Languages (ESOL)* classes. Hispanic immigrant children with poor English are isolated academically, and must play catch-up with their English-speaking peers.

In 2011, Georgia tracked 82,112 students enrolled in English language class (Redmon). Of those, 42,581 were in Atlanta area schools (Redmon). Gwinnett County had the most ESOL enrollments at 18,834 of Atlanta's 14 counties (Redmon). Most ESOL students enter Gwinnett County Public Schools as kindergarteners. At every grade, K-12, ESOL students are tested for English Proficiency in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening (Webb). By 2013, Gwinnett

County’s number of ESOL enrollments had increased to 27,444 (Webb). Figure 12 shows the October 2013 enrollment (Webb).

Figure 12: English Learner Enrollment in Gwinnett County Public Schools, October 2013

<i>Total Overall</i>	<i>Elementary School</i>	<i>Middle School</i>	<i>High School</i>
27,444 ELS	21,925 ELS	3,145 ELS	2,336 ELS
168,463 Total Students	77,227 Total Students	39,731 Total Students	51,088 Total Students
16.2% of enrollment	28% of enrollment	8% of enrollment	4.5% of enrollment

Source: (Webb)

The growing Hispanic immigration cannot be ignored; otherwise, the effect will be dire for Hispanic immigrants’ children.

County school boards must be sensitive Hispanic immigrant children’s needs and provide cultural services to support academic achievement. In 2010, Gwinnett County Public Schools in the Atlanta metropolitan area operated 123 schools and was the largest school district in Atlanta (Rosenberg). Employing over 20,800 people, Gwinnet County Schools served over 158,000 students. For Fiscal Year 2014, the Gwinnett County Public School’s budget was \$1.763 billion (County 7). The average cost of educating one child was \$7,548 per year (County 7). The Gwinnett County Board of Education consists of six board members, who are voted into office and serve for four-years. (GCPS 3). For an undetermined reason, no Hispanics are represented on the 2014 Gwinnett County Board of Education’s elected governing body. Gwinnett County had the most ESOL enrollments of Atlanta’s 14 counties (Redmon). Hispanics representation should be obligatory on public school boards with high numbers of Hispanic students in order to allot appropriate resources to meet the growing Hispanic immigrant population.

When high school students graduate, they are supposed to attend college. If students do not succeed in high school, they will likely not enroll in college. In one report, only 7 percent of minority students graduate from college with a bachelor’s degree within 10 years (Luna 68).

Figure 13 shows U.S. Census data of the Sex by College or Graduate School Enrollment by Type of School for Atlanta’s three counties with the largest Mexican populations (B14004).

Figure 13: Sex by College or Graduate School Enrollment by Type of School by Age for the Population 15 years and over, 2006-2010 American Community Survey

B14004: SEX BY COLLEGE OR GRADUATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY TYPE OF SCHOOL BY AGE FOR THE POPULATION 15 YEARS AND OVER -
Universe: Population 15 years and over

2006-2010 American Community Survey
Note: This is a modified view of the original table.

	Clayton County, Georgia			Cobb County, Georgia			Gwinnett County, Georgia		
	White alone	Black or	Mexican	White alone	Black or	Mexican	White alone	Black or	Mexican
	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Total:	45,135	125,237	15,201	347,700	123,215	29,932	339,084	123,963	51,844
Male:	22,500	55,656	9,171	170,159	54,380	17,225	167,237	56,113	30,181
Enrolled in public college or graduate school:	561	2,397	170	11,043	3,743	266	7,293	3,726	417
15 to 17 years	0	11	0	22	109	0	0	9	23
18 to 24 years	204	1,013	107	7,081	1,848	252	4,467	1,921	174
25 to 34 years	227	816	63	2,574	930	8	1,601	1,020	106
Not enrolled in college or graduate school:	21,742	51,851	8,959	156,132	48,379	16,853	157,590	50,583	29,668
15 to 17 years	818	4,737	533	8,623	4,591	1,108	9,835	5,134	1,874
18 to 24 years	2,277	7,190	1,797	9,557	6,733	3,296	12,418	6,203	6,546
25 to 34 years	3,492	10,247	3,546	24,902	10,591	5,900	25,682	10,053	11,596
Female:	22,635	69,581	6,030	177,541	68,835	12,707	171,847	67,850	21,663
Enrolled in public college or graduate school:	813	6,556	171	11,779	6,713	366	8,946	6,044	544
15 to 17 years	16	41	0	0	57	0	122	40	0
18 to 24 years	499	2,427	42	7,034	2,786	311	4,959	2,094	353
25 to 34 years	214	2,073	79	2,456	1,823	31	1,693	1,844	71
Not enrolled in college or graduate school:	21,554	60,256	5,782	162,468	58,660	12,276	160,127	57,737	21,022
15 to 17 years	641	4,656	561	8,267	4,551	927	9,190	4,950	1,578
18 to 24 years	1,565	6,619	992	8,424	5,298	2,163	10,288	4,136	3,968
25 to 34 years	2,943	12,270	2,047	24,224	13,105	4,337	24,593	12,602	7,411

Source: (B14004)

According to Figure 14, Hispanic college enrollment statistics are very low for Atlanta’s Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties (B14004). In Clayton County, only 107 or 1% of Mexican males were enrolled in a public college or graduate school out of the 9,171 males annotated for 18 to 24 years old (B14004). For Cobb County, 1,848 or 3% of Mexican males were enrolled out of 54,380. Finally, Gwinnett County had 174 or 1% Mexican men enrolled out of a total 30,181 in the survey. Mexican females’ results were a little better (B14004). In Clayton County, 42 or 1% of Mexican women were enrolled out of 6,030 for ages 18 to 24 years old. Cobb County had 311 or 2% of Mexican women enrolled out of 12,707 (B14004). For Gwinnett County, 353 or 2% out of 21,663 Mexican women were enrolled for ages 18 to 24 years old (B14004). There is a great deal of room for improvement; so, these county school

boards must take effective steps to prepare children of Hispanic immigrants to attend college. Then, they must provide college counseling in the areas of finance, academics, and degree selection. The alternative is a legacy of generational low-pay, low-skilled Hispanic immigrant workers.

For Hispanic immigrant working adults, low educational attainment affects occupational advancement and ultimately household earnings. Managers or senior administrators earn better wages than manual, low-skilled wage earners. Atlanta’s median household income is \$56,024 (Forbes.com). A household consists of all people who occupy a housing unit regardless of relationship, according to the U.S. Census Bureau’s definition (Frequently Asked Questions). Figure 14 displays U.S. Census data of Income and Benefits for Whites, Blacks, and Mexicans in Atlanta’s Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties (DP03).

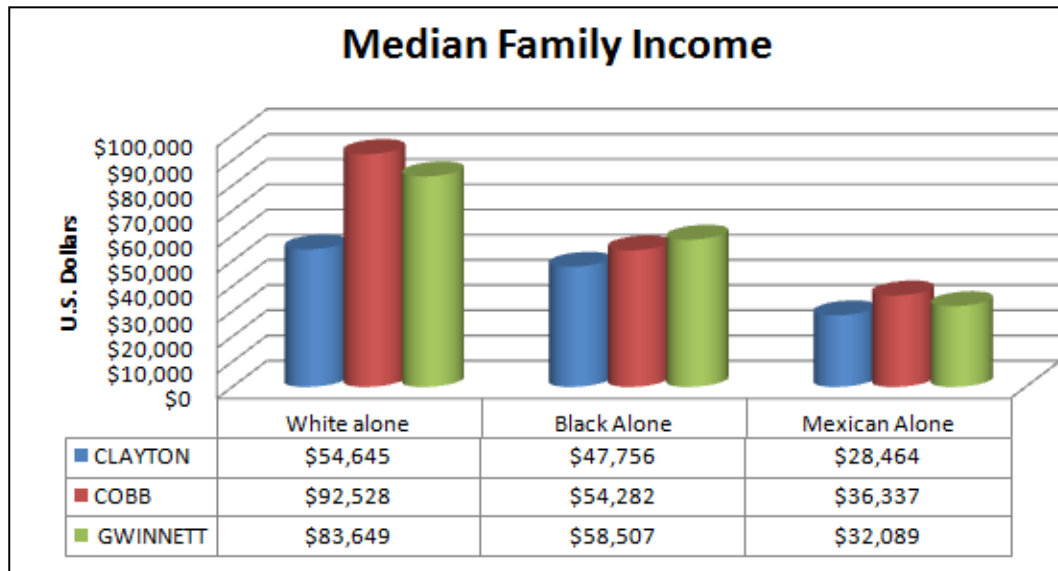
Figure 14: Income and Benefits (in 2010 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)

Subject	Clayton County, Georgia						Cobb County, Georgia						Gwinnett County, Georgia							
	White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)		White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)		White alone		Black or African American alone		Mexican (210-220)			
	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent	Estimate	Percent		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
INCOME AND BENEFITS (IN 2010 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>																			
Median household income (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	43,981	(X)	43,178	(X)	31,841	(X)	75,172	(X)	47,603	(X)	37,981	(X)	73,499	(X)	52,981	(X)	33,374	(X)
Mean household income (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	56,609	(X)	51,456	(X)	41,790	(X)	96,808	(X)	60,714	(X)	50,816	(X)	89,004	(X)	63,812	(X)	44,322	(X)
With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits in the past 12 months	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	1,801	9.1%	8,520	14.6%	842	18.2%	4,216	2.5%	7,105	11.3%	1,320	12.9%	4,897	3.2%	5,927	10.0%	1,571	8.9%
Families	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	12,889	12,889	37,723	37,723	3,866	3,866	115,442	115,442	40,103	40,103	8,558	8,558	115,492	115,492	41,861	41,861	14,525	14,525
Median family income (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	54,645	(X)	47,756	(X)	28,464	(X)	92,528	(X)	54,282	(X)	36,337	(X)	83,649	(X)	58,507	(X)	32,089	(X)
Mean family income (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	65,672	(X)	55,923	(X)	38,005	(X)	113,908	(X)	68,595	(X)	47,586	(X)	99,412	(X)	69,452	(X)	42,409	(X)
Per capita income (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	22,080	(X)	19,157	(X)	10,036	(X)	39,148	(X)	23,766	(X)	11,576	(X)	32,452	(X)	22,731	(X)	10,873	(X)
Median earnings for workers (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	24,971	(X)	28,813	(X)	17,813	(X)	40,876	(X)	30,648	(X)	18,558	(X)	36,839	(X)	32,875	(X)	17,462	(X)
Median earnings for male full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	37,311	(X)	38,619	(X)	25,353	(X)	66,655	(X)	40,756	(X)	24,713	(X)	57,292	(X)	43,474	(X)	24,472	(X)
Median earnings for female full-time, year-round workers (dollars)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	30,906	(X)	33,862	(X)	18,790	(X)	47,623	(X)	38,757	(X)	21,759	(X)	42,579	(X)	39,111	(X)	19,254	(X)

Source: (DP03)

In Clayton County, the median household income for Whites is \$43,981, Blacks is 43,178, and for Mexicans is \$31,841 (DP03). For Cobb County, the median household income for Whites is \$75,172, Blacks is \$47,603, and Mexicans \$37,981. In Gwinnett County, the median household income for Whites is \$73,499, for Blacks is \$52,981, and for Mexicans is \$33,374 (DP03). In the counties of interest, Mexican households make considerably less than their White and Black counterparts. Figure 15 shows the median family income for the three races in the counties of Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett (DP03).

Figure 15: Median Family Income, 2010 U.S. Census



Source: (DP03)

The U.S. Census defines a family as two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit (Frequently Asked Questions). According to the U.S. Census data, Whites and Blacks’ median family incomes are considerable more than their Mexican immigrant counterpart. Shockingly, Cobb County median family income for Whites at \$92,528 is almost three times as much as Mexicans’ median family income (DP03). Hispanic immigrants typically work in low-paying jobs, which may account for

the huge disparity in the median family income. In addition, the Hispanic immigrants may not have requisite higher education degrees, namely bachelors or higher degrees to qualify for managerial or professional positions. Nevertheless, Figure 14 confirms the dismal rates of college attainment for Mexican immigrants in Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties. Despite the reason for the gaps, the Hispanic population of Mexican origin earns considerably less in median family income than Whites or Blacks.

Possible Solutions:

Anti-immigration laws – Georgia’s anti-immigration hysteria is not based on facts. In 2010, Hispanics only made up 8.8% of Georgia’s total population; however, anti-immigration activists are pushing their agendas as if Hispanic immigrants are taking over the state and stealing their jobs. Hispanic immigrants with legal permanent visas and those undocumented workers fill critical labor shortages in construction, landscaping, poultry, and other service industries. They typically perform the low pay, low skilled jobs in harsh conditions that English-speaking native populations will not do. Therefore, for undocumented workers, Georgia’s politicians should lobby the local Immigration and Naturalization Service to issue more temporary work visas. The undocumented worker should be given worker status if he/she has a place of residence, have lived in the country for five years, have maintained a clean criminal record, and have paid taxes, including property and income taxes.

The benefits to such a policy are numerous. Local employers in the agriculture, manufacturing and seasonal industries would benefit by filling their labor requirements. Local police would have more resources to dedicate to arresting real criminals, such as rapists and murderers. The state of Georgia and its counties would obtain tax revenues from these newly

legalized residents. In addition, Georgia's immigration officials would be able to track these temporary workers. The undocumented immigrants would have a legal status. They would also have protection from abuse and exploitation due to their illegal status. They can travel between their home country and host country without the threat of deportation. Foreign tourists, particularly Hispanics, would probably increase travel to Atlanta as well as throughout Georgia due to the welcoming atmosphere. Continued harassment of legal and illegal Hispanics serves no purpose. With anti-immigrant sentiment and discrimination, Hispanics will relocate to friendlier and welcoming locations.

Low English proficiency and low educational attainment - For Hispanic immigrant adults, free or discounted evening literacy and English classes would increase language proficiency. Many Hispanic immigrants are much poorer than their White and Black counterparts. Therefore, the state or federal government may have to provide small stipends to supplement the immigrants' lost incomes while attending school. Community colleges and even senior high school might be great locations for English classes. These types are already in place. Also, the classes would better tie the immigrants to the community.

Lack of education for Hispanic immigrants has a direct correlation to low wages, little occupational advancement, and poverty. Schools must raise awareness, provide support, and address Hispanic cultural issues. Local governments must track underperforming schools and investigate innovative methods to improve their outreach and effectiveness in teaching Hispanic immigrant children. Although there is separation of Church and State, churches can be a weapon against illiteracy through encouraging college and academic advancement. Hispanic parental involvement is important to the educational attainment of Hispanic children. School systems may have to provide transportation for parents to attend parent-teacher conferences if

transportation is an issue. School systems may also have to fund more bilingual teachers. In all of the above, local government, schools and Hispanic immigrants must work together (Roderick 155).

Conclusion:

Foreign-born Hispanic immigrants are a vital part of Atlanta's labor market. Many industries would not survive without Hispanic immigrants in the work force. Foreign born immigrants of Mexican origin are the largest Hispanic group in the Atlanta metropolitan area. Mexican workers and the smaller other Hispanic groups contribute to local communities through employment in construction, restaurants, retail, and manufacturing. Still, many Hispanic immigrant workers have not attained upward occupational mobility. The discrepancy may be attributable to lack of English proficiency and lower educational attainment. These factors also affect earning power. Therefore, most Hispanic immigrants are relegated to low paying and low skilled jobs that relegate these immigrants to the edge of poverty. Nevertheless, Hispanics are the fastest growing immigrant population in the U.S. The problems with their inclusion in society cannot be easily dismissed.

Anti-immigrant political forces have implemented policies and laws to stem the tide of Hispanic immigration. Georgia has passed HB 87, which denies social service and employment to undocumented workers. The law also holds employers accountable for hiring illegal workers with stiff fines and criminal penalties. HB 87 also permits police to detain any individual, who does not have proof of legal status/residency. Of Atlanta's 14 counties, Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett counties have the largest Hispanic immigrant populations. Yet, Cobb County local law enforcement has made it a priority to round up illegal immigrants for deportation. Also, Cobb

County legislators passed laws restricting Hispanic day laborers from congregating in pick-up locations. Cobb County's actions have created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion between the English-speaking native and the Hispanic populations. This county's actions are not unique. Unfortunately, Hispanics with legitimate, legal residence status may be caught in the dragnet through harassment and frequent detention in order to verify their status. In reaction to Georgia's anti-immigration laws and policies, Hispanics have left the state for friendlier locations. The impact has adversely affected local businesses and communities with lost revenues.

Anti-immigration laws and policies are short-sighted. As long as Atlanta is thriving with jobs, foreign-born Hispanics will continue to immigrate and live in the area. Politicians, law enforcement school administrators, and teachers must develop comprehensive plans to deal with the growing Hispanic immigrant population. They cannot deport them all. Instead of fighting the flow, Georgia's legislators should lobby the proper federal authorities to develop a comprehensive temporary work visa program. Such programs would provide a permanent work force for agriculture, construction, and manufacturing jobs that Hispanic immigrants have traditionally filled. In addition, Georgia's immigration officials would be able to track these temporary workers. The undocumented workers would have legal status and be protected from abuse and exploitation. The legal status will also help raise Hispanic immigrant income levels because they can then freely voice issues, affecting their community. The Hispanic immigration to Atlanta, Georgia, and the impact on Atlanta's communities is a rich subject, which is worthy of more research and study.