Institutional Responses to Latin American Immigrants:

An Appalachian Case Study

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ABSTRACT

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As Latino populations grow in new destinations such as northern Appalachia, understanding the response of institutions in the community is necessary. The primary purpose of this study is to understand the institutional response to newly established Latino populations within two counties in northern Appalachia, Mineral County, WV and Allegany County, MD. The research found no formal committee or government council that has formed in response to this growth. However, hospitals, churches and non-profit groups are beginning to respond and provide services to Latinos through providing translators and helping this population to learn English. Most institutions do not have fully developed responses to this population; therefore they cooperate with other local institutions such as local universities and non-profit organizations to meet the needs of this population. In addition to focusing on the established Latino populations within the two counties, this study also considers the role of other non-native populations living within this area and the use of recreation areas by Latinos.

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For Mrs. D and her never-ending support of education.

Mrs. Jane M. Dawson, Member, Board of Education of Allegany County, Maryland

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

One of the most important contemporary trends in the ethnic geography of the United States is the development of Latino\textsuperscript{1} immigrant communities in “new destinations,” such as the urban South, the rural Midwest, and Appalachia. The traditional gateway destinations of metro New York, California, Texas, and Illinois continue to receive the majority of Latino immigrant populations, but the new destinations have become an important socio-economic issue and one that is beginning to receive attention from academic researchers (Barcus 2007). The majority of research on Latino immigrants at these new destinations focuses on the impacts of a new population on the destination’s socioeconomic structure and on how the Latino population adjusts to the new destinations. Little research, however, has focused on the institutions within the communities which must also adapt to the changing demographics. Institutions such as schools, police departments, hospitals, churches, and social service agencies play a critical role in the lives of Latino immigrants and may influence the settlement dynamics and livelihoods of the immigrant population.

The primary purpose of this study is to understand how institutions in communities in northern Appalachia are responding to a small but growing Latino immigrant population. This thesis examines communities in Western Maryland and Northern West Virginia. More specifically, it focuses on services provided to Latinos, and how their response impacts the objectives of the institution.

\textsuperscript{1} In this thesis, the term Latino will be used to describe persons of Latin American ethnicity. The term Hispanic will be used one when quoting or paraphrasing another person. If known, the person’s country of origin will be used.
The Latino population in Appalachia has increased in the past several decades, reaching 465,000 in 2000, more than tripling its population since 1980, and has continued to increase throughout the past decade (Barcus 2007). Although this is a small population compared to the more than 45 million Latinos living in the United States, the population is large enough to cause institutions to respond and is offsetting some of the population loss northern Appalachia is experiencing (ACS 2008). This growth is significant to communities of Appalachia, which have not yet been exposed to such large populations of Latin American immigrants (Barcus 2007). The growth of Latino populations in Appalachia has important implications for the existing economic, political and social structure of the region. These changes impact the well-being of migrants, people living within the host communities, and the integration of immigrants into the community. Therefore, institutions within the established communities play an important role in the integration of the Latino population into the community. Institutions also have important implications for migration theory and ethnic geography because as this thesis shows, institutions affect decisions on where to locate and when an area becomes hospitable.
Figure 1. This map shows the two counties serving as the focus of this study, Allegany County, Maryland and Mineral County, West Virginia. It also labels the four cities serving as the focus of this study. (Source Data: ESRI, Map by author, 2010)

The two counties serving as the focus of this study are separated by the Potomac River and are fairly isolated; Interstate Highway 68 is the only major road connecting them to metropolitan areas. The population of these counties is predominately white and
aging. The study began as a comparison of the responses of institutions within two cities of each county, and the counties as a whole, yet the unexpected coordinated responses of local institutions allowed for a comprehensive overview of institutions in this area, rather than a comparison. It focuses on two cities in each county, in Maryland it focuses on Frostburg and Westernport, and Keyser and Piedmont in West Virginia. This study emphasizes institutions identified in the literature, such as city government, churches and organizations which assist migrants in becoming integrated or comfortable in the community. It also highlights key institutions and their responses and interactions with new Latino populations in this region.

This research sought to identify and describe the responses of public and private institutions to the growth of new Latino populations, assesses the services provided and documents the interactions between local institutions and Latinos. A secondary objective of this research is to understand how immigrants perceive and interact with the services or lack of services provided within their community or county. However, due to the Latinos ambiguous legal status and small population, I was only able to speak with a few individuals informally.

This thesis makes several points regarding the responses of institutions to new Latino population growth in northern Appalachia. Overall, the response of hospitals, schools and city governments has been minimal. The response of hospitals centers around providing translators to any non-native English speaker who seeks treatment. Each school system has programs available to work with non-English speaking students, but do not report special programs solely for Latinos. City governments on the other hand reported that they have not yet needed to respond to this population and therefore
have not made changes in response to new Latino populations. Religious institutions are the most organized and active institutions in their response to Latinos. In this study, the leadership in local churches was instrumental in responding to local immigrant populations, and providing them with a safe space to congregate. This research presents a few unexpected outcomes, specifically the temporary presence of large Latino populations at Rocky Gap State Park on weekends during the summer months. The invisibility of the Latino population in this area is another finding as this population does not often interact with institutions or other community members, outside of the realm of the religious institutions. Overall, to meet the needs of growing non-native populations hospitals and religious organizations are working together, often even across political boundaries.

This research is informed by the “new destinations” literature within migration studies. Therefore, this research is organized by the institutions and community organizations identified as key actors in the literature. The regional description of this thesis provides demographic data and information on the Latino population of this area in order to contextualize this research. The methods section clearly states the use of qualitative methods to conduct semi-structured interviews and analyze the responses of the key actors and institutions on which this research focuses. The results section provides detailed information organized by institution to document the different responses and tactics employed by these institutions to provide assistance to these new populations. The discussion section outlines the overlying themes expressed by the institution’s responses. This thesis clearly documents and analyzes the responses of institutions within Allegany and Mineral Counties to new Latino populations in this area.
CHAPTER 2: NEW DESTINATIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES

For the first time in the United States, Latino population growth has shifted so that “roughly half of all non-metropolitan Hispanics lived outside the traditional southwestern settlement states of Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas” (Kandel and Parrado 2006). This presents a shift of migrants away from places commonly associated with immigrants, such as the four “gateway” states: New York, New Jersey, California and Florida (Brown et al. 2007). While areas with existing Hispanic populations saw an increase in population growth during the 1990s of an average 56 percent, new settlement areas had growth rates of more than 100 percent during the same period (Bump et al. 2005). This is an important change in settlement patterns, since Hispanic migrants have been concentrated in select urban areas since the end of World War II (Kandel and Parrado 2006). The primary reasons Latinos are migrating to new destinations are the jobs and incentives like the low cost of living available in these areas (Barcus 2007). While fifteen percent of new migrants came to new destinations in the United States from traditional “gateway” states, research has shown that the majority of migrants are migrating to new settlement places from abroad (Bump et al. 2005).

2.1 New Destinations

Currently, Latino population growth in non-metro U.S. destinations represents one of the more profound social transformations affecting rural places, altering their social, economic and political profiles (Kandel and Parrado 2006). This transformation
also challenges the national perception of small town America (Kandel and Parrado 2006). Furthermore, migrant populations are often younger and have several children, which represents a different social composition than several northern Appalachian communities, which have aging populations. A young migrant population also indicates a need for public policy changes, and changes within the local educational and medical systems to accommodate this population (Kandel and Parrado 2006). Little attention has been paid to the relationship between migration and the needs or motivations of families and communities, by policy makers and researchers (Castles 2002).

**Community Impacts**

Research regarding the new destinations of Latino immigrants has focused mainly on the impacts communities face as a result of the shifting social structure of the area. Migrants often have a profound impact on the communities into which they immigrate as demographer William Frey explains “some minorities are migrating to parts of the country where most residents have never heard Spanish or Chinese being spoken” (Bump et al. 2005 p. 19). A study by Parra and Pfeffer found that as non-native populations increase, people living in communities experiencing new Latino population growth are “ambivalent” about the increase of minorities in the area (Parra and Pfeffer 2006). The main reason for this sentiment is the lack of contact and knowledge that many community members have with and about the new population. In many cases, immigrants and native community members have limited interaction, leaving the immigrant populations often seemingly invisible within the communities where they live and work (Parra and Pfeffer
2006). Many areas experiencing the growth of immigrant populations also tend to have large populations of elderly people. This is leading to the restructuring of health care systems as the influx of migrants in their child bearing years presents a major difference in perceived needs, when compared to those of predominately elderly populations (Kandel and Parrado 2006). The increasing Latino populations in rural areas have many social, political and economic implications for the area (Kandel and Parrado 2006).

According to research conducted by geographers Lise Nelson and Nancy Hiemstra, the transnational aspect of their lives is the most important feature for understanding their interactions within their host community or country (Nelson and Hiemstra 2008). Through their comparison of immigrant populations in Oregon and Colorado, their study provides an example of how the Latino population’s employment can leave them invisible within communities. They cite long work days and commutes as factors that keep Latinos segregated from others within their host communities, which then prevents them from gaining a sense of belonging within the community. In addition, the transnational lives of Latinos can also lead to exclusion from the native community. However, the combination of these factors can lead to a strong sense of solidarity among Latinos in many new destinations.

2.2 Institutional Responses

Research on Latinos in new destinations is heavily concentrated on the impacts of these populations on the communities to which they immigrate. The untold story of new Latino populations in Appalachia is how communities and institutions in these
communities respond to their presence. Most research does not consider the importance of the host community’s role in the process. However, Zarrugh suggests that the responses of institutions and community members to increasing diversity as a result of growing Latino populations needs to be further addressed (Zarrugh 2008). In Appalachia, institutional responses to new Latino populations may be problem driven, in that institutions such as the police or the school board react to specific problems as they happen, or they may be addressing large scale problems at once. In these communities, community leaders, employers and institutions such as churches and non-profits which serve these populations will face new demands as a result of the shifting social structure of the area (Kandel and Parrado 2006; Parra and Pfeffer 2006; Zarrugh 2008).

Considering the role of institutions in communities experiencing new Latino population growth is essential as local institutions or organizations are likely to come into contact with Latinos based on their regular interactions with people in the community. For example, if a Latino is injured while working, they are likely to go to the Emergency Room at the local hospital for treatment and may not speak English, causing a need for a translator (Kandel and Parrado 2006). In addition, when interacting with other institutions such as the educational system, religious institutions or the legal system their interactions, positive or negative, will likely influence their likelihood of remaining in the community. A positive experience of Latinos interacting with a church that provides Spanish language services could strongly influence their well-being within their host community. However, without access to translators in hospitals or a safe space within churches to congregate and communicate with priests, the Latino population could
become more isolated leading to a negative experience in the community. Considering the interactions between Latinos and institutions in new destinations is essential as it conditions the Latino’s experience in the community.

The limited research available on this topic identifies several institutions as likely to interact with Latinos due to the services they provide. Institutions such as the health care and school systems in addition to local governments are usually the first to respond to the needs of Latino populations (Bump 2005). Furthermore, these institutions are often the only way for immigrants to access the resources they need, due to their lack of social networks within the established community (Parra and Pfeffer 2002). Although some responses have been documented, the responses of institutions such as the health care system and law enforcement agencies are largely unknown. The following table displays the institutions identified in literature regarding the community response to immigrants as key actors, and their documented response to Latino populations (Table 1).
Table 1. Institutional responses to immigrant populations in new destinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Migrants in New Destinations</th>
<th>Institutions</th>
<th>Response from Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>Unknown other than agricultural workers (Kandel and Parrado 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Systems</td>
<td>English as a Second Language Classes, Spanish speaking teachers (Kandel and Parrado 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Governments and Law Enforcement Agencies</td>
<td>Unknown, often contextual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Churches</td>
<td>Services in Spanish (Bailey 2005), providing meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-profit Organizations</td>
<td>Outreach programs (Bailey 2005), Legal Aid (Bailey 2005)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

_Hospitals_

Many of the programs providing medical assistance to Latinos in the United States are focused on documented migrant agricultural and seasonal workers. Many of these programs provide outreach to migrants, care at clinics, transportation to hospitals and translation services (Parra and Pfeffer 2002). Often Latinos without health insurance or documentation interact with the medical system only when they visit a hospital Emergency Room due to a work related injury or as a result of an accident. The focus of most research on this topic centers around Latinos receiving treatment at Emergency Rooms, not private clinics or primary care physicians. In addition, many areas
experiencing the growth of migrant populations tend to have large populations of elderly people, leading to the restructuring of health care systems, namely hospitals as a result, of the influx of migrants in their child bearing years (Kandel and Parrado 2006). Outside populations of documented seasonal and agricultural workers, the medical system’s response to new Latino populations is unknown.

School Systems

Increasing Latino populations in areas with overall decreasing populations has important implications for school systems as it presents a possible increase in fertility rates and enrollment in schools (Kandel and Parrado 2006). In the United States, children of immigrants are all provided with access to public education (Parra and Pfeffer 2002). The increase in Latino children attending schools in new destinations creates a demand for translation services and outreach programs to integrate students and parents into the education system (Parra and Pfeffer 2002). Demands are also created for Spanish speaking teachers, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and for materials sent home to parents to be written in Spanish to accommodate parents (Parra and Pfeffer 2002). School systems are also accommodating the needs of Latinos through providing bilingual services and transportation to schools when needed. However, in new Latino population growth areas, many school systems are facing budget cuts and do not have the resources to adequately provide these services (Kandel and Parrado 2006). As Latino populations increase throughout Appalachia, school systems must prepare to
accommodate the needs of this population including translation services, transportation and English language classes.

**Governments and Law Enforcement Agencies**

Law enforcement agencies and local governments also face challenges with increasing immigrant populations in rural areas, often due to immigrants’ unfamiliarity with federal, state or local legislation. Immigrants can be unaware of traffic regulations, registration requirements for their cars, and drive cars although they do not have a legal driver’s license. Furthermore, one of the most common problems faced by law enforcement officers is the inability to communicate with Latinos as a result of the language barrier (Bailey 2005). This is a common problem in the Greensboro, NC area as new Latino population growth has encouraged local police departments to actively seek bilingual officers to join police forces to allow for better communication with Latinos. Problems have also occurred in North Carolina when those taking the driving test must communicate with their instructor in English, although the written exam is offered in several languages. Another challenge for law enforcement agencies is the ability of undocumented workers to find work “under the table,” within the informal economy, which causes problems for the immigrant and employer (Bailey 2005). Furthermore, falsified documents such as work visas and driver’s licenses are fairly easy to obtain for most undocumented immigrants. As a result police face difficulty as employers and businesses often do not question the authenticity of documents due to the relatively low wages they are able to pay in addition to the income derived from their
immigrant employees (Bailey 2005). The response of law enforcement agencies to new Latino populations is complex due in part to the often undocumented status of immigrants.

_Churches and Non-Profit Organizations_

Research conducted recently in North Carolina regarding the response of community groups towards new immigrant populations suggests the importance of churches and non-profit groups in welcoming immigrants into the established community (Bailey 2005). Many religious organizations have embraced the new immigrant populations and have allowed these groups to become integrated into the local churches. While many Catholic Churches have welcomed Latino immigrants based on the similarity of religious beliefs, many Protestant Churches have also developed outreach programs for this population (Bailey 2005). Furthermore, some churches have gone so far as to employ multicultural staff members and conduct services in multiple languages (Bailey 2005). Moreover, allowing immigrants space to congregate in churches has in some cases initiated the development of community groups which celebrate immigrants native countries and educate children and young adults about cultural beliefs and practices of various immigrant groups (Bailey 2005). Other outreach programs focus on leadership development within the Latino community, while providing structural support and programs for the immigrant community (Bailey 2005). Religious institutions have become key actors regarding the community response to new immigrant populations.
through welcoming them into their existing institutions and helping to develop new programs to support immigrant populations.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Qualitative methods were used to gain insight into how public and private institutions in this area are responding to new Latino population growth. Using this method, I conducted twelve formal interviews with representatives from local institutions and had several informal conversations with community members and Latinos living in this region. The qualitative methods utilized in this study allowed for the perspective of many people, ranging from religious leaders personally reaching out to the Latino population to city officials who do not report having an interaction with Latinos to be assessed. My data analysis consisted of focused and axial coding of interview transcripts and field notes. In addition, I analyzed public documents published regarding the immigrant population within my study area to further understand the context of Latino population growth in these communities. The primary data for this project was collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews between August 2009 and January 2010. Interviews were conducted with religious leaders, school board employees, hospital social workers, Spanish professors at local universities and a park ranger in Allegany County, Maryland and Mineral County, West Virginia (Dunn 2005).

3.1 Identifying Key Actors

In order to gain access within the communities where I intended to conduct this research, I used my personal social network, as a result of residing within Allegany County for the majority of my life. My familiarity with this region has allowed me to have an in depth understanding of key institutions and community leaders who are in
contact with Latinos in this area. My first introduction to this community came from an
attorney in Westernport, MD who, knowing my knowledge of Spanish, invited me to
attend his church’s weekly Spanish language service. This person served as my first
informant and helped me to gain access not only to the Latino population residing in this
area, but also to one of the religious institutions in this area (Dunn 2005). Because my
introduction to this community began within the religious institutions of this area, I
started with this institution and then contacted other acquaintances, to find additional
participants to interview and also to interview about community involvement.

I also used newspaper articles published in the local newspaper, the *Cumberland
Times-News*, to understand the context of the Latino presence in this area. I used two
main newspaper articles to help identify key actors and institutions responding to Latinos
in these counties. The first article I utilized was “Spanish Spoken Here” which appeared
in the *Cumberland Times News* on February 18, 2009. This article focused on the growth
of Latino populations in the region and identified several institutions, including churches,
hospitals and school systems, where interaction with Latinos was occurring most often. I
also used an article published May 21, 2009 in the same newspaper titled "Need for
English practice explored" as another source of information on this topic. This article
explored the actions of several community members and a local non-profit organization
seeking to teach English to immigrants in this community. These articles served as
important sources of information as I began to identify key actors in this area.

Once I had contacted individuals identified as key actors, I used the snowball
method to find other participants living in the area to interview for my research (van
I also volunteered with a local church, allowing me to interact with local Latinos and meet other church representatives and priests of other denominations who also regularly interacted with Latinos. In addition, I attended meetings for the Exploring ESL group, which is working to start offering conversation hours within this area, in an attempt to help local non-native populations learn English. I then spoke to city officials to determine the role of the city in addressing new Latino populations. In addition, I spoke with representatives from the school system in each county to understand how Latino students, especially those needing extra English practice are received within the schools in this area. Additionally, I spoke with a representative of the hospital in each county to understand the context of their interactions with Latinos and how the hospitals prepare for these incidents. Through the snowball method, I was also informed of the large number of Latinos who regularly visit the local state park, leading me to contact a representative of Maryland State Parks to better understand this pattern of park visitation. To analyze the role of institutions, I relied mainly on my interactions and conversations with institutional representatives during the beginning stages of my research to help identify other key actors within the response to immigrants in this area.

3.2 Interviews

In order to establish contacts, I began networking, meeting and volunteering with various community groups, specifically St. James Episcopal Church in Westernport, MD and the Exploring ESL group at Frostburg State University during the spring and summer
of 2009 (Dunn 2005). During the summer of 2009, and the fall of 2009 I conducted the
majority of my interviews. Each participant was interviewed once, and most of the
conversations with formal community organizations were recorded using a digital voice
recorder. Subsequent interviews were conducted throughout the fall of 2009 and winter
of 2010 until sufficient data were collected to effectively present a summary of my
findings. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted, eight of which were
recorded with a digital voice recorder, and four were conducted taking detailed field
notes. Nine interviews occurred in the study area in person at the respondent’s office,
and three interviews were conducted over the phone at the request of the respondent.
These interviews were recorded using a digital voice recorder with permission from the
respondent. Additionally, several informal conversations which were not recorded were
used in this research. The topics covered during the interview process consisted mainly
of current job held, primary purpose of the organization, immigrant population growth,
services provided to immigrants, interactions with immigrants and how services may
change in the future. Unless given permission to use the name of the person I
interviewed, the person will be referred to by their job title and institution they represent.
When providing information about an immigrant, a pseudonym will be used.

3.3 Coding

The interviews were coded according to themes and patterns that emerged (Gill
2000). First, I compiled a list of open codes detailing the “who, what, when, where and
why” information from my interviews. Then I expanded this information to develop the
open codes to form a list of detailed, overarching themes from the responses which formed my group of focused codes. The list was as follows: uniqueness of Latino population, consideration of policy changes, interconnectedness of institutions, invisibility of the Latinos, temporary populations, considering cultural characteristics, attitude of native population, role of other non-native populations, lack of public transportation, lack of interaction with native community and the area acting as one unit. I then combined the focused codes into an axial framework to assess the most important themes evident in the responses of institutions to new Latino populations (Harris 2001). This framework was used to organize the discussion section. Due to the interconnectedness of the institutions, I chose to organize the results chapter by institution to clearly define the role of each institution within the two counties.

3.4 Positionality

I have lived in Allegany County, Maryland for the majority of my life and have a deep understanding of the existing populations and institutions within these communities. Therefore, I am able to understand the complex changes that are occurring due to the increasing diversity. As I began this project, my knowledge of the area and my reputation as a “local” were integral aspects of my ability to gain access to both the immigrant population and the institutions most actively involved in working with these populations. However, my position as a native of this area, made it difficult to gain access to the Latino population, outside of the religious communities. Furthermore, my positionality as a student caused difficulty engaging in conversations with several
organizations such as the local police departments and the Mineral County School System.

Studying Spanish and Latin American Studies in college allowed me to have an understanding of Latino culture which has proved beneficial for this project. Additionally, my knowledge of Spanish allowed me to have informal conversations with Latinos in their native language. In addition to volunteering with the church in Westernport, MD, I volunteered at a community center in Wilmington, DE where I helped children and families deal with the language barrier and the transition to the United States. My own experiences in this part of Appalachia combined with my knowledge and understanding of Latin American culture (three study abroad programs and a university major in Latin American Studies) helped me to understand the context of the growing population of Latinos in northern Appalachia.
CHAPTER 4: REGIONAL DESCRIPTION

4.1 Northern Appalachia

This study focuses on the region of northern Appalachia, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission (Pollard 2004). Northern Appalachia is comprised of parts of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland and the majority of West Virginia. Based on the 2000 Census, northern Appalachia had seven percent of the total population whom identified as a minority (Pollard 2004). The percentage is lower in central Appalachia with only four percent of the total population identifying as a minority. However, southern Appalachia is experiencing a great deal more population growth and has a total of nineteen percent total minority population as of the year 2000 (Pollard 2004). The Latino population in northern Appalachia is comprised of Latinos born in the United States, while those in the southern sub-region are mostly foreign born yet in both regions most Latinos are living in metro areas. In central Appalachia the Latino population is primarily comprised of Latinos born in the United States, living in non-metro areas (Barcus 2007). While Latino populations are growing in many areas of Appalachia, the growth and context of this new population differs by region.

Latino population growth is evident in all of Appalachia, with the total Latino population of 12.5% surpassing the African American population which numbers 12.3% (Hayden 2004). However, the majority of this population growth is occurring in urban areas, especially within southern Appalachia (Hayden 2004). Throughout the region, by percentage North Carolina has the largest Latino population growth at 624.9% and
Maryland has the smallest with 70.3% (Hayden 2004). Yet Barcus’ cluster analysis of this growth identifies populations on the region’s periphery in states such as Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, New York and Maryland as likely to have increasing Latino populations in the near future (Barcus 2007). However, as southern Appalachia experiences total population growth noting large population gains from migration, northern Appalachia although also experiencing increases due to migration has net population losses according to data from the 2000 Census (Obermiller 2004). The central sub-region’s population has remained fairly stable (Obermiller 2004). Latino population growth has been distinct in each of Appalachia’s three sub-regions.

4.2 Study Area

This study focuses on Allegany County, Maryland and Mineral County, West Virginia, both located in the sub-region of northern Appalachia, separated by the Potomac River. The counties have similar demographic structures and income levels. Both counties also have a notable percentage of individuals living below the poverty line, 13.6% in Allegany County and 17.9% in Mineral County (US Census Bureau 2008). In Allegany County, 92.7% of the population and 97.4% of Mineral County’s population identify themselves as White. Both counties also have aging populations and slow population growth. In Allegany County, 18% of the total population is age 65 or older, in Mineral County the number is slightly less at approximately 14% of the total population. Furthermore, the rural and fairly isolated location of these counties is an important consideration for the new, culturally distinct Latino populations now entering the area.
These counties are connected by Route 36, providing an essential link among the four cities highlighted in this study. According to the United States Census Bureau, this is a two county Metropolitan Statistical Area for US Census purposes, based on the high level of job commuting between the counties (Census Bureau 2000). Interstate 68 is also an important road within this area as it connects this region to the metropolitan areas of Baltimore, MD and Washington D.C. and to points further west.

Although there are many parallel institutions within the two counties, in some cases the institutions proved to serve very different roles within the communities. First, within Allegany County, a new hospital opened in November of 2009. The hospital is very large, and was built to serve not only Allegany County, but also most of the tri-state area, including Mineral County. While there is a smaller hospital in Mineral County, the hospital in Maryland serves the majority of people in both counties. Furthermore, most discussion or documented stories about immigrants in Mineral County have been associated with their place of employment as their only interaction within the community in which they are residing. However, in Allegany County, less is known about immigrants employment and the majority of the focus surrounds the large population of Latino visitors at a state park within the county. The two counties show the different ways institutions in rural Appalachia are responding to Latino immigrant populations.

4.3 The Latino Population

Within these two counties, there are several important characteristics to consider about the Latino population. According to my interviews with two priests, working
closely with the population, the majority of Latin American immigrants are from El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico, and there has been a steady increase of Latinos living in these two counties. According to conversations with institutions working closely with this population, there was a population of approximately 30 or 40 Latinos interacting regularly with local institutions as of the spring of 2009. The majority of these people were young men, between ages 18 and 40; institutions reported very few women and children in this population. In addition, they reported that the majority of men working in West Virginia are employed by lumber companies and furniture building factories, and are here without their wives and children. In Maryland, the majority are employed by Mexican or Italian restaurants owned by Mexican entrepreneurs, including several families with young children. The priests reported that to their knowledge the majority of Latinos in this area had immigrated internationally in the past few years, from their native countries directly to this area. However, the majority of people working in the restaurant sector have been living in the United States and many have come to this region from other places in the United States. Although there is not much known about the Latino population in this area, these characteristics help us to understand the context of this population living in Allegany and Mineral counties.

4.4 Allegany County, Maryland

Allegany County is located in the far western panhandle of the state. This county is officially located within the region of Appalachia, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC 2010). According to the American Community Survey
(ACS) three year estimate from 2006-2008, the total population of the county is 72,419 persons. Approximately 92.7% of the total population, or 67,141 persons, classify their race as White (ACS 2008). The second largest population by race in this county is Black or African American, totaling 4,889 persons or 6.8% of the population (ACS 2008). The third largest ethnic group is people of Latino descent, totaling 753 persons or 1.0% of the total population (ACS 2008). In comparison, the 1990 Census counted 319 total Latinos living in the county (US Census Bureau). Therefore, the Latino population has more than doubled since 1990. Simultaneously, the total population of the county has decreased during this period from 74,946 persons in 1990 to 72,419 persons in 2008 (US Census Bureau). Thus the increasing Latino population is significant in light of the county’s decrease in total population.

The Latino population represents many different countries and cultures, thus increasing the diversity of the county. The largest population of people of Latino ethnicity is the Mexican population which totals 301 persons or 0.4% of the Latino population within the county. The next largest population of Latinos is persons of Puerto Rican ethnicity, totaling 234 people or 0.3% of the total population. The next largest group is persons of Cuban descent, accounting for 49 people and 0.1% of the total population. These figures demonstrate the diversity among Latin American immigrants settling in Allegany County within the past few decades.
4.5 Mineral County, West Virginia

Mineral County is located in northern portion of the state, within the federally defined region of Appalachia (ARC 2010). According to the American Community Survey three year estimate from 2006-2008, Mineral County has a total population of 26,725 persons (ACS 2008). Within this county, the majority of the population identifies as White, accounting for 97.4% of the total population, or 26,037 persons (ACS 2008). The second largest group categorized by race in this county is Black, totaling 3.6% of the total population or 956 total persons (ACS 2008). According to the 2008 population estimate, the total population of Latino persons living within this county totals 158 persons or 0.06% of the population (ACS 2008). In 1990, the total population of Mineral County, WV was 26,697, and the total population of Hispanic persons was 101 persons (ACS 1990). Therefore, the Latino population has increased more than 50% since 1990 yet the overall total population within the county has decreased by approximately 1,000 people (ACS 1990, 2008). The increasing Latino population combined with a decreasing overall population will likely have many implications for institutions responding to the changing population.
CHAPTER 5: RESULTS

Interviews conducted with institutional representatives in Allegany and Mineral counties were used to provide a basic understanding of how institutions are interacting with the Latino population living and traveling through these two counties. This section is organized based on the key topics identified in the literature on this topic. Most notably, the medical/health care system, school systems, local governments, state parks, local nonprofit groups and religious organizations will be explored in depth. Although the majority of the information collected is consistent with the information found within the literature on this topic, some unexpected results such as the use of state parks in rural areas by Latino persons are discussed. I conducted this research as this population is just starting to develop in this area, and I am aware that the institutions are only just beginning to see a need to respond to these new populations. Therefore, this chapter will explain the responses of several institutions in this area as they begin to respond to the new Latino populations.

Understanding the context of the Latino population in this area from late 2007 through the winter of 2010 is important as it affected the type of results I am able to report. During this time, the international economic crisis occurred, and several groups of Latinos left this area to either return to their native country or migrate to another region of the United States. Additionally, in Mineral County, the owner of a lumber company that employed the majority of Latinos in this county was arrested for a drug trafficking charge. Soon after this event, he sold the company. The new owners gave the Latino employees six weeks to present them with formal documentation of permits
allowing them to work in the United States or else they would lose their jobs, according to a priest who worked closely with this population. Soon after this request, many Latinos quit working for the company and left the area. Then on Easter weekend of 2009, another raid occurred in this area, this time looking for undocumented workers. Several people were deported as a result of this raid, according to the priest that was in close contact with area Latinos. The priest also reports that as a result of the fear many Latinos in this area developed due to the raids, many people decided to leave the area as they no longer felt safe. Those that remained kept themselves hidden and stopped interacting with local institutions, lessening the pressure on them to respond to this population. Considering these recent events it is necessary to understand the context of the Latino population and how these incidents impact the responses of institutions in this area.
Figure 2. This map shows the location of key institutions in Allegany and Mineral counties. Labeled on this map are the Potomac Valley Hospital, Western Maryland Regional Medical Center and Rocky Gap State Park. (Source Data: ESRI, Map by author, 2010)
5.1 Hospitals

Hospitals are one of the main institutions that commonly interact with immigrant populations. There are two main hospitals located in the study area. One large, non-profit hospital, the Western Maryland Regional Medical Center in Cumberland, MD serves both Allegany, Mineral and other surrounding counties in West Virginia, and southern Pennsylvania. The Potomac Valley Hospital is a small, private, for profit hospital located in Keyser, WV. Both hospitals report some interaction with Latino populations, have materials such as pamphlets to assist Spanish-speaking people who may enter the hospital and provide translators if needed.

_Potomac Valley Hospital_

The Potomac Valley Hospital is a small, for profit hospital, owned by a private corporation serving customers mainly living within Mineral County, WV, according to the hospital social worker. Occasionally people from surrounding counties will come to this hospital for treatment, but most often only people from the immediate surrounding area use the services of this hospital. Overall, most of the people who seek treatment are from the native population, not Latino persons or members of any other non-native population. The hospital’s social worker explained that while the area does not report a large amount of seasonal migrant workers, there are some companies in the area that specifically hire Mexican workers. Thus the greatest interaction between Latino persons and the hospital comes from work-related injuries often due to their work in local lumber mills, according to the hospital’s social worker. Most often people seeking treatment
visit the hospital’s Emergency Room. The hospital does not report an increase in the number of Latino patrons visiting the hospital in the past few years. However, in the past few years there has been “a stable amount” of Latinos visiting the hospital according to the hospital’s social worker. Although the hospital could not formally estimate the number of Hispanic persons who had received treatment in the past decade or few years in the hospital, they do not believe it has been a high number of people.

The hospital’s social worker reports that they strive to meet the needs of any non-native person who seeks treatment at the hospital. The first step for the hospital in treating a non-native person is to determine if the person speaks English, or if they have a person with them who can translate for them during their treatment. According to the social worker, they are a joint commission accredited hospital, meaning they have to be able to prove that they can provide whatever is needed for any patient who enters the hospital or Emergency Room. The social worker reports that the hospital does have a large amount of education materials and pamphlets in Spanish available to anyone who enters the hospital and needs such materials. Although the social worker reports that none of the nurses or doctors at the facility speaks Spanish, the hospital has a list of community members, including Spanish professors at the local university, who they are able to call upon should they need a translator for a patient. According to both the hospital’s social worker and translators, currently this is an informal arrangement, as there is not a large or frequent demand for translation services at the hospital. Potomac Valley Hospital’s social worker contends that if there were more of a demand for
translators, the hospital would work to meet that need yet they have not noticed such need at the present time.

Additionally the social worker cites immigrants fear of interacting with formal institutions, possibly because some immigrants may be in the area illegally as the main reason that the hospital has a small number of Hispanic patrons. To visit the hospital a person does not have to show proof of legal status in the United States. However, the hospital’s social worker believes that fear originates because each person is asked for their social security number when entering the hospital as a patient. In the past two or three years, the hospital has obtained more Spanish language materials such as pamphlets and videos, but otherwise they have not needed to take any other steps to meet the needs of this population. If a particular need is not being met by the hospital, they can generally refer them to the state health care providers, which follows the same protocol they would for any other hospital patron. In the future, the social worker reports that the hospital plans on adapting to whatever changes or demands are presented to them by the Hispanic population or any other non-native population.

Western Maryland Regional Medical Center

The Western Maryland Regional Medical Center (WMRMC) is a hospital in Cumberland, Maryland which opened on November 21, 2009, and is the primary hospital for the tri-state area including western Maryland, and parts of southern Pennsylvania and northern West Virginia. The WMRMC is located along Interstate 68 in the eastern portion of Allegany County and is the trauma center for any car accidents that happen
along this road, which is often traveled by people heading to destinations further west and those traveling towards the Baltimore/Washington Metro area, according to the director of social work at WMRMC. The hospital is open to the public, and the most frequent contact with Latinos is through the Emergency Room. Most commonly, Latinos come to the hospital because they have been injured while working for a local firm. The hospital’s director of social work estimated that during the past few years, the majority of Latino persons using the hospital have been male and employed by companies in the area or have been involved in a traffic accident, almost always involving some sort of trauma. Most often those seeking treatment are employees of local lumber or construction companies. In addition, there have also been several people traveling through the area that the hospital has assisted in finding appropriate community resources and local homeless shelters. The hospital’s director of social work reports a growth in this population due to Latinos working in the local community and people traveling through the area.

According to the director of social work, the hospital is usually unable to predict the arrival of Latino patients receiving treatment, which presents some challenges and unique situations for the hospital. While the director of social work cites many Latino men as working within the area, often they are not originally from the local area and may not have a home in the area served by the hospital. The hospital has treated several patients involved in car accidents who lived in Hagerstown or Frederick, Maryland or in West Virginia and arrangements must be made to transport the person back to their current residence. The hospital’s director of social work also stated that Latino persons
often “are concerned when they come to us that they don’t have a green card or work visa and they are concerned about whether we will report them. Often their employers have the same concerns” according to the hospital social worker. In cases where the patient has family in other countries that they wish to have contacted, the hospital would figure out a way to contact appropriate people and pass appropriate information along. The hospital’s director of social work maintains that “we are here to give them medical care and make sure they get discharged and help them with community resources and get them what they need.”

In meeting the needs of the Latino patients, they need to have interpreters in most instances. According to the director of social work at the WMRMC, often Hispanic patients do have some knowledge of English, but the hospital provides a translator in order to ensure that the patient understands consent forms, side effects or any other risks associated with their treatment. The hospital has several doctors and nurses who are able to serve as Spanish-English translators for patients. The hospital also has a list of community members, mostly local professionals such as Spanish professors at the local university to call if they have a need for translation services, according to the hospital’s director of social work. The primary source of translators is usually a doctor or nurse on duty, the secondary source is Spanish speaking professionals in the community, then if necessary the hospital also has access to a professional translation service they can hire if they have a need. In case of emergency, the hospital is also able to do teleconferencing or translation by phone. Translators are used in many instances ranging from trauma patients being treated in the Emergency Room to women needing them as they give birth.
The Western Maryland Regional Medical Center uses their own on duty, bilingual professional staff, professionals within the community, and a professional interpretation service in order to communicate with Latino patients who enter the hospital and are unable to communicate with hospital staff in English, according to the director of social work.

Overall, the hospital’s director of social work reports an increase in Latino patients entering the hospital in the past few years. Although no formal data are available to account for the number of Latino persons visiting the WMRMC, the director of social work estimates that no more than a half-dozen Latino persons a month seek treatment at this facility. Although this is not a numerically large number, “it is certainly more than it was two years ago” according to the hospital’s social worker. The hospitals currently have a fairly informal response to the new Latino population, due to the numerically small population at this time. In the future, the hospital’s director of social work anticipates a more formalized multi-agency approach to help this population become more integrated into the area. The hospital will also continue to evolve their programs and the services they provide to meet the need of the Latino population within this region of Appalachia, according to the director of social work at the hospital.

5.2 School Systems

Mineral County Public School System

Although I was unable to speak with a representative of the Mineral County School System despite repeated efforts to contact school board officials, I was able to
speak with an elementary school teacher working for the Mineral County Public School System. According to the teacher, who is directly involved in reading programs and lessons, there is no specific organized ESL program within the county school system. To identify a student with special learning needs, such as a special education student or someone who needs ESL classes, Mineral County schools use a program called Response to Intervention or RTI to quickly identify specific students and their needs. According to the program’s website it “provides early, effective help, identifying students who have a difficult time learning within US schools.” The program measures and analyzes the ability of the students while also considering their achievements usually in the form of their grades, to assess their effectiveness of learning in the classroom. Therefore, using these strategies to identify students who may need extra help in the classroom, teachers are able to deal with a student identified as needing ESL classes on a case by case basis in the classroom.

While the Mineral County Public School System does not have an organized ESL program, teachers do have access to resources that contain ESL lessons in addition to English, according to a teacher within the school system. Mineral County primarily uses the Pearson Scott Foresman series of books to teach reading, which contains an ESL lesson along with each day’s regular assignment. Therefore, the teacher would be provided with an ESL lesson to complete with a student who has been identified as an ELL (English Language Learner). Furthermore, the Scott Foresman series encourages each student to learn at their own pace, which would also allow the ELL to work at their own pace in learning English. The RTI program helps to assess the “student’s knowledge
and skills in their first language and then understanding their performance in their second language (English)” (www.rtinetwork.org). Therefore, if the student shows high literacy skills in their first language, the teacher is aware that the student has demonstrated the capacity to work towards English literacy. Although the Mineral County Public School System does not appear to have a formal, organized ESL program, teachers do have several resources and assessment tools to determine if a student is an ELL and can then work with the student on a one-on-one basis to help them attain English proficiency, according to a teacher currently employed by the school system.

Allegany County Public School System

The initial contact with a potential student in the ELL (English Language Learner) Program occurs when the student enters the Allegany County Public School (ACPS) System and registers as a non-native English speaker, as reported by the Director of Special Programs for ACPS who runs this program. The Director of Special Programs is notified of the student’s current English capabilities. The ELL program was formerly the ESL (English as a Second Language) program, but was renamed by the Maryland State Board of Education. The next step in entering the ELL program is for the student to undergo a diagnostic test to determine their English level/proficiency. The levels of the ELL program are: low beginner, high beginner, low intermediate, high intermediate, advanced and independent. These classifications allow the program to determine the amount of support given to the student. These services are free of charge to any student enrolled in the ACPS system, according to the Director of Special Programs.
In Allegany County for the 2009-2010 school year there are 29 students enrolled in the ELL program. The program has expanded a great deal in the past 10 years. As of 10 years ago, there were only six students enrolled in the ELL program. Of the 29 students, 18 are native Spanish speakers, 7 are native Mandarin Chinese speakers, and one native speaker of the following languages: Korean, Romanian, Russian and Gujarati.

During the 2008-2009 school year, there were 26 students, showing an increase of three students in the past two years. According to the Director of Special Programs, as the ELL program in the ACPS system increases, Spanish-speaking children remain the majority of students in the program.

The program operates by sending a tutor to the school where the student meets with them individually to work toward proficiency. All of the tutors have teaching credentials, and most are retired language arts teachers. The tutors work individually, with the students in their regular classrooms. The tutors join the students in class as they work on their regular class work, to help the students keep up in their classes, while also pulling them aside to work on their English skills at various times during the week. The students and tutors are provided with extra materials to help with the students English lessons, and still follow county and state curriculums. This method has been chosen in this county instead of pulling students out of class and into clusters to work on their English skills. According to the Director of Special Programs, this allows students more time in their regular classes and more individual attention on their English work with their tutors. Students stay in the program until they have remained at the advanced level for two years and have good MSA scores. The students are monitored for those two
years to ensure that they maintain advanced English proficiency and no longer need tutoring.

Students progress is evaluated each year during the month of April when all students in the ELL program are given a diagnostic test to determine their progress and their placement level for the next school year. By state of Maryland law, the non-native English speaking students must be given the diagnostic test the month that they enter the school system; if they are transfer students the test must be given within two weeks of the student’s arrival in the ACPS system. In addition, the ACPS makes it a point to encourage students to speak their native language. As long as they are learning English and can understand what they are learning in their classes, the school system encourages them to be bilingual, according to the Director of Special Programs.

In general, the administrators of the ELL program do not have contact with the parents of their students, unless the parent contacts the program office directly with a concern. There is no specific program for Hispanic parents or the parents of any other group of children. When considering students practicing their English skills, most students are still speaking Spanish in their homes, likely because many members of their families do not speak English. In other Maryland counties, the school systems have services like Spanish-speaking psychologists to help students with any problems they have, but to the knowledge of people within the ELL program in Allegany County, there has not been a need for such a program here. All of the major documents provided to students in the public school system are made available to parents in their native language, if they request them. In other counties within Maryland school systems
provide copies and materials without having to have them requested by parents, mostly because the population of students in the program is much larger, according to the Director of Special Programs. In these counties, they have more funding to support the larger scale of the English Language Learner (ELL) program.

Maryland measures the progress of ELL students using various standards to ensure that the students are meeting the state’s goals.

The two most prominent standards are as follows:

- Student’s scores on their end of the year exams must be 15 or more points higher than their previous year’s scores. For the county to meet the requirement set by the state, 57% of their students must meet this. Last year 62.5% met this standard.

- The county must also ensure that 15% of students exceed the minimum score for each grade. This past year they had 23% score above the minimum score.

According to the Director of Special Programs for the ACPS system, who oversees the ELL program, they are very pleased with the test results of students. Students met both of the main standards for the Department of Education’s program during the 2008-2009 school year. In particular, the Director of Special Programs is pleased that the use of tutors allows students to stay in their regular courses and cites this as a major component of meeting the state mandated standards for this program. In general, the ACPS system is pleased with the results of the growing ELL program and plans to continue to use it to help non-native English speaking students achieve English proficiency.
5.3 Local Governments

Currently, according to representatives of the two city governments, there is little formal government response to this population. Also, there was no interaction reported between the cities of Keyser and Frostburg and the Latino populations residing in each city. However, due to the limited interaction and the lack of Hispanic persons requesting help from local governments, the cities report that they believe they are meeting the needs of Hispanic persons in the city to the best of their ability.

**Keyser, West Virginia**

According to the Office of the City Clerk of Keyser the city does not interact with the Latino population in the city. A representative of the city clerk’s office reports that there are only a few Latino families living in the vicinity of Keyser. The city’s main concerns are that people abide by the local and federal laws, obey city ordinances and pay taxes and water and sewer fees. In regards to the Latino population, the representative states that the city does not report any problems with Latino persons obeying any of these laws, or paying the city of Keyser. A spokesperson for the City Clerk stated that the Latino population “interacts with the companies they work for”, adding that “they are not really seen in the community”. Due to their limited interaction with Latino persons, city officials contend there is much they do not know about the population, according to a representative of the city clerk’s office. There are also no ordinances that have been passed in the city that directly impact or came as a result of an increase in Latino persons living in the city. In addition, the city clerk’s representative reports that no Latino
persons have ever come before the city council regarding their experiences within the city. Although a spokesperson for the office of the City Clerk reports an increase in the Latino population, they have little direct interaction with the population, yet do believe that their needs are being met by the city from their perspective.

_Frostburg, Maryland_

According to the Commissioner of Public Works for Frostburg, there is some informal interaction between the city and non-native populations in the city. However, no formal board or committee exists to meet the needs of the Latino population. There has been a definite recognition in the increased diversity of the city resulting from several new businesses owned by Asian and Latino people. In addition, Frostburg State University is located within the city and has experienced a growth in minority and international students in the past few years. Specifically, within the city of Frostburg, there “has not been any major conversation” about the growth of Latino populations at city council meetings, according to the city’s Commissioner of Public Works. At city council meetings, conversations about businesses obtaining state projects and needing to meet a minimum percentage of minorities to earn these jobs have been mentioned, but that is the extent of conversations about minorities at these meetings, according to the Commissioner of Public Works.

The City Council of Frostburg did have conversations on the topic of diversity in 2007 when the Commissioner of Public Works proposed a program that the national league of cities was promoting, called “Inclusive Community.” The most obvious way
the inclusive community program impacts the city is to have businesses put a sign above their doors which reads “welcome, we are an inclusive community”, according to the Commissioner of Public Works. This project was suggested by the Commissioner of Public Works during a work session, and it was voted on at the next City Council meeting. The measure did not pass at the meeting, and the issue received some negative publicity in the local newspaper. The main negative argument was that by implementing this program, the city was on “some levels saying that we are not [presently] welcoming to a diverse population.” There were members of the public who spoke during the meeting, one of whom referred to “illegal aliens” entering the area in a negative manner, according to the Commissioner of Public Works who was on the commission at the meeting. Several members of the commission, including the Mayor, stated that they believed the city already was inclusive and for that reason it was unnecessary to post signs, according to the Commissioner of Public Works.

Although the Inclusive Community program was not adopted by the City Council, a community member remained dedicated to implementing the program. To gain a better understanding of how community members viewed the city and it residents, the community member held two round table discussions which were open to the public. One was held on Frostburg State University’s campus and the other was at City Place, a community meeting space. As a result of these conversations, many good ideas were generated and a group of people were active in implementing some sort of inclusive community program, embracing diversity within the city of Frostburg, as reported by the city’s Commissioner of Public Works.
5.4 Law Enforcement

While I was unable to speak with a member of the law enforcement agencies in Mineral or Allegany counties, an article in the *Cumberland Times News*, titled “Spanish Spoken Here” by Michael Sawyers on February 18, 2009 cited information on the interaction between this institution and the local Latino population. According to the article, there is only one State Policeman working in western Maryland, Sergeant Anthony Rumgay who speaks Spanish fluently. Therefore, he has been called to assist law enforcement personnel all over western Maryland, from Westernport to Frederick. According to Rumgay, the majority of his interactions with the Latino population are when he is called by another law enforcement agency such as the Circuit Court or Department of Juvenile Services to translate for a Spanish speaker. Outside of translating for other law enforcement agencies, he often assists with traffic stops such as moving violations and instances of driving under the influence. He has also assisted with instances of domestic violence or assault although they are less numerous. Rumgay also points out that there are only a few State Police officers in the state who speak Spanish fluently. The Cumberland Police Captain was also quoted in the newspaper article saying that although there is not an emphasis on hiring Spanish speaking officers or training officers in Spanish, it would certainly be beneficial for those training to be officers to have some knowledge of the Spanish language. Although the response of law enforcement agencies in this region to new Latino populations has been limited, bilingual State Police Officer Anthony Rumgay has been working to help both the Latino population and other law enforcement agencies overcome this challenge.
The winter and spring of 2009, was a turning point for the Latino community in this region as a result of the actions taken by law enforcement officers. The owner of the furniture making company which employed the majority of Latinos was arrested for his involvement in illicit drug-related activities. During this incident the Latino employees were held at gun point in the factory. This caused some Latinos to experience a lot of fear, leading to the cancellation of Spanish language church services as the priests responded by meeting individually with the Latinos to conduct services. Soon after this incident, according to the Episcopalian priest, the company was sold and the new owner gave employees a few weeks to show legal documentation in order to keep their current jobs. Then, on Easter weekend in the spring of 2009, there was an immigration raid at their place of employment. At this point the majority of Latinos who were not deported left their jobs and the area. Most of these employees had been attending services in Keyser. In Westernport there are fewer than five Latinos remaining, yet unlike Keyser church services are still being held. Before this turning point, there were more than twenty Latinos attending church services weekly, now there are three men attending services in Westernport regularly. These incidents contributed to a great deal of fear within the Latino community, leading to their increased invisibility in the community.

As I will discuss later, law enforcement officers employed as park rangers at Rocky Gap State Park report their interactions as positive and have very little overall interactions with this population. According to one of the park rangers, “the reality is, if they were illegal immigrants I don't think they would be coming all the way out here to a state park filled with police to have their picnics.” The park rangers have been reaching
out to this population, to provide soccer balls and other materials they may need during their time at the park, not checking for proper identification as they relax at the park. The park rangers also are trying to learn Spanish in order to better communicate with this population during their time at the park.

5.5 Churches

In both counties religious institutions have been very involved and organized with their response to new Latino populations in this region. Each county has one church with a Spanish speaking priest that is actively responding to and working to meet the needs of Latinos. In Allegany County, a priest at the Episcopal Church located in Westernport has been reaching out to Latino populations, and in Mineral County a priest with the Catholic Church has been involved with Latino populations. Both priests are Spanish-speaking and conduct services in Spanish for the Latino community. In addition, to help Latino congregation members adjust to the United States, each church provides English lessons for non-native English speaking people at the churches. To work towards incorporating the native and non-native English speaking congregations into one unit, both churches have held regular bilingual services. Although the churches are of different denominations and located within different states, the priests have worked together on a few occasions, such as a funeral they conducted together to serve the entire Latino population.

When considering the role of religious institutions in these two counties, there are several items which need to be addressed to allow for a clear understanding of the context
of the interaction between churches and Latinos in this area. For the most part, the
Latinos attending these two churches were young men. During my interactions with this
population I only met one woman and one child. This population is primarily from El
Salvador and Mexico. They are working in the lumber processing and furniture making
industries in this area.

Catholic Church – Mineral County, WV

The primary interaction with Latinos in West Virginia was through a priest for the
Archdiocese of Baltimore, Ty Hullinger. He had been told that in previous years the
Catholic Church had tried to interact with the Latino population in Cumberland and had
even had a Spanish speaking priest for a while, but this had ended well before he came to
the area. The primary interaction began in 2006, after Hullinger had been working as a
priest in Allegany County for about six months. He stated that most of the priests
working in this region had not taken Spanish in seminary, so they were not able to
effectively communicate with the Latino population. However, Father Ty did take
Spanish classes during his time in seminary and although he is not fluent, by the time he
was stationed in Allegany County he had enough knowledge to communicate with
Spanish speaking populations within the church. He also stated “I had worked with
immigrant communities in other parishes and I just had the desire to want to reach out.
Maybe it was just the right time.”

Father Ty reported that St. Peter’s in Westernport was the parish church where he
first noticed Hispanic immigrants coming to services and mass. During Holy Week in
2006, Father Ty noticed four Latino men in attendance at the services, one of whom was reading a prayer that only religious leaders pray. It was at this time that Father Ty met an immigrant named Juan, who became his main contact with the Latino community. Juan attended church often and had been in the seminary in Mexico before immigrating to the United States. As Juan and the other men continued to attend the church services, Father Ty learned that they were living and working in Keyser and Piedmont, West Virginia. Knowing that he was the only person in the Catholic Church who could speak Spanish, Father Ty began to hold services in Spanish at least once a month, sometimes weekly at St. Peter’s Church in Westernport for the Latino population. It also was a safe place for Latino immigrants to learn conversational English as well, according to Father Ty. In addition, Father Ty did two baptisms for Latino families in the area. For each of the baptisms, approximately fifty or sixty people, almost all Latino, attended the services. From this point on, the services in Spanish began to gain popularity and many more people began to attend functions held at the church.

However, as previously noted, in September of 2008, the company that most of the Latino population was working for in West Virginia was investigated for illicit drugs. As a part of the process, the warehouse they worked in was searched and the workers were forced to stand in the middle of the room at gunpoint while the business was searched. As a result of this incident, the Latino population became fearful of the area and stopped attending church services. At this time, Father Ty began to hold Spanish mass in the warehouse where the men worked to better accommodate them due to their new fear of the community. According to Father Ty, he “remembers at that point, I got a
sense that the community was afraid of being in public.” Usually at the services held at
the warehouse, Father Ty still managed to have at least 25 or 30 people come to the mass.
Personally, Father Ty took this opportunity to try to “be a welcoming presence and
reassure the community that I am here if they need me.” Overall, to the Latino
community in Mineral County Father Ty provided sacraments and mass, confession,
baptisms of a few children and helped with a funeral.

In early 2008, Father Ty was reassigned to St. Mary’s Catholic Church in
Cumberland, in the eastern portion of the county. However, as Father Ty continued to
hold services at the West Virginia warehouse, he realized he was “a priest crossing a
border” since he was crossing into the archdiocese of Charleston, WV. He then got into
contact with the archdiocese offices in Charleston and learned that the Martinsburg, WV
viceroy had a Hispanic ministries committee, which really allowed Father Ty to
understand the continuing growth of Latino populations in rural areas. The priest in
Martinsburg was busy working with a stable Latino population in that area, so Father Ty
was able to continue working in Mineral County. As time passed and the Latino
population became less fearful, the services moved into the Catholic Church in Keyser.
Once the services began at that church, another small population of Guatemalans working
on the other side of the county began to attend services as well. This proved that not only
was the Latino population in Mineral County growing, but it was also not monolithic, as
many different nationalities are represented in the numerically small population.
However, in the past couple of years the Latino population has disbanded and very few
people continued coming to the services. Currently there are no Spanish services occurring at the Catholic Churches in this County.

At the official level, Father Ty stated that the church has been very open to his work with local non-native populations. Although most of his superiors and the majority of the other priests he worked with do not speak Spanish, they were supportive and encouraging of his work. He has also joined the Archdiocese Immigration Coalition, as the lone member from Western Maryland. According to Father Ty, the group is “trying to raise awareness and raise consciousness in the parishes and in the parish communities of immigration issues and what the church teaches about immigration.” The other objective of the coalition is to be advocates of immigration and immigrants rights. Churches also held clothes drives, especially for warm winter clothing and allowed the Latino population to take as much clothing as they needed, and told them to tell their friends to also come and help themselves. At the parish level, Father Ty did encounter some problems as he often spoke about immigration during his services and many people view this topic as highly political. Some people have not reacted positively to these messages, and Father Ty has gotten some criticism based on these services. He also states that “one thing I have learned in these three years is that racism is a part of this.”

According to Father Ty, if the Latino population in the area does grow and there once again is a need for Spanish language services, he would love to resume his program. He mainly cites the combination of a numerically small Latino population and the rural geography of Mineral County as the main reasons it can be difficult for the Catholic Church to organize and serve the Latino population in this area.
In Allegany County at St. James Episcopal Church in Westernport, Tom Hudson, the rector of the church speaks Spanish and is able to hold services in Spanish to accommodate the Latino population that has begun to attend the church. For the Latino population, he performs priestly duties such as celebrating the Eucharist, holding confessions, baptisms, marriages and funerals as well. At St. James, working with the Latino population began more than five years ago when at one of the English services a Hispanic man came and sat in the back row. The former rector of the church had tried to greet him, but since the man did not seem to speak any English, Hudson helped translate for the two men after the church services. The man told them that he had simply heard the church bells on Sunday morning and followed them, knowing he would end up at a church. At this time, the church invited him to come back, and he continued to attend the service each week, often bringing other Spanish speaking friends with him as well. In the beginning to accommodate the Spanish speaking population in the church, Hudson would translate the bulletin into Spanish to help them follow along with the English service. However, he soon learned that the group did not have any English skills at all, so he found a PDF of the prayer books in Spanish and printed them out for the Spanish speaking population to follow along. After several months, the group grew to eight to ten people, and Hudson decided to try a separate Spanish language service for them.

St. James Church began to hold a 9:30AM Spanish service between their 8:30AM and 11AM English services to better accommodate the Spanish speaking population of the church. In addition, one of the parishioners at the church donated enough money for
the church to purchase twenty-five of the prayer books in Spanish. Yet one of the problems that the church did not foresee was that the majority of the Spanish speaking people attending their services could not read Spanish, and thus were unable to actually use the prayer books. So Hudson makes his own bulletin and prayer book for the Spanish service each week, putting the parts that they should say in bold print to make it easy to follow along. However, Hudson then took books one step further and put text in Spanish on one side and English on the other both in case an English speaking person came to the service, but also in hopes that it would begin to help some of the non-English speaking congregation learn English. In addition, the other churches in the archdiocese of Maryland have begun to use the booklets he has created to work with their Spanish speaking populations as well.

A goal of Hudson’s since he began to work with the Spanish speaking population at St. James has been to make sure that regardless of the language barrier, the congregation is one unified congregation, not two divided by language. Therefore, the church has held many bilingual services, trying to not only help the Spanish population learn English, but also to help the English speaking group learn some phrases in Spanish. In addition, some events like a baptism have been bilingual, and on holidays such as Easter and Christmas, the services are bilingual and held at one time for the entire congregation. Furthermore, the congregation really enjoys when the Latino men sing in Spanish, so the church makes sure to incorporate that into services often. While a few elderly people have expressed discontent over the bilingual nature of the church, asking “why the Spanish speaking people cannot just learn English,” overall the majority of the
congregation and the governing board of the church have been very in favor of the way the church is operating.

As the Latino population attending the church continued to grow, the church also began to hold English classes for the Spanish speaking population. The lessons were funded through a program the diocese of Maryland has where a parish can apply for a grant to fund a specific project. Therefore, for two years, Hudson was able to fund a salary and mileage reimbursement for an English teacher to come to the parish for ten weeks in the fall and ten weeks in the spring to teach formal ESL classes. However, the problem of the Latino population being unable to read Spanish was evident again as the books they had purchased for the class were not usable as the group could not read the Spanish or the English. Therefore, the class stopped using the textbooks and instead focused on practical and social English, learning how to greet people, thank people and learning how to talk to people about sending remittances.

During this time, the Church also had a Honduran priest working and living at the church, which really helped the development of the Latino congregation at St. James. Since he lived at the church, people were able to come to the church during the week to meet with him, and spend time with him. He also helped with the development of the Spanish language services during his time at the church. Often after church the congregation would have lunch cooked by some of the women in the group and they would socialize in the rectory for a few hours after the service. In addition, one of the congregations in Baltimore sent a 50lb bag of rice to the church for the Hispanic population to use when cooking their meals after Sunday service. This really allowed the
group to socialize after their services on Sundays, through having their meals at the rectory when the Honduran priest was living there. However, the priest had to return to Honduras due to his visa ending, and due to unrest in Honduras he was unable to return to the church, much to his and St. James’ dismay.

Just as the congregation was growing, in September 2008 the aforementioned drug raid occurred. Although many of the workers at the company were attending the Catholic Church services, not the Episcopal Church services, the entire Latino population of the area was fearful to leave their homes, even to go to church at this point. Therefore, Spanish services at the church stopped, and Hudson began to go to the homes of Latinos, and church services were conducted in their homes for a period of about two months. However, after two months, the immigrants began to be more comfortable in the community and began to attend church again. Then, in April 2009 there was an actual immigration raid. It was unclear if the state police had noticed the large number of immigrants working for the company during the drug raid and had come back, or if it was independent of that situation. As a result of that raid, at least three people were arrested and deported, really scaring the Latino population of the area again. In addition, as the economy worsened, the majority of the group lost their jobs. However, the owner who took over the company did state that if the workers had legal papers, they would be hired back. Yet many people did not have papers, or did not want to stay in the area and moved to other places in the United States and also returned to Latin America. Currently, St. James continues to hold a Spanish language service for the few Latinos that are still living in the area. Although the English lessons are no longer happening, the church
hopes that they will be able to continue to the program once the population grows again in the future. Hudson does wish to continue the services and hopes that as the economy recovers, more jobs will attract Latino immigrants back into the area.

Although the Spanish speaking population at St. James Episcopal Church in Westernport has decreased dramatically in the past year, Tom Hudson continues to conduct services in Spanish and hopes that the Latino population will begin to grow again in the near future. If the population does return to its previous size, the church would really like to reinstate the English lessons and would also like to have another priest to live in the church rectory full time, in order to make the church more of a meeting place and a place for socialization for the Latino community.

5.6 Community Non-Profit Organizations

*Exploring ESL*

While several community non-profit organizations have been working in conjunction with other institutions in both counties, the Exploring ESL group stands out as an organization geared toward non-native populations in this area. The Exploring ESL group began to meet informally during the spring of 2009 as a group of mainly Frostburg State University professors in the English and Spanish departments. A few community members have also begun to attend. I attended an August 2009 meeting with several English and Spanish department professors, two community members who had personal connections to immigrant populations in the county, a student in Frostburg State
The primary purpose of this group is to respond to the need that the participants have noticed as a result of the increase of non-English speaking people within the region. Although this group has noticed a need for services, especially English language lessons, they do not know of any formal groups which are providing these services or responding to the needs, thus they have formed this group, according to the group’s leader. One of the main difficulties they have encountered has been putting their plans into place and formalizing a conversation group or other services for this population. Since the group is newly formed they are finding it hard to mobilize people for their cause and spread the word among the native and immigrant populations, according to the group’s leader.

The Exploring ESL group does have several objectives which they hope to meet, according to the group’s leader. First, they would like to find information on who specifically needs instruction or would like to learn conversational English for the workplace. In addition they would like to figure out how to begin a program at the basic level which could be expanded eventually and could branch out to serve more non-English speakers and include more volunteers at a later time. Lastly, according to the group’s leader, Exploring ESL has realized the importance of figuring out what needs to be done within the community and within their group to make their program work and become a constant program for non-native English speakers within the community. According to the leader of the organization, they have clearly defined objectives which they hope to meet as their group develops in the near future.
According to the leader of Exploring ESL, the group raised awareness for their “cause” through a newspaper article which ran in the *Cumberland Times News* on May 21, 2009, written by Kristin Hardy titled “Need for English Practice Explored.” At their meeting in August they also discussed asking her to write another article in order to encourage English speaking community members to volunteer to help with the event and join the group, in addition to locating non-English speakers who would benefit from the group’s efforts.

In the future the group would like to have a program in conjunction with Frostburg State University and Allegany College of Maryland. Their goal is to have a formal program which would help any non-native English speaker in the area to be able to better communicate in English. As of late 2009, the group’s leader feels it is not ready to have a more formal group. The group leader cites several problems as to why their organization has not yet become more formalized. Their main problem is the need for official teachers so that their program can include formal teaching instead of only being conversation based. In addition they would need to have financial support to hold formal meetings and classes, as well as materials to provide to the students. They have some resources to use during informal English conversation groups, but not enough to provide for an entire group of students for a long period of time, according to the leader of the organization. Although the Exploring ESL group is working to meet the need for English lessons in this county, which they perceive as a need of local immigrants they have encountered within the community, starting a formal program has proven to be a challenge, according to the organization’s leader.
5.7 Recreation Areas

Rocky Gap State Park

An institution which was not evident in the literature on the community or institutional responses to new Latino populations is state parks or recreation areas. However this proved to be an institution in this area which regularly interacts and responds to Latino populations. Rocky Gap is a Maryland State Park, located in eastern Allegany County. During summer weekends, the park has begun to see an increase in the number of Latinos using the park. Currently, according to one of the park rangers there are very few “Caucasian” people utilizing the park during the summer. The park ranger estimated that approximately 2,000 to 2,500 Latino persons visit the park each Saturday and Sunday during the summer. From the conversations people working at the park have had with the Latino visitors, the majority are from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. They are coming to the park from the metropolitan areas of Maryland, such as Baltimore or suburban Washington D.C., approximately a two and a half hour drive to western Maryland. They are leaving their homes early in the morning and driving to the park, and then leaving the park at dusk and returning to their homes. Interestingly, the park ranger does not report that any of the Latinos using the park are local Latinos, although they state that because the Latino population in Allegany County is small they could be using the park unnoticed. The park ranger does point out that increased Latino populations at state parks is a trend happening at all Maryland parks currently. However, to date Rocky Gap is the western most park to experience Latino visitation, according to this park ranger.
As of ten years ago, the park ranger reports that there were virtually no Latino visitors in Rocky Gap State Park. Approximately five years ago several hundred Latino visitors began to spend each weekend day at the park. This past year, the park ranger estimates that 95% of the park’s visitors on any summer Saturday or Sunday are Latino. In addition to the increased use of the park by Latino visitors, the ranger has noticed a simultaneous decrease in local people using the park during the summer. While the ranger has heard from several local people that the rise in Latino visitors has caused their decreased use of the park, he does not attribute the decreased use of the park by local people entirely to the increase in Latino park visitors. The park ranger states that negative views of Latino use of the park often center around those opposed to immigration that consider this population to be “illegal.” However, according to the park ranger most of the visitors are families with young children, “and the reality is, if they were illegal immigrants I don’t think they would be coming all the way out here to a state park filled with police to have their picnics.”

Due to the increase in Latino visitors, park personnel have had to make some changes to better accommodate this population. The park rangers have translated some documents into Spanish. In addition, many signs have been translated into Spanish. For example, signs for the restrooms, changing facilities and snack bar now appear in Spanish and English. The park personnel have also placed signs in the bathrooms in Spanish telling visitors to flush toilet paper, not place it next to the toilet in the trash, which is common in Latin America. Additionally, park rangers have repeatedly tried to teach their staff members to speak Spanish, in an attempt to better communicate with the majority of
park visitors, but this has not been very successful. The primary reason this has proved
difficult is the staff’s lack of fluency. The park ranger contends that they are always
looking for people who are fluent in Spanish to work for the park. The park also has an
internship program with the Spanish Department at Frostburg State University which
provides Spanish speaking interns to increase their communication with the Latino
population. In addition, to assist the park employees in their interactions with this new
and culturally distinct population, the park held cultural training for the staff, organized
by the head of the Department of Foreign Languages at Frostburg State University. This
training taught park employees that “Hispanic people tend to gather in larger groups and
be loud. They like to have music and people around them” (“Spanish Spoken Here,”
2/18/09). It also taught employees basic Spanish phrases and helped them understand the
cultural importance of large family celebration and soccer games at the park each
weekend day (“Spanish Spoken Here,” 2/18/09). Although the limited time park
employees interact with Latino visitors has proved to be difficult for practicing Spanish,
the park service has made several attempts to gain a better understanding of the Latino
population attending the park and to encourage positive interaction between Latinos and
park employees.

The park ranger does not report any demands or requests made by the Latino
population of the park’s staff, but the staff has noticed some needs that they have worked
to meet for this population. Since the majority of the people visiting the park are families
with small children, increased recreation areas have been added. Specifically, more
facilities for soccer games have been added, since many large groups often participate in
soccer games during their day trips to the park. The park rangers also purchased soccer balls and orange cones for the groups to use during the day. The park staff scatters the balls and cones around the park fields and the materials are always returned at the end of each day, they have never had any recreation materials stolen. The park ranger also states that there are only about 18 rangers on duty each day, responsible for the 2,000-2,500 daytime users of the park and the 3,000 people using the campground, yet they have virtually no crime or disturbances in the park. He considers the Latino population “truly maintenance free,” says that they “don’t cause us any trouble” and that this past summer there were no fights, incidences of drinking or disturbances among any of the Latino park visitors.

Due to the lack of disturbances and the relaxed atmosphere of the Latino population using the park, the park rangers often have little interaction with this population. Since the Latino population rarely asks for anything from the park, and since most comply with the rules, there tends to be minimal interaction. However, when there is an interaction, it often is with a family member under the age of 30 who speaks very good English. They will speak on behalf of the entire family and will make arrangements, such as renting boats for the entire family. According to the park ranger “the only challenge we have had with interacting is sometimes the language barrier. We just assume that if you follow the generational lines, you will find someone who speaks English.”

Since the park is an inexpensive activity that an entire family can enjoy together for an entire day, the park ranger sees the trend of increasing Latino populations
increasing over the next few years. As a result of this, park personnel continue to evolve their programs and services to accommodate this population. All of the staff members at the park have received diversity training and are prepared to interact with the Latino population. According to the park ranger, “they are fantastic, we continue to welcome them here”.

5.8 Other Non-Native Populations

Throughout this research, several institutions cited other non-native populations utilizing their services as something they are focusing on as their services evolve. City of Frostburg representatives have noticed an increase in Asian owned businesses on Main Street, and in the city representative’s effort to communicate with the owner they found that they could not speak English. Therefore, several elected officials are considering the needs of other non-native populations and how they may need to hire translators to be able to communicate effectively with all business owners. According to hospital social workers, hospitals in the area also have translators of several different languages who they are able to employ if needed, as they have also seen an increase in non-English speaking people entering the hospital. In the Allegany County School System there has been an increase in overall students enrolled in the ELL program. The majority of them are native Spanish speakers, but the second highest percentage of students are native Mandarin Chinese speakers. There are also smaller percentages of other languages evident in the schools, demonstrating an overall increase in other non-native populations, according to the Director of Special Programs. Institutions in this area are focusing not
only noticing an increase in Latino population in this area, but also of other non-native populations.

5.9 Other Considerations for Latino populations

Within both counties, several institutions noted other needs non-native populations in this area may have, but are outside of the realm of services provided by many local institutions. Inadequate housing is an issue that several institutions cited as a concern, yet they considered assisting in searching for better housing beyond their ability. Although there are several Latino families living in this area, the majority are young, Latino men living in housing provided by their employers. In several cases, the men are living with several other people in a small building, on property owned by their employers. Most Latinos in this area do not have their own form of transportation, and due to their poor housing situation, often in a rural area they do not have a way to leave the small area where they live and work. There is limited public transportation in this area, but it is not clear if the Latino population utilizes this service. Inadequate housing and a lack of transportation are two issues several institutions cited as hindering Latinos interactions with native community members, and as partially responsible for their lack of interaction with local institutions.

5.10 Conclusion

While the Latino populations in Allegany and Mineral counties have experienced notable of growth in the past few years, many institutions are only just beginning to have
organized responses to this new diversity. Although Latino immigrants often have trouble receiving health care, the hospitals in the study area report that they are working with Latinos patients to provide what the hospitals consider adequate care. They do not require forms showing their legal status within the United States, they will provide an interpreter for the patient and they will make necessary arrangements for the patient after he or she is released from the hospital. Local non-profits such as the group Exploring ESL, have noticed a need for ESL classes and conversation groups in the area and are working to establish a group which can provide these services, according to the organization’s leader. To date, local governments have not had any documented interactions with the Latino populations of the area. The Commissioner of Public Works for the City of Frostburg reports that they are considering the growth of non-native populations and the needs that they may have within the city. As was consistent with the literature on community response to new Latino populations, the religious institutions have the most organized and direct responses to this population. The ACPS also proved to have an organized response to new non-native populations, working to have their English levels quickly assessed and having tutors work one on one with students to ensure that their English proficiency was improving each year. Although not as organized as the ACPS system, the Mineral County Public School system does work to ensure that the students needs are assessed, and teachers are provided with ESL assignments which allows them to work one on one with students. In both counties, the religious organizations, specifically two priests have the most developed interactions with the Latino populations and worked with them on religious and personal levels to ensure
that their needs were being met. When considering the institutional responses to Latinos in these counties, considering the recent immigration raids and decrease in Latino population is essential to the changing context of Latinos in this area. While the responses of institutions within Allegany and Mineral counties are certainly in the early stages, most institutions report that they are meeting the needs of these populations by working together sometimes across state lines and adjusting current programs to serve this new culturally distinct group.
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

6.1 Introduction

The responses of institutions in this area vary, yet most reported no need to respond to the Latino population, and are not reaching out to Latinos. The previous chapter explored the responses of institutions evident in the new destinations literature in Allegany and Mineral counties to new Latino populations. This chapter seeks to understand and explore these responses. Hospitals and the school systems have been responding in a reactive manner to new populations. They have not reached out to the Latino population, but representatives of these institutions report that they are taking steps to accommodate Latinos that receive services at their institutions. Representatives of Keyser and Frostburg both report a lack of outreach to Latino populations. The priests at a church in each county, on the other hand, are reaching out the Latino populations on a regular basis, providing religious services and also personal help such as translation services to this group. The Exploring ESL group is reaching out to Latino populations in the area, hoping to provide English lessons to them, according to the group’s leader. Additionally, the park rangers at Rocky Gap State Park are reaching out to the Latino populations using the park to provide them with soccer balls and fields, signs in Spanish and area attempting to learn Spanish to better accommodate this group, according to a ranger at the park.
6.2 Why Institutions Matter

Understanding the response of institutions in areas experiencing new Latino population growth is essential as many factors impact the nature of these responses. When considering events such as the raids by law enforcement agents in this area, they created volatility and led to people leaving the area. Yet this event prompted a response from the priests in this area as they reached out to this population, and made special arrangements to hold religious services. Additionally understanding the structure of the population is essential, a population of mainly young men without wives or children living in the area places much less pressures on local school systems since there are not any children. Furthermore, in this area, a threshold for possible responses seems to be in place for some institutions. Although the priests reach out to this population even if only one person is in need, this is not the case for all institutions. Each city representative spoke of the Latino population as though it was transient and did not yet warrant a response from city councils or representatives. The local hospitals and school systems are reacting to the populations but are not doing any type of outreach for this population. However, with a larger number of Latinos in the area and a more permanent settlement, city representatives, school systems and hospitals may begin to reach out to Latino populations.
6.3 Other Findings

*Other Non-Native Populations*

Latinos in new destinations must be understood as one component of increasing diversity that comes from many sources. In addition to Latinos, most institutions have noticed a growth in Asian population and increased populations of African American and International students at local universities. According to the Commissioner of Public Works for the City of Frostburg, although the city has not had any specific interactions with Latinos in the area, they have interacted with new Asian business owners. An increase in non-native populations within the local school system has also been reported by the Allegany County School Board. While the majority of the students enrolled in the ELL (English Language Learner) program are native Spanish speakers, there are several other nationalities represented in the schools. These two factors have led to the ELL program having its highest ever enrollment. Furthermore, the group Exploring ESL has several members who have been notified of a need for English classes by several workers at local Asian restaurants, in addition to the need they have noticed within the local Latino populations. Several local institutions have recognized not only the need to expand services to accommodate local Latino populations, but also needs of other non-native groups, specifically Asian populations in the area.

Institutions in this area report that they are seeing an increased need for translators, not only those speaking Spanish, but also translators of other languages in order to be able to effectively communicate with those they both serve and interact with on a regular basis. For instance, while a representative of the city of Frostburg welcomed
new Asian business owners that have recently opened stores on Main Street, due to the language barrier, they were unable to communicate with a representative of the city that came to their store, to welcome them to the city. As a result of this recent experience, the city representative has begun thinking about the need for translators of various languages. The Western Maryland Regional Medical Center’s director of social work also reported a need for translators of various languages to ensure that all of the patients entering the hospital understand their medical problems and plans for treatment. The hospital representative reports having employees that have knowledge of other languages and the hospital has a list of translators, both community members and employees of a professional translation service that they can contact if needed, for many different languages. As the overall population of non-native English speaking persons and increases in Mineral and Allegany Counties, institutions are noticing a new need for translation services of many different languages in order to accommodate these new population groups.

Institutions Working Together

Institutions in Allegany and Mineral Counties do not have fully developed responses to new Latino populations; therefore they cooperate with other local institutions to meet the needs of this population. Although mainly on an informal basis, there has been a multi-agency approach in providing support for these new populations. Institutions are encouraging Latino populations to utilize community resources such as public food banks or services for those who are homeless such as the Union Rescue
Mission, to insure that the person is able to meet their needs while living within local communities. Several institutions also report local community members volunteering to help Latino and other non-native populations with any needs that they may have that are beyond the scope of formal institutions such as clothing or food.

The Director of Social Work at the WMRMC supports the use of institutions and organizations already existing in the community as the main means of meeting the needs of the non-native populations that seek treatment at the hospital. Thus, the social work department of the hospital is able to refer the patients to the Union Rescue Mission, the areas non-profit that works with people who are experiencing homelessness, or need help locating a place to live. The hospital representative contends that the same arrangements or help with plans after a patient is released from the hospital is available to any patient, not only those that are non-native or non-English speaking. The hospital often cooperates with other institutions to meet the needs of patients once they are released from the hospital according to the director of social work who is often involved in these interactions.

In addition, several area institutions interact regularly with Frostburg State University (FSU). The majority of the translators used by the WMRMC are Spanish or ESL (English as a Second Language) professors at FSU. However, the hospital spokesperson does contend that this is an informal arrangement as the hospital uses a list of volunteer translators from the community when they need a translator for a patient. Although the group does not actually interact with Frostburg State University, Exploring ESL is comprised of many FSU employees including Spanish, English and ESL
professors. Several of whom serve as translators for the Western Maryland Regional Medical Center. Several times the Foreign Language Department at FSU has been contacted by other area institutions in regards to non-native English speaking populations. The department chair has been contacted by the local Head Start childcare program seeking a translator to be able to communicate with a child’s non-English speaking parents. The department also works with Rocky Gap, as the state park has developed an internship for a Spanish speaking student with knowledge of Latino culture, often an FSU Spanish major. FSU’s Foreign Language department and several employees are cooperating with other area institutions in an attempt to meet the needs of the area’s non-native populations.

In their response to Latino populations in this area, the churches have worked with several religious charities to help the Latino population become integrated and more comfortable in their host community. In addition, the Catholic Church has an Archdiocese Immigration Coalition through the Archdiocese of Baltimore which allows Catholic Priests within this region to come together and talk about issues dealing with immigration within the church. The Episcopalian Church was able to apply for a grant from the diocese of Baltimore to hire a formal ESL teacher to hold ESL classes for the Latino population attending the church for 10 weeks in the fall and spring for the past two years. To help the new Latino populations in this area learn English and be better integrated into the community, the two church groups in this area have been reaching out to other religious charities, organizations and each other to help provide resources for these populations.
Two priests, one at a Catholic Church in Keyser and one in an Episcopal Church in Westernport have worked together for the benefit of the Latino population in this area. Although formally the two Priests working at separate churches have coordinated a few events before, most notably the funeral of a man from Mexico that was killed in a car accident. The Priests held a joint funeral in order to serve the entire Latino population in the area, as many were split between the two churches and this tragic event brought the entire population together. Furthermore, the two Priests do communicate about their interactions and the programs they use with the Latino population, regardless of their separate denominations in order to ensure that the needs of the entire population are being met to the best of their ability. The two Priests are also very aware of what the other is doing at their church in regards to this population, yet there is no competition, only conversations comparing both churches’ interactions with non-native populations, according to conversations with each priest.

*Invisibility of the Latino Population*

This thesis argued that much of the Latino population has remained invisible in these two counties. This research suggests that Latino populations are beginning to interact with many local institutions and utilizing services provided to them, yet these interactions still seem to be limited. Several institutions cited the lack of integration of the Latino population into the communities in which they live. Although this population is not highly visible within the communities in this area, institutions are aware of their presence and are focusing on how to best meet their needs and are focusing on how to
effectively meet their needs without frequent requests for assistance from the Latino community.

The lack of interaction between local institutions or community members and the Latino population living in the area has proven to be a challenge in many instances. Representatives of Keyser, WV and Frostburg, MD reported no actual interaction with the Latino population living in either city. While each representative stated that they were aware of Latinos living in the cities, neither city has formally interacted with any member of this population. Thus they report difficulties knowing the needs of this population. Although this lack of interaction between local governments and the Latino population does not seem intentional, it can be problematic as each group has limited knowledge of the other and they could likely benefit from communicating.

The exception to the invisibility of this population is within the interactions between Latinos and the religious institutions of this region. Each priest has welcomed Latinos into their churches and accommodated them through providing free English lessons and services in Spanish, according to the priests. Additionally, through holding bilingual services and dinners for the entire congregation, they are working to integrate the entire church congregation. In return, the Latinos attend church each week, congregate in the church rectory after church and converse with English speakers before the start of the Spanish language service. Although Latinos are considered invisible by many institutions, the exception to this is within churches where they are very active and regularly spend large amounts of time each week according to the Spanish speaking priests.
The invisibility of the Latino population in Allegany and Mineral Counties correlates with the work by geographers Lise Nelson and Nancy Hiemstra in rural Oregon and Colorado. In both studies, the location of Latino’s homes on the outskirts of communities, often in poor conditions and owned by their employers contributes to their lack of interaction with other community members. Additionally, their lack of transportation keeps them from being visible in the communities. Transnationalism and the creation of strong social networks among Latino immigrants in this area is keeping this population invisible to native community members and from becoming involved in community organizations (Nelson and Hiemstra 2008).

*Rocky Gap State Park*

An institution which directly interacts with Latino populations, but is not well-developed in the literature on this topic is state parks. Rocky Gap State Park in eastern Allegany County hosts thousands of Latinos every weekend during the summer months. The park administrators have worked to respond to what they perceive are the needs of this population through the addition of bilingual signs, teaching park rangers Spanish and building soccer fields. The use of the state park is distinctive as the Latino population is not living within this area; instead it is a form of cyclical weekend migration. According to the Park Rangers in this area, while Latino populations are increasing at all Maryland Parks, Rocky Gap is the farthest west park experiencing this phenomenon. Thus they are putting pressure on the institutions in this area although they are not residing there, making it essential that institutions consider more than only the population in the
immediate area they serve when making future plans. Considering the impact of a Latino population utilizing Rocky Gap State Park although they do not live in Allegany County, MD is important for local institutions, since the small Latino population in this area does not necessarily correlate to the number of people using resources provided by local institutions.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Although the literature on the community response to new immigrant populations in rural areas is limited, this research has investigated the institutions cited in this research to focus on new Latino populations in northern Appalachia. While the Latino population is small, this growth is new, culturally distinct and beginning to gain attention from local institutions. Thus regardless of this new population growth, local institutions are focusing on ways to meet the needs of this group through services they already provide, and to understand how they can shift their services to better suit this population in the future.

Several themes evident in new destinations research were apparent in this thesis. Key institutions such as hospitals, school systems and religious institutions were identified as essential organizations involved in this response (Kandel and Parrado 2006). In addition, research by Nelson and Hiemstra considers the indirect exclusion of Latinos due to their long hours working and the distance they must travel to work, preventing them from interacting socially with the native population of the town, as was evident in this thesis (Nelson and Hiemstra 2008). Furthermore, their research also focuses on the transnational lives of the Latinos, and their focus on creating a sense of community among other Latinos instead of assimilating into the larger community in which they live (Nelson and Hiemstra 2008). In this thesis, this concept was evident as the Latino population had a lunch and socialization time after church each Sunday, interacting mainly with other Latinos. In addition, this was also evident with Latino populations visiting Rocky Gap State Park on summer weekends. Their use of the park is to socialize
with their families and friends, not to interact with native community members. Several topics evident in the literature on this topic were evident in the research conducted in Mineral and Allegany Counties, and was expanded to consider the institutional responses to Latinos in this area.

However, several themes are evident in this thesis which were not apparent in the literature on the community response to new Latino populations, most notably the temporary migration of Latinos to use recreation areas. The use of state parks in this area by a population traveling long distances, often more than two and a half hours, to an area where there are very small Latino populations living locally places important demands on local institutions. In addition, the identification of key institutions in the literature on this topic tends to identify these institutions as working with the Latino populations separately. This research identified many institutions working together to meet the needs of the Latino populations in this area. Furthermore, this thesis has shown that institutions such as local universities that do not interact directly interact with Latinos are essential in responding to new Latinos as they provide support to local institutions and assist them in their responses to this population.

Throughout this research, one of the themes that became evident in several conversations with different institutions in this area was the focus on other non-native populations in addition to Latino populations. While I had intended this research to focus only on Latino populations, the growth of other non-native populations, specifically Asian population was something that institutions cited often in the context of their preparedness for interacting with non-native populations in this region. One of the main
concerns about the growth of non-native populations in this area is the need for translators of several different languages. This sentiment was evident in interviews with the area’s hospitals, school systems and city governments. The Latino populations growth currently occurring in this area has encouraged local institutions to not only focus on the services provided to this population, but also the needs of other non-native populations that they have seen an increase in recently.

In addition, there is a complex web of interactions among institutions in this area which demonstrates the willingness of local institutions to interact with and meet the needs of the Latino populations utilizing their services. Institutions within Allegany County, MD and Mineral County, WV are working together, often in informal ways to ensure that the Latino population or other non-native populations in this area have everything they need. Furthermore, several institutions such as the religious institutions and the Western Maryland Regional Medical Center report working with and referring Latinos to other non-profit agencies in this area to help with services and support outside of their institution’s abilities. For instance, the religious organizations have encouraged Latinos to visit community food banks to obtain adequate food. They have also referred them to other local churches that collect winter coats to ensure that they have appropriate winter clothing. The WMRMC has also referred released patients to the United Way and Union Rescue Mission to help them find adequate housing within the community and clothing and foods following their treatment in the hospital. One of the most important aspects of the institutional response to Latinos in this area is the willingness of local
institutions to work together in an attempt to meet the needs of this population effectively.

Although the majority of interactions among the institutions are informal, they are noteworthy. Often finding people to translate for institutions such as the hospital or law enforcement agencies is difficult in this area, leading hospitals to informally contact a Spanish professor at a local university or the single Spanish speaking State Police officer in the region to communicate with those in need. In addition, institutions work together informally, such as the two churches of different denominations working together to conduct a funeral for the entire Latino population of the area, or the hospital referring released patients to area non-profit organizations to meet their needs following their release from the hospital. To effectively provide services for the Latino population in this area, institutions often interact informally to ensure that the needs of this population are being met.

An important consideration of this research is that this study has taken place during the early stages of Latino population growth in this area. In the past decade the Latino population in this area has increased, although it still remains less than one percent of the total population in both Mineral and Allegany Counties (ACS 2008). In addition to being in the beginning stages of this growth, due to the economic decline in late 2008, there has been a lack of jobs in this area which has caused many Latinos to leave this area or the country entirely. Furthermore, the drug and immigration raids which occurred in Piedmont, West Virginia caused several people to be deported or to leave the area entirely due to their fear of a similar raid happening again. Therefore, institutions
interviewed for this thesis reported a lack of Latino population growth currently in this area for these reasons. According to several institutions, Latino population growth and the responses of local institutions are both stagnant as of the spring of 2010.

Regardless of the current lack of Latino or non-native population growth in this area, the majority of institutions contacted for this thesis reported that they expect these populations to grow within the next several years, and additionally they expect the populations to be more numerous than they have been previously. Therefore, many institutions are focusing on the future and trying to plan for the services and support needed to meet the needs of increased non-native populations in this area. Most institutions report goals of having access to translators in order to effectively communicate with the area’s non-English speaking population, in addition to providing more outreach programs to be able to communicate with these populations to ensure that their needs are actually being met. Although this research is considering the Latino populations in Allegany and Mineral Counties at the beginning of this demographic shift, institutions are already noticing and working to meet the unique needs of this population and working to better understand the needs of this population. Within these communities, institutions are beginning to notice this new diversity within small town Appalachia and are working to meet their needs to the best of their ability, primarily through working together.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE INSTITUTIONS

This is my interview schedule for my semi-structured interviews with individuals affiliated with community organizations, local government officials, school board officials and religious leaders.

Basic Information
- What is your job description?
- What is the primary purpose of the organization with which you are affiliated?
- Does your organization operate city, county or state wide?
- Is your organization affiliated with immigrants in the region?
  - In what capacity?

Immigrants within the community
- Have you or your organization noticed growth among Hispanic populations in this area?
  - In what capacity? Where?
- Does immigration affect the operation of your organization?
  - How so?

Services provided
- What services, if any are provided to migrants through your organization?
- Have you noticed a need for any services for the migrant population?
- Have the changes in the migrant population changed the services provided to the immigrant population?
- Have there been any demands made by the immigrant population regarding your services?
- Has your organization changed the services for migrants provided during the last two decades?

Relationship with immigrants
- How often does your organization interact with migrants?
- What is the purpose of the interaction with migrants?
- Do you often interact with community members (community non-profits, teachers etc.) regarding migrant populations?

Response
- Have you heard of any problems regarding Hispanic migrants pertaining to the services your organization provides?
- Do you know of any policy changes in this community which are currently occurring regarding migrants?
- Do you see your organization working with migrant groups or liaisons in the future?
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE LATINOS

This is a tentative interview schedule to be used during interviews with Latinos migrants, if this opportunity is deemed physically and ethically safe during my research.

Basic Information:
- In which community do you live?
- What was your motivation for moving into that city (i.e. family, job opportunity, proximity to services)?
- What is your occupation?
- Do you have children here in this community?

Interactions with community members/services
- Do you work within the community or travel elsewhere for work?
- How did you obtain your job?
- With whom do you often interact with while at work, other migrants or non-migrants living within the community?
- With whom do you interact with outside of the workplace?
- Are you involved in any activities outside of your employment (i.e. soccer league, church group)?
  - What type of activities and how often?
- Do you attend any community meetings or church services with non-migrant community members?

Use of services
- Are there any services, such as health care or free English lessons provided by the city, county, state or private organization that may be available to you?
- Do you have children attending schools in this country?
- Are your children able to effectively communicate with their teachers and fellow students?
- Have you ever attended any events such as free English classes?
  - If so, which organization provided this service?
  - Where are these services location and when are they held?

Perception of the Community
- Do you feel safe and welcome within this community and county?
- Do you feel comfortable interacting and speaking with non-migrant community members?
  - Do you do so often?
- What services do you need, that you feel are not available to you?