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ABSTRACT
Within the context of relatively new immigration and settlement in North Carolina, this ethnographic study highlights Latina mothers’ narratives and conversations about a moral family education. Their narratives involved the claiming of el hogar (the home space) in the midst of the English-speaking community’s attempts to define their families and childrearing practices as “problem.” With a race-based feminist perspective, this article examines the role of the mothers’ counter-narratives in contesting their deficit framing, producing “educated” identities, and creating community in the rural South.

I accompanied a health service provider to Dolores’ trailer home. The provider told me her living conditions were terrible, “unkept” and “the children should be in school.” He told me of a problem she had with her baby who got sick apparently because of the “dirty” living conditions and because the family didn’t know to take the baby to the doctor. He spoke of neglect.
--Field journal, June 1994

Dolores in a parenting class: Yo all [M xico] le cri bien a mi hija. No hombre, cuando vivamos en M xico, mi hijita, esta iba a la tienda de la esquina sola, nom s tres a os ten a. Mi hija era bien cabrona, all , pero aqu como que ni a la esquina puede ir. [In Mexico, I raised my daughter very well. When we lived in Mexico, my daughter, she’d go to the corner store by herself, she was only three years old. My daughter was very smart, there, but here (in Hope City), she can’t even go to the corner.]
--Field Journal, April 1995

Dolores was one of the first Latina mothers I had met in Hope City, North Carolina.(FN1) Afterward, I began to see her everywhere, speaking up at school parent meetings and at the adult classes for Latina mothers. While Dolores’ life was often portrayed within the discourses of minority poverty and despair (Foley 1995),(FN2) she, on the other hand, articulated an intense pride and self-confidence in her role as a mother, particularly in the way she raised her eldest daughter in Mexico, and was now challenged with the task of raising children in the United States. The health provider’s well-meaning but deficit framing of Dolores’s life was the “helping” voice so common in Hope City, offering concerned accounts of Latina mothers’ “plight” as immigrant women who did not know better in properly caring for their families. Although it was true that Dolores and her family suffered through various problems, the health provider’s deficit-framed story, or what I call “benevolent racism,” contrasted sharply with Dolores’s own “storying” of her life as a knowledgeable mother and community member.

Based on over two years of ethnographic fieldwork, this article locates “southern” Latina mothers in small-town power relations where the racial landscape undergirded contested views and cultural productions of what it meant to be educated (Levinson et al. 1996). Against their deficit framing, Latina mothers created “counterstories” through which they claimed dignity in their role as mothers/educators who imparted what they believed to be a “better” education of morals and values than what Hope City had to offer. In situating their counterstories against the landscape of southern racism, labor migration, and white and Latino patriarchies, I examine how the mothers’ complex narratives of education involved the claiming of el hogar (the home space) as “educated” women responsible for the cultural preservation of a newly forming Latino community in the South.

RACIALIZING LATINO FAMILIES AND GENDERING RACE
The centering of race is critical, not only as a way to name the subtle but insidious forms of racisms operating in Hope City, but also as a frame by which to understand the importance of Latina mothers’ education stories in claiming their place and dignity against their marginalization. More specifically, an emerging perspective that braids together race, Latino/Chicana/o issues, and women of color feminisms helps me to understand (1) the different manifestations or “brands” of small-town racisms that discursively situated Latino families as “problem”; (2) the ways in which gender and race intersected with “nation” and the economy to situate Latinas as mothers/educators, social service “clients,” and transnational laborers;(FN3) and, finally, (3) the role of the mothers’ counter-narratives in contesting their deficit framing and in creating community in the rural South. What follows is an attempt at this braiding.

I was initiated into the relations of power operating in Hope City by education, health, and social service providers who kindly opened their doors to me. They welcomed me as an insider to the community of educators who shared a concern for the “plight” of Latino immigrant families (Villenas 1996). These professionals were formally interviewed by my university colleagues as part of a larger study of Hope City (see Noblit et al. 1995), and I also joined them in meetings and informal gatherings. My contact with them was certainly facilitated by my multiple roles in the community as an instructor for adult English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes, as a bus driver and ESL instructor for mothers in parenting classes, and as an after-school bilingual language arts teacher. My community roles also brought me into close relationships with Latino families and with Latina mothers in particular. From January 1994 through the spring of 1996, I participated in social events, community meetings, school meetings, and Catholic mass in Spanish. It was in this context—in parenting classes, the bus ride to the ESL class, in homes, at parties, and at church—that I recorded the conversations and stories related by Latina mothers. Additionally, I gathered and tape-recorded the oral life histories of 21 Latino community members, including those of the 11 mothers with whom I worked most closely.(FN4) In this way, I too played a part in circulating racialized discourses of “othering,” as simultaneously an insider and outsider to both the Latino community and the community of English-speaking professionals.(FN5)

The ways in which Latinos/as are "race-d" in the United States are linked to the histories of colonialism and
imperialism in the Americas, current immigration control policies, the changing structures of the local and global markets, and the stratification of labor (FN6)—indeed, lifelong projects of inquiry of too large a scope for the modest goals of this article. Suffice it to say (or not), in situating the lives of Latino immigrant families within the rapid globalization of capital and the proliferation of technology, it is important to understand the connections between racial power and the political economy—something that, according to Crenshaw and associates (1995), the left-liberal approach has failed to do. (FN7) In other words, we have not paid serious attention to the “racial and ethnic character of the massive distributive transformations that globalization has set in motion” (Crenshaw et al. 1995:xxx) and to “analyzing the precise processes that produce globalized stratification” (Crenshaw et al. 1995:xxx).

To theorize about the racialized U.S. economy is to explore how racial ideologies justify the intense border patrolling of the South in comparison with the North (Crenshaw et al. 1995) and how racialized Latino/Mexicano families become the victims of poverty and of physical violence at the hands of the border patrol, the police, and anti-immigrant vigilante groups (Su rez-Orozco and Su rez-Orozco 1995). At the discursive level, racial ideologies serve to construct Latinas/os as an invisible/visible Other—invisible as “ghost” workers, yet highly visible as families needing education and health care. The racialized language of anti-immigrant xenophobia (e.g., wetback, illegal alien) facilitates the dehumanization of Latino/a immigrants (Barbtorlom and Ma ceo 1997) and fuels xenophobic legislation, including English-only laws, and the dismantling of bilingual education in California and Arizona, and the post-1997 immigration laws that severely limit the process and possibilities of permanent residency. These laws serve to create second-class citizens and reinforce the subordinate status of Latinos/as in this country. (FN8)

Similar dominant racial ideologies also took root in Hope City as Latino men and women came to comprise the “brown” transnational labor force serving expansionist capitalism in North Carolina. In a changing and restructured North Carolina economy dominated by poultry, meat-processing, and textile industries (Griffith 1995; Holland et al. in press), new forms of economic exploitation and violence were being perfected as Latino/a immigrants filled the ranks of unskilled cheap labor (Murillo 1999; see also Griffith 1995; Villenas in press). Indeed, race issues helped to organize local labor and local politics, entrenching the disparities in the process of uneven economic development (Murillo 1999). Murillo argues that in Hope City, “The presence of Spanish-speaking immigrants has raised new questions of ‘entitlement’ to public resources and intensified public debates ranging from labor displacement to the meaning of citizenship” (1999:123; see also Holland et al. in press). The racialization of Latino/a transnational settlers was thus linked to conversations about competition and access to resources and to a nationalistic social coding of Latinos/as as noncitizens (Murillo 1999) who were undeserving of American democracy.

At the same time, however, this small town’s dependence on the growth of the poultry factories allowed spaces for both xenophobic and “generous” racist constructions of Latinos/as, who, as a “third” race, altered historically “southern” racial formations (Griffith 1995) operating from a black/white binary. (FN9) For Latinos/as, new forms of subjugation were in process that were both similar and different from the Southwest context. For example, the “novelty” of the immigration trend allowed for a benevolent racism practiced by well-meaning professionals to become somewhat popular in Hope City. As social service providers struggled to meet the health and educational needs of newly arrived Latinas, their signal of welcome for a moment discursively upstaged other kinds of racisms. These social, health, and educational services were much appreciated, and also appropriated, but the paternalistic “we know what’s best” tag was not missed by women such as Dolores.

**HOPE CITY LATINO SETTLEMENT AND A BENEVOLENT KIND OF RACISM**

In 1990, Hope City had a census population of 4,488. The census counted 184 Latinos of mostly Mexican origin. Latino farm workers began arriving in the county in the 1980s, mostly from Mexico. In the years 1986-87, the first Latinos arrived to work in the industrial and poultry-processing plants. At this time, Hope City’s economy was undergoing a period of transition with a shift toward mechanization of poultry, cattle, and tobacco. Moreover, small family farms were disappearing, and there was a growing need for labor in the new industries (Levin et al. 1995). Many of the workers were recruited specifically to work in the poultry industries.

The majority of Latinos/as who lived in Hope City at the time of this study had arrived after 1990. According to the census estimates, Hope City had a Latino population of 3.8 percent, while the Latino population in the county and the state was 1.5 percent and 1.2 percent, respectively. As Levin and associates (1995) point out, the “growth of [Hope City’s] Latino population is disproportionately higher than in the state as a whole, indicating that [Hope City] represents a particular focus for migration” (1995:14-15). However, as Levin and her colleagues also assert, Latinos have been undercounted, particularly with respect to undocumented homeowners. Taking into account the Latino work force and the number of housing units rented and owned by Latinos, these authors come up with another estimate of Hope City’s Latino population at the time of their study. They report what they think is a conservative estimate of 1,500-3,000 persons of Latino heritage living in Hope City, or one-third to two-thirds of the prior (1990) population.

Of significance is the fact that women and families had only recently begun arriving in much greater numbers both to join their husbands and as solo travelers. Data from birth certificates point to an increasing number of Latinas of childbearing age (Levin et al. 1995). According to the Office of Minority Health, in 1995 the county had 58 births to Latina mothers, or 10.4 percent of the total births in the county. In Hope City, Latino births made up only 5 percent of the total births in 1989 but jumped to a remarkable 28 percent of the total births in 1993 (Levin et al. 1995).

The recent population increase of women and children was also evidenced in the early elementary school enrollment data. In 1994, the principal of Hope City Elementary reported to me that 15 to 20 percent of the school population was Latino, in contrast to the high school Latino population of 5 percent (corroborated in Levin et al. 1995). Taken together, these birth and school enrollment statistics pointed to the fact that the growing population of Latinas was indeed recent and increasing. This had not been missed by the other residents, who had been situating Latinos/as within the public discourses and institutions of Hope City.

Newspaper headlines between 1993 and 1996 in Hope City represented a range of responses to the increasing diversity in the community. These public responses and, indeed, different brands of racisms ranged from fear and concern—“Newspaper Ad Sparks Concern at City’s Growing Hispanic Population”—to the Southwest style of xenophobic racisms in which Latinos are blamed for all the ills—“I want to know if my tax money is going to illegal aliens”—to a paternalistic situating of the “problems” and “lacks” of Latinos/as—“Literacy Void a Big Issue” and “Program Enables Hispanic Women to Become Better Mothers.” In this range of simultaneously occurring racisms, the county was also
haven to the Ku Klux Klan, which in 1995 left posters on the main Hope City highway announcing whites as an endangered species. While, in general, Hope City residents did not want their "sleepy" town to be associated with Klan activity, the material realities of white supremacy as cultural and ideological domination (hooks 1995) have always been present in the everyday lives of Hope City residents.

 Institutionalized racism was rampant in the areas of housing, employment, and police surveillance. For example, among Latino residents looking for housing, it was common knowledge to them which apartment complexes were not available to Hispanics. (FN10) As I drove around with a Guatemalan friend who lived in Hope City, she pointed out to me all the places she had inquired about but could not rent because the owners did not rent to Latinos. In my ESL classes, the men often talked about police harassment. They told stories of being stopped for no reason and then having their identification, license, and/or permanent residency cards taken away. Yet because discourses of xenophobia were less "publicly" acceptable than the "helping" response, the community of English-speaking agency and education professionals became well aware of the problem and responded by offering cultural sensitivity courses to police officers. Certainly they considered people like the "insensitive" police officers and the town commissioner, who wanted to know if tax money was going to "illegal aliens," to be extremist and racist. These professionals wanted their agencies to be the ones to help Latino families. But I will explain further, their well-intended actions, or benevolent racism, unwittingly contributed to the public stigmatization of Latino families.

 Mothers figured prominently in these "public" yet often well-meaning conversations about the Latino "problem," particularly as recipients of a wide range of "helping" responses. Certainly the ways in which schools and social services (i.e., prenatal care; Women, Infants, and Children/federal food programs) are structured implicate women more often than any other segment of the population. This is especially poignant in the case of Latina immigrant mothers who, as Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) points out, engage in the very activities (i.e., employment, health assistance, etc.) that consolidate settlement of their families in the making of permanent and stable communities in the United States. Women have also historically been considered the bearers of culture, a belief that has allowed for the targeting of Mexican immigrant women for Americanization and assimilation programs (González 1990). This was also the case in Hope City, in which, in the dominant public sphere (i.e., conversations among service professionals; the newspapers; school rhetoric on language deficiency and child abuse), these women were simultaneously constructed as "problem" and "victim." Their culture and language were a "problem" while their gender made them "victim" of the stereotyped Latino machismo. In the practice of benevolent racisms, they were also constructed as "problem" mothers (i.e., "nativists," "illiterate," "unEnglishable") wanting English, parent-teacher conferences, health education, and, most of all, knowledge of how to raise and educate their children in a "modern" way. Thus there were concerted efforts on the part of the dominant community to provide English language instruction, parenting classes, and health education to the women. The women I worked with appreciated some of these services, but they also appropriated the spaces provided by these programs to talk among themselves on their own terms.

 The paternalism and deficit framing of Latino families thus undergirded the insidious "helping" practices of benevolent racism. As a form of cultural and ideological domination, the practice and manifestation of benevolent racism in Hope City was the normalization of white/Western middle-class cultural ways (including mothering practices) and the pathologizing of Latino cultures. Unlike xenophobic racisms, in which Latinos/as are unwelcome and blamed for all of society's ills, benevolent racism was characterized by a publicly welcoming response attached to genuine concern for the "Latino plight." However, as social service, education, and health care providers interacted with Latinos/as through the organizational lens of "client," the focus of "lack" or what Latino parents didn't do or didn't have took center stage. For example, Latina mothers were readily solicited by health and social services for undoubtedly very important prenatal care, well-baby care, and services to children. But they also became the targets of agency programs such as "mothering classes" (i.e., "teaching English", parenting skills, health care, child care, housing, and, most of all, knowledge of how to raise and educate their children in a "modern" way. Thus there were concerted efforts on the part of the dominant community to provide English language instruction, parenting classes, and health education to the women. The women I worked with appreciated some of these services, but they also appropriated the spaces provided by these programs to talk among themselves on their own terms.

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GENDERING RACE: LAS MUJERES (THE WOMEN) OF HOPE CITY

Women of color have ever so eloquently centered race in challenging patriarchy, classism, and homophobia. Certainly, as so many women of color writers have said, we are not just women, we are black women, Chicanas, Asian American women, "Third World" women--our gender is inseparable from our experiences as racialized others. While Chicanas, among other women of color, have asserted that the struggle for liberation and social justice is above all a cultural feminist movement, una conciencia de mujer (Anzaldúa 1987:77), the meaning of a "feminist" struggle involves "an ever present consciousness of our interdependence specifically rooted in our culture and history" (Castillo 1994:226). For Chicanas, the feminist struggle is a collective cultural endeavor of liberation from all oppressions. In this way, as culture has a color and "racial" is also understood as peoplehood (Martinez 1993), women of color have simultaneously "race-d" gender and "gender-ed" race.

As discussions of race and coloring epistemologies (Schaeurich and Young 1997) have proliferated in recent progressive and critical Scholarship coming from postcolonial studies, whiteness studies, critical race theory, and from discussions among anthropologists of all fields, the gendering of race cannot become tangential. A view of the transnational labor force as racially gendered (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Lamphere et al. 1997) puts Latinas (and other migrating women of color) as the most vulnerable in these global transformations whereby the racialization of patriarchy and capitalism serves to subjugate women in every way--during immigration, in their job situations, in their roles as transnational mothers (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Villa 1997), and in their interactions with social services. It is critical to consider how racialized ideologies and practices deeply impact Latinas who occupy the lowest rung in the labor market and are considered disposable. Put differently, an intersectional framework (Crenshaw 1995; Tate 1997) is useful in examining how Latina diaspora mothers are differently and simultaneously oppressed as women, as brown people, as transnational laborers, as undocumented "citizens," and so on. Latinas' experiences within a racialized patriarchal economy are critical to understanding the context against which the mothers framed their education narratives in Hope City.

Class figured prominently in the racialization of Latinas in Hope City. Latina mothers in Hope City came to the United States transitioning from a position of unemployment or underemployment to employment, often for the first time (Guendelman and Perez-Itriago 1987). The work skills that some of the women learned in their countries for the most part could not earn them a living in Hope City. Although some of the women did earn money in the informal sectors through work such as babysitting, sewing, or selling food and pastries, most entered the town's poultry and textile industries. Through racialized hiring practices and social networks (Segura 1994), Latinas were channeled into low-level factory jobs in companies that employed working-class white and African American women, and Latino men and women. These were a plastics manufacturing company, a textile company, a hosiery company, and two large poultry factories. In all of these jobs, the women were making between five to seven dollars an hour, as the higher paid jobs were given to the men. White women worked in the offices of the poultry factories doing secretarial work, certainly less physically demanding work in comparison to the work Latinas performed on the factory line. The high-intensity, repetitive manual labor at the poultry factories (which employed the largest percentage of Latinas/as, with a majority of men) was strenuous and dangerous. People worked with knives and dangerous machines on often greasy and icy floors. Disabling falls, cuts, and hand ailments such as carpal tunnel syndrome posed serious health risks for Latino and Latina workers. Health risks also were present at the textile factories, where workers breathed in the thread dust. Among the women I worked with, Carmen Mu oz was suing for a job-related accident that was serious enough to prevent her from going back to work.

Hope City's Latinas confronted immense barriers to employment, job security, decent wages, and advancement. Employer discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity and language kept Latina immigrant women in Hope City from having the chance of even entering into "more prestigious" white women's jobs such as those of receptionist, secretary, nurse, teacher, and teacher's aide. While one woman arrived with experience as a nurse, two others with the equivalent of a high school degree, and still three others with some college education, they all found themselves segregated into unsafe, unskilled, low-level jobs with few opportunities for advancement. As a Latino ESL student in Hope City, I learned from my friends that "Venimos de todo aqui, con educaci n, sin educaci n. Sin embargo venimos a trabajar en los mismos trabajos, todos juntos" [We come all of us different, with education, without education. Yet we come to work in the same jobs, everyone together]. Several of the women asked me to inquire at the community college for the equivalent of a high school degree, and still three others with some college education, they all found themselves segregated into unsafe, unskilled, low-level jobs with few opportunities for advancement. As a Latino ESL student in Hope City, I learned from my friends that "Venimos de todo aqui, con educaci n, sin educaci n. Sin embargo venimos a trabajar en los mismos trabajos, todos juntos" [We come all of us different, with education, without education. Yet we come to work in the same jobs, everyone together]. Several of the women asked me to inquire at the community college for nursing certification. The road to even the gender-stratified employment of nursing/nurse's aide was a long one indeed, with many institutionalized barriers to overcome. Race, gender, legal status, and language, then, structured economic opportunities for Latina mothers. Yet the perfected use of cheap labor in Hope City, a microcosm for the continued reorganization and division of labor worldwide, went unquestioned in the practice of benevolent racism. Rather, Latina mothers became a metonym for, or naturally connected to the idea of, an underclass (Urciuoli 1996) as another category of immorality and deficit that further pathologized Latino home life and legitimized intervention.

Latinas, however, reversed their deficit framing and reaffirmed Latino family lives through their life histories and narratives about family education. While the racialized gendered experience of settlement and labor structured Latinas' "educated" identities and their childbearing and community building efforts in Hope City, Latinas also resituated themselves vis-à-vis Latino and white patriarchy with anything other than mindless deference to both sexism in the home and economic exploitation by white bosses. In complex and contradictory ways, the women claimed their value and their "educated" identities as mothers and educators in el hogar and in their network of family and kin. I saw their self-constructions, and their appropriation of the more valued educational terrain of morality, as the seizing of a dignified space. The moral education these women promoted for their children was about maintaining the integrity of their families amid cultural assault (Ba c Zinn and Dill 1994).

UNA BUENA EDUCACION: MUJERES TELLING STORIES AND CLAIMING VOICE

We do not simply survive, that would imply that we were no more than drones. We live lives full with meaning.

--Ana Castillo 1994:221

The Latina mothers I met and talked with in Hope City reaffirmed meaningful lives imbued with the teachings of family and community. The women did three things in their life history interviews, which I detail in the following sections.
First, they constructed themselves as "educated" people. Second, they positioned their traditional family education and the community education of their home countries as superior. Finally, they situated themselves in el hogo in their roles as homemakers, simultaneously critiquing the values and "education" of U.S. white women.

WE ARE INTELLIGENT AND "EDUCATED" WOMEN
As I interviewed and talked with the women, what struck me most were the ways in which they performed their identities as very "educated" and intelligent people. To have una buena educacion (a good educational base) meant having the social skills of etiquette, loyalty to family and kin, and most important, respect. As Valdés (1996) points out, many working-class Mexican families have worldviews of success and proper socialization that differ dramatically from those of white, middle-class, mainstream families. She writes, "For most ordinary Mexican families, individual success and accomplishment are generally held in lesser esteem than are people's abilities to maintain ties across generations and to make an honest living" (Valdés 1996:170). These moral values and beliefs about what constitutes an "educated" person undergirded the ways in which Latina mothers improvised una buena educacion in their education narratives and in their everyday conversations.(FN15)

Do a Carmen Muñoz, for example, spoke strongly against how she, a poor and illiterate immigrant woman, would be framed in the racial discourses of Hope City. Carmen is a mother of 17 children who had to raise them by herself in El Salvador after her husband passed away. She fled El Salvador due to the political turmoil but was recently remarried in Hope City, where she was raising her youngest daughter. Carmen's story is very provocative in the ways in which she constructed an "educated" identity against and despite poverty, civil war, and social injustice in El Salvador and then in the United States. Carmen framed her life story in this manner by beginning with a question, "Se le puede platir coro uno ha sufrido, s? Como de la guerra, de donde vivo un, donde vivo un quedo ac? ... Sin leer, ni escribir, ni nada" [Can we tell you about how one's suffered, yes? Like about the war, where we lived, and where we came to be ... without knowing how to read and write, without anything]. From there, Carmen narrated her life to show how despite poverty, political turmoil, and lack of formal schooling, she is an "educated" and intelligent person, and a good mother and teacher. In reclaiming suffering, poverty, and war as integral to who she and her husband had become, she moved to name a collective experience of suffering and education. She moved from the "I," "Me toc andar sufriendo" [It was my lot to be suffering], to the "we" Salvadorians: "We were educated because our parents educated us.... Because there was only war, there wasn't a school." Carmen was teaching me that illiteracy, poverty, and war were a collective problem. In a serious and somewhat saddened tone, she explained, "The majority, I think I must know thousands of my comrades, males, females, and nobody knows how to read, nor write." And yet she, Carmen, was educated in the moral sense, and she knew how to work. Carmen explained, "My parents taught me a lot about work. I know how to make tiles; I know how to make brick; I know how to harness an animal; I can drug an ox to sleep." But El Salvador's poverty drove her to the United States, ironically to continue suffering, to work hard, to get injured while on the job, and to get fired. From the collective suffering in El Salvador she identified herself now as "we" Hispanos who encounter suffering and discrimination in the United States but, as she emphasized, who are actually a "benefit" to the state in all the ways Hispanos bring in money yet never claim social services.

Carmen was able to give her children an education of morals, work, and letters because she was educated in the way of morals and the ethics of hard work. Her belief about learning and teaching was that everyone learns through buen sentido (common sense) and by watching. Raising a family is common sense. She said, "It doesn't take much to educate a family, from the time they're little you bring them up." She used a metaphor that reflected these beliefs about childrearing: "Well, I think that the way I educated my children is like when someone goes to a mountain where there are a lot of little trees, and the one that's soft, you can straighten, right? But when it's big you can't straighten it because the tree is already too hard. And I think that the family is the same way." For Carmen, then, it is not hard to educate children when a parent gives them a good base from the beginning and uses common sense.

In the end, Carmen moved to show not only that was she able to give her children an education but also that she was herself a very intelligent person despite her illiteracy. In the following story about her success at obtaining a driver's license in Hope City, Carmen emphasized her common sense knowledge in being able to learn how to drive:

You learn everything by having common sense and by watching, because for a long time I only sat in the front seat and I'd watch him [my husband], how he crossed through the traffic lights ... and I'd watch where he turned, I'd be watching here, I'd be watching there. And I don't know how to read and I went and got my driver's license. And people are surprised, how did I get my license.... My nephew is very intelligent.... And he tells me, "You have a license, Auntie, you're going to tell me what letters to choose on [the practice exam], you're going to answer them." And he reads them to me, and I tell him, "See, I'll be celebrating three years since I got my license.... I drive the car well ... but ask me them and I'll answer you." And I answered them well, and so now I helped him get his driver's license.

Yet, as Carmen also asserted, she had much more than common sense. She is intelligent, and an example was that she was able to help her nephew study for his test; he is in telligent too, but Carmen helped him pass his test. In this way, though this story is one about driving and not racism, Carmen narrated herself as an intelligent and resourceful woman precisely because she was fully aware of how Hispanics were being negatively positioned in Hope City. Indeed, from her beginning words, Carmen framed her life history in terms of reclaiming dignity amidst poverty in El Salvador and racism in the United States. Yet while Carmen was very much respected by other Latina mothers in Hope City, who often left their children in her care, mainstream social service professionals had a difficult time honoring the intelligence and good mothering skills of someone like Carmen, who was illiterate and poor. When Carmen narrated herself as an "educated" person who knew how to raise children properly, she certainly turned this deficit framing on its head.

OUR EDUCATION IS BETTER
La situaci n en que los ni os [est n], para mi que se est n all porque para mi es mejor. Tienen una mejor educaci n y no faltan el respeto. Y es que aqui ... le digo la verdad lo que he visto qu! ... esa influencia, va, depende al ambiente donde un crece, que lo rodea, lo van asimilando ellos. [For me (my children) should be there (in Guatemala) because
for me it's better. They have a better education and they don't lose respect for others.... And it's just that here ... I tell you the truth of some of the things that I've seen here ... it's the influence, that depends on the environment where one grows up, that surrounds you, they're (the children) assimilating it."

--Marisela Ayaia

Just as Carmen forcefully constructed her identity as a highly "educated" woman and a good mother against her awareness of the way Hispanics were being negatively positioned in Hope City, other women claimed their family and community education of their home countries as superior. In doing so, they often harshly critiqued what they perceived as a lack of moral education in the United States. Marisela's critique about some of the things she had seen in Hope City referred to her belief that the United States was a country that permitted a lax morality. Marisela insisted that "the child is the home" and that the child assimilates everything of the home, including the bad influences of the United States that inevitably permeate Latino homes. Moreover, her belief was that children learn from these two distinct environments by assimilating the essence of explicit and implicit instruction of moral behavior. In the telling of her life history, she recounted how her mother used stories to teach her and her brothers and sisters important moral lessons:

More than anything my mother gave us a lot of examples because she used to say that it wasn't necessary to use the stick. She would call us and she would tell us stories.... And so it was an education that, how should I say it? ... It wasn't something that they forced on us but it's something that they gave very softly, right. And the one who assimilated it, kept the essence or was left with it, the one who didn't, didn't.

Marisela recounted her life history of education with much pride. In the moment of telling, she embraced her home pedagogies and "better" Guatemalan family education as superior to what was being offered in the United States. Her stories went against the deficit framing of Latina mothers as poor educators judged against the norms of "superior" Western ways of rearing children.

Similarly, a theme that emerged from the stories of other Latina mothers was the fear of their children losing the education they themselves grew up with. In a group conversation about their interview transcripts, Lydia Torres commented, "The change is more difficult when the children grow up and se acostumbran, they get used to life here."

Alba Ortega added, "We wish they could live like how we grew up." In an individual interview, Lydia expressed her wishes for giving her daughter an education that would be about preserving Mexican customs while taking advantage of the educational system in the United States:

For my girls, I wish for them to study, that they study here but that they follow our customs from Mexico and that they know the history of Mexico.... Some things are going to change raising them here. For example, here they don't use the molcajete [grinder] or the metate [flat stone]. I would like for my daughters to learn the regional dances from Mexico and to learn how to make comidas t picas [traditional foods]. I would like to conserve those things.

Thus, as Alba and Lydia pointed out, traditions, along with change and cultural innovation, were important to the mental self- and collective preservation of a racialized group of mothers forging community in Hope City.

Yet U.S. mainstream family education was not the only thing that was critiqued. Community education and safety were also compared and scrutinized, though Hope City was certainly a small and relatively safe town. In an interview, Alba Ortega, from Guanajuato, Mexico, and mother of five, spoke at length of the freedom the children of her birth community enjoyed:

In Mexico ... like I say, the children are very free ... well, you see that in our town, they [the people] go out, for example they sit outside, well, almost the majority of all the people of the town, even the very poorest ... and all the children, since they have a lot of freedom, like I say, it'll be 11 and 12 o'clock at night and you see the parade of little children ... playing, playing there in the street under the light of the lamp posts.

Alba contrasted this freedom with the way in which her children in Hope City were encerrados (locked up) in the house and then faced danger in terms of the complications of taking a bus to school as opposed to children having the safety to run through the town. She explained how she is always worrying about her children because they do not have the same safety and liberty as they did in Mexico:

It's a tranquil life, very calm at the ranch ... well, see, there's hardly any danger of getting run over by a car, because cars hardly ever go by. A car never passes by there. [The children] go by themselves, they go running with their little notebook in their hand in the house and they come home running too and they throw the book down ... and here one's always al pendiente [on the watch] of everything with more worries, that the bus comes for them and you have to be al pendiente that they come home.

Alba also talked about the community role in educating her children. While, for Alba, raising a well-educated child was about teaching buen comportamiento (good behavior), she believed that this moral education was a collective responsibility. She believed that "el pueblo les ense a a vivir" [the community teaches them how to live]. On one occasion, when I was leaving Alba's house after a brief visit, Alba warned her children who were being a little noisy, "Si no se comportan bien, la maestra les va a pegar" [If you don't behave yourselves, the teacher will hit you]. Alba did not mean it literally, but by saying what she did, she included me in her circle of "community," privileging me with the right to discipline her children. Children are taught by everyone in the community, though the trade-off is that community teaches both lo malo y lo bueno (the good and the bad). Yet to be street smart, to know how to live and survive, entails knowing both lo malo y lo bueno. Alba explained why her children would grow up better in Mexico: "Well, I'm just saying that over there they'll be more happy, well, here they're all the time encerraditos [always inside] and they need to live with Mexican children so they can figure out life for themselves also and, well, here, there aren't any [Mexican children]. How can they be here only with me?"

Alba's words provide a glimpse into how the racialized transnational movement of labor has changed women's ways of rearing children. As the mothers' narratives illustrate, the racial and gendered character of immigration has also
caused uncertainty for women struggling to educate and rear children while simultaneously building community in an often hostile environment. Labor is intensified at home when children are not cared for by the community support system as in their home countries. And certainly, while some may respond, "Well, go back to Mexico," their migration is framed by a history of U.S. imperialism and economic integration and domination that has pushed men, women, and their families to migrate north to escape dire conditions in their home countries. Their subsequent racialization in the United States affects women the most; while welcomed as cheap labor, they are unwelcome as "mothers" with their own cultural integrity. Cultural containment, surveillance, and assimilation occur in the practices of both benevolent and xenophobic racisms. Yet, within this context, the Latina mothers I talked and worked with in Hope City, in both forceful and taken-for-granted ways, claimed the higher ground in being more than capable (if not superior) in educating their children properly.

**ENFRENTAR EL HOGAR (TO FACE THE CHALLENGE OF THE HOME)**

Y como le digo, mi suegra, y mi pap ... me ense aron a qu e ten a que enfrentar mi hogar. [And like I tell you, my mother-in-law and my father ... they taught me ... to face the challenge of the home.]

--- Norma P rez, Hope City resident

Without a doubt, the Latina mothers of Hope City situated themselves within el hogar in their roles as mothers and educators of a moral education. In the process, they formulated their own stereotypes of U.S. women, whom they characterized as having too much libertinaje (licentious freedom) and too many vices. They talked about themselves as devoted to the home in comparison to their perception of the lax marriage and mothering attitudes abounding in the United States. Rocio Cordova's comment, "La mujer Americana no es hogare a" [The American woman is not of the home], was often voiced among the women. Rocio elaborated on her perceived differences between Latinas (in this case, Mexicanas) and U.S. women:

Well, in Mexico, el consejo [the advice] they give you is, for example, when they start to have boyfriends, "No, don't be going with your boyfriend [laughs] or you might end up with your domingo siete [seven Sunday]," like they say in Mexico when they get pregnant. And here, well, it's normal. ... And in Mexico it's not the same. Life is very different here compared to there [Mexico] ... from the time they're young, they're smoking and over there, NO. There it's very rare to see a woman smoking. ... Well, for someone who is Mexican, right, we have to teach them our country's customs. It's to our advantage. Well, here there are people with a lot of vices.

With these words, Rocio situated the Mexican family education of morals and virtue as superior to the family education of U.S. households, which, according to her, are permissive of licentious behaviors such as premarital sex, drinking, and smoking. While these beliefs are certainly ethnocentric stereotypes, indeed fed largely through U.S. media images, and while morality and women's virtue are much disputed in Mexico, what is important to consider here is how Rocio's gendered narrative of a moral education was also created against/within an internal dialogue of talking back to U.S. racism in both a reactive way (e.g., reversing the deficit framing), and in cultural reaffirmation. My point is that what I (and other Chicana feminists) would view as double-standard ideals of women’s virtue are reclaimed by Rocio and articulated as "cultural” values embedded in a Mexican education. Indeed, these articulated women's virtues are ideologies appropriated, improvised, and contested in the women's everyday lives. Yet, within the context of their deficit framing in the public sphere, Latina mothers such as Rocio emphasized the teaching of women's morality as part of a "superior" education rooted in the home. In this way, Latina mothers such as Rocio maneuvered between racial, linguistic, gendered, and religious discourses to highlight some oppressions and discursively reify others as the specific historical moment required. This moment of resilience in the face of racism urgently required a discursive commitment to el hogar—a cultural difference between Latina and U.S. women vehemently emphasized by Rocio and the other Latina mothers.

In another example, Norma P rez simultaneously criticized the conduct of U.S. women in their marriages while emphasizing the positive lessons she learned about marriage from her father:

Yes, my father ... like I say, he wasn't university educated but he had his different education. And like that, he raised us and, well, he taught us what you don't see here [chuckles]. That the wife should follow her husband's ideas and decisions. Not like here where one makes a decision over there and the other over there [waves her hand]. In other words, las costumbres [the customs] that we have in our roots. That the home is the home, and everyone should cooperate economically as well as emotionally, right?

Norma believed that equality in the home involves cooperation, but cooperation defined in terms of the gendered division of labor. For the most part, the mothers' work in the home was not seen as oppressive, as long as the men kept their end of the bargain in performing "men's work" and in caring for the family both economically and emotionally. Certainly, feminists, including Chicana feminists, may cringe at Norma's words about how "the wife should follow her husband's ideas." Indeed, it is not my intention here to rescue the women from Latino patriarchy, sexism, and even their own ethnocentrism vis-à-vis white women, or to romanticize women's situations in the home. (FN16)

Rather, my aim is to resituate their seizing of the home space as something other than mindless deference to Latino patriarchy. Their investment in el hogar was complexly agentic. As Mojanty states, women are constituted and reified by dominant discourses that reify their domination. Their investment in el hogar is framed by a history of U.S. imperialism and economic integration and domination that has pushed men, women, and their families to migrate north to escape dire conditions in their home countries. Their subsequent racialization in the United States affects women the most; while welcomed as cheap labor, they are unwelcome as "mothers" with their own cultural integrity. Cultural containment, surveillance, and assimilation occur in the practices of both benevolent and xenophobic racisms. Yet, within this context, the Latina mothers I talked and worked with in Hope City, in both forceful and taken-for-granted ways, claimed the higher ground in being more than capable (if not superior) in educating their children properly.

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Notwithstanding, enfrentar el hogar certainly entailed grappling with the contradictions of patriarchy and capitalism.
These Latina mothers were concerned about the lessons of survival they must also teach their daughters. Norma repeated the familiar phrase of the lesson that many Latina daughters hear from their mothers. This is the lesson of valerse por si misma (to make it on your own). Norma ponders this lesson in her wishes for her daughter's future:

She [my mother-in-law] taught us how, how a woman has to teach herself to valerse por si misma [get along on her own] without depending on anybody. "Because," she would say, "today you can get married, maybe things will go well, maybe they won't and you have to confront life." Yes ... I want her [my daughter] to be una mujer de hogar [a woman of the home], decent and everything, right? As is the dream of every mother. But yes to valerse por si misma. To make it on her own so that if tomorrow she faces a situation where her husband leaves her with all her children, well to know how to confront the situation, to pull through.

To be una mujer de hogar in a capitalist society steeped in racism and sexism is indeed wrought with difficulties and contradictions. For example, racialized mothers must teach their daughters to both fit into systems of oppression as well as to be critical of them lest they be willing participants of their own subordination (Collins 1991). For Latinas, to encourage a daughter to be una mujer de hogar is indeed, among other things, also about fitting into sanctified constructs of a good, virtuous woman. Ideally, marriage "protects" women both sexually (from other men) and economically, as well as providing women with a respected role in the community as a seora. Yet Latinas are well aware that marriage and mothering are less than ideal institutions, afflicted by poverty, violence, and abandonment. To valerse por si misma is the counterlesson of survival in a patriarchal society and is intertwined with transgressions of gendered ideologies. In Hope City, to enfrentar el hogar and to valerse por si misma were contestations and negotiations, appropriated as agentic expressions of resilience against racism and economic oppression in the United States.

However, Latina mothers' claim to the home space was also deficitly framed in the dominant public discourses of Hope City. While Latinas made it loud and clear that as centers of their hogar, they have a powerful role in the home and community as teachers of a "cultural" moral education, their positioning was nonetheless reframed in deficit terms. We can compare these women's stance with the Hope City newspaper article entitled "Literacy Void," in which the white male educator interviewed asserted that Latinas wanted to be like U.S. women. In speaking of machismo and women's illiteracy in Latino households, the educator's deficit framing of Latinas' appropriation of the home space was clear:

We are going to see a change in the [Hispanic] community in women's roles. ... Women see what American women are capable of doing--working outside the home, having a much more independent life, and being well educated and controlling their own destiny; they see that the old macho system isn't right.... Hispanic men don't want their women to learn English because they won't be able to control them as easily.

The educator placed "American" (racially coded for "white") women as superior and as models for Hope City Latinas to emulate. At the same time, he characterized Latinas mothers as "uneducated" and belonging to backward, controlling, "macho" families. Again, my intent is not to rescue Latino patriarchy but, rather, to say that it does not look like this, and that Latino patriarchy is no more sexist than white patriarchy. The latter point certainly goes unacknowledged by the adult educator in framing white women's lives and in not considering the effects of white patriarchy on Latina mothers. From the Latina mothers' cultural frame of reference, sexism was differently interpreted and framed. This man had no idea that Latina mothers thought the complete opposite about white women's roles and their "education." In fact, the "independence" he celebrated is precisely what Latinas criticized because to them it meant abandoning el hogar. In contrast to the representation of Latinas in this newspaper story, the mothers I worked with came back to el hogar, not as pawns or passive victims, but as strong and morally "educated" agents.

Finally, in coming back full circle, I have reconceptualized Latina mothers' appropriation of the home space by centering race and its intersections with women of color feminisms. Because racism has reconfigured these women's home lives in a way that breaks down the public/private sphere distinction, an understanding of women's claim to the home has required a race-based perspective. For example, Ada Hurtado (1996) argues that the public/private distinction is not relevant for women of color because, historically, the state has always intervened in the private lives of the working class, particularly in the lives of women of color. In contrast to the feminist slogan "the personal is political," Hurtado posits that women of color activism stems from the realization that the public sphere is personally political. That is, public policy has historically invaded the lives of women of color. Through welfare programs and policies, unauthorized sterilization, disproportionate numbers of sons, brothers and husbands of color in jail, women of color have been affected directly and disproportionately in comparison to white women (Hurtado 1996). For women of color, there has never been such a thing as a private sphere "except that which they manage to create and protect in an otherwise hostile environment" (Hurtado 1996:18). In Hope City, the practice of benevolent racism deeply involved the cultural surveillance and containment of the intimate lives of Latina mothers. For this reason, the space from which Latina mothers imparted a moral education was critical to the cultural and psychological preservation of diaspora Latino families building community in rural North Carolina.

**CONCLUSION: LATINA MOTHERS AND THE EMERGING LATINO DIASPORA EAST OF AZTL N**

While mothers told stories of discrimination and daily indignities of living in Hope City, as many others in the United States have done and continue to do, I have focused on stories of a moral education emanating from an agentic appropriation of the home space. As mothers struggled with negotiating their roles as mujeres de hogar (women of the home) against and alongside both Latino and white patriarchy, their acts of narration were firmly planted in cultural affirmation and resistance to cultural denigration. These mothers constructed their sense of "self" and community against interlocking structures of oppression that publicly positioned them as social service "clients" and as brown transnational workers who became targets of both benevolent and xenophobic racisms. However, it was in the intimate spaces of el hogar and comunidad (community) that these women claimed their dignity and "educated" identities in possessing and imparting to their children the most important kind of education--a moral one.

As such, these mothers' stories have critical implications for continued family and community resilience, in both the
public schools with respect to the new generation of "southeastern" Chicano/a youth, and in the wider community for a newly emerging Latino diaspora. For example, mothers are key to providing children with the cultural integrity to resist their deficit framing as "minority" students in the English-speaking/nonbilingual schools of Hope City. Certainly, new hybrid and diasporic forms of Chicana/o youth activism are in the making.

The Latina mothers' counternarratives can also be useful in conceptualizing the possibilities for resistance and collective action to bring about social change in Hope City. Good examples are documented of the kinds of social struggles needed to bring about significant change in Latino education through parent organizations (Delgado-Gaitán 1996) and political struggles (Donato 1997; Foley 1990; Soto 1997; Trueba et al. 1993). While Latino grassroots organizing was not yet present in Hope City at the time of this study, it is important to rethink mobilization in ways that do not privilege only those collective and public forms of protest (see Scott 1990). Indeed, as the mothers' education narratives reveal, the resistance that occurs in direct and subtle ways in the intimacy of the home is critically important. As Scott (1990) points out, the civil rights movement could not have happened without the prior 200 years of day-to-day resistance and the daily maintenance of pride and dignity through counterstories that challenged the masterscript of white superiority. In identifying themselves as the "best" educators of the most important moral masterscripts of the community, Latinas/os created counterstories of dignity and self-preservation that may well form the basis for future self-determination and future collective action in which needs are community-defined. Such collective action requires Latino community members to bring to the public what was already circulating in the intimacy of el hogar and in the comunidad of friends and coworkers. What was circulating is an understanding and critique of racism and discrimination in Hope City, and a reclamation of the dignity of a people.

Acknowledgments. I am indebted to las mujeres of Hope City who so generously shared their lives, words, and wisdom with me. I would like to thank Ed Buendia, Frank Margonis, Audrey Thompson, and Troy Richardson for their invaluably challenging questions on earlier drafts. Gracias a mi padre, Doug Foley for your insights. This study was funded in part by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center in Chapel Hill, the North Carolina Humanities Council, the Southern Oral History Project, and with support from the Spencer Foundation.

FOOTNOTES
1. All names of places and people are pseudonyms.

2. I am reminded here of Foley's (1995) example in his ethnography of the "sentimental" minority despair discourse used by white newspaper reporters to portray Mesquaki Indian families.

3. Aviar Brah explains that while gender is theorized as an important constitutive of labor, much less attention is paid to "racialised/ethnicised constructions of 'cultural difference' in the gendering of labour" (1996:128).

4. The women I interviewed came from diverse regions of Mexico and from Central and South America. Six of the women came from four different states in Mexico--from the northern state of Chihuahua to the southern state of Oaxaca. Two of the women came from different regions of Guatemala, and there was also one woman each who came from the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, and Colombia.

5. In addition to data collection from interviews and participant observations, I also analyzed public agency and town documents, including the Hope City daily newspaper.

6. I have taken these notions from Avtar Brah's (1996) list of seven domains important to a discussion of Muslim women's participation in British labor markets.

7. Ed Buendia (personal communication) pointed out that while the left-liberal approaches have not examined the connections between racial power and the political economy, cultural studies theorists (e.g., A. Appadurai, S. Hall, L. Grossberg, P. Gilroy, A. McRobbie, R. Williams, etc.) have been particularly interested in the relationship between institutional and cultural apparatuses and their proliferation and legitimation of symbols and identities.


9. It is very important to emphasize that to speak adequately about race and race relations in Hope City, a more extensive study was required in collaboration with African American community members. Race relations between Latinos/as and African Americans were very complex and were created at the nexus of discourses about competition for resources and jobs, socioeconomic class, English-speaking ability, citizenship, etc., and undergirded by white racial hegemony. Moreover, there were both African Americans and a few English-speaking middle-class Latin Americans in the community of social services and health professionals who I framed as practicing a benevolent racism vis-à-vis working-class Latina immigrant mothers. Finally, Latino men and women also racialized African Americans in the community. Latinas/os brought with them from their countries of origin particular racial beliefs and ideologies such as mestizajd, blanqueamiento (whitening), "negritude" and indigenista nationalism (see Whitten and Torres 1998). These ideologies provided the initial lens by which Latinas/os race-d others, stereotyping African Americans and all the while being hyperaware of how they themselves were being racialized. Yet I also witnessed Latinos/as challenging each other's racial stereotypes toward African Americans as they spoke critically about racism and labor exploitation in Hope City.

10. Hispanics was a term used by Latinos/as when speaking of a collective ethnic identity. It is important to emphasize that while Hispanic and Latino are terms used to refer to a largely diverse group of people from Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, we are similarly racialized as a monolithic group in the United States (Hidalgo 1998).

11. The list of women of color feminist and postcolonial writers is too extensive to cite, but a few include bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa, June Jordan, Cherríe Moraga, Emma P rez, Chela Sandoval, Patricia Hill Collins, Chandra Talpade...
Mojanty, Paula Gunn Allen, and Gayatri Spivak.

12. See Harrison 1998 for a succinct overview of the race dialogue within the field of anthropology.

13. Certainly the work of legal scholars Kimberl Crenshaw, Margaret Montoya, and Regina Austin, to name a few, has articulated Critical Race Theory together with a feminist analysis.


15. For the sake of space, I will regrettably be using mostly English translations of Spanish-language interviews.

16. I would like to thank Audrey Thompson for challenging me on this point.

17. Murillo and Villenas (1997) name the southeastern United States as “east of Aztlan.” Aztlan refers to the ancient homelands of the Aztec civilization, currently the southwestern United States.

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