Moral panic and the social construction of deviance: images of Latinos images of crime

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Moral panic and the social construction of deviance: Images of Latinos images of crime

by

Martha Melissa Dettman

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Sociology

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of
Martha Melissa Dettman
has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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ABSTRACT

Immigration issues have been at the forefront throughout history in the United States, contributing not only to population growth, but also creating greater amounts of diversity. It is estimated that if the current trends in immigration and birth rates continue the number of U.S. residents who are Latino or nonwhite will have more than doubled to nearly 115 million by the year 2020. This phenomenon is highly evident in the Midwest, a region traditionally characterized by a homogenous white Anglo European population. Information pertaining to immigration and non-European ethnic diversity in the Midwest does exist, however there is limited information pertaining to its presence in rural areas. Hence, this study proposes to research a small rural community in Northeast Iowa that has experienced the establishment of an immigrant Latino community within the past decade. The study focuses on how perceptions of Latino deviance are formed by the insiders (non-Latinos) of the community and how those perceptions affect attitudes towards Latinos, and consequently, the integration process of Latinos.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Immigration has been at the forefront of United States history, contributing both to population growth and greater racial and ethnic diversity. During the years 1776 through 1889, nearly 16 million immigrants migrated to the United States particularly from Northern and Western Europe. America received nearly 40.5 million immigrants in the years 1890 through 1965 (Carlson, 1994). During those years Central and Southern Europeans made up the bulk of the immigrants migrating to the United States. In 1965, amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act were passed, resulting in changes to the composition and numbers of non-natives. The years 1970 through 1989 saw the number of European immigrants decline, while the number of Asians and Latin Americans\(^1\) grew (Almaguer, 1994). These two immigrant groups grew so quickly that when combined they accounted for at least 80 percent of the total immigration to the US from the 1970s to the 1990s (Aponte & Siles, 1994; Carlson, 1994). Moreover, it is estimated that if the current trends in immigration and

\(^1\) Individuals from specific geographic regions such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay.
fertility continue, Latinos\(^2\) will be the largest racial/ethnic minority group by the year 2005 (Aponte & Siles, 1994).

This demographic phenomenon is evident throughout the US and not only in regions of the country traditionally known for its Latino population (i.e., Mexican Southwest, Puerto Rican Northeast, Cuban Miami). The Midwest\(^3\) is different from the other regions of the US in that it has been typically homogeneously white, rural, and agriculturally based. Within the past decade the Midwest has seen a dramatic increase in the Latino population (US Census Data, 1992; Aponte & Siles, 1994). Aponte and Siles (1994) indicate that between 1980 and 1990, the Latino population grew as a proportion of the total Midwestern population. More telling, the total White non-Latino population declined by 9.5 percent while the Latino population grew by more than 9 percent from 1990 to 1996 (Deardoff, 1998). The implications of this demographic shift are immense and raise a major challenge to predominately white, rural farming communities of the Midwest.

To illustrate, in the late 1880s the town of New Austin\(^4\), Iowa was settled by Scandinavian and German farmers. For the

\(^2\)The terms “Latino” and “Latinos” are used interchangeably with the terms “Hispanics.” They are both umbrella terms for individuals from Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Central and South American ancestry. In addition, the terms “Latina” and “Latinas” will be used when specifically discussing Hispanic females.

\(^3\)According to US Census Bureau classification, Midwestern states include Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

\(^4\)A pseudonym is being used for a Northeastern Iowa town.
past 100 years the legacy of the community's first settlers has been evident through its static ethnic composition. New Austin was established as and remained a white farming community until the late 1980s. The past decade has brought changes to the Norman Rockwell community of approximately 1,500 residents. In the late 1980s and early 1990s a kosher slaughterhouse and a turkey processing plant respectively opened their doors to local labor. The labor demand was too great to be met by workers in the local and surrounding communities, resulting in the plant's recruitment of "outside" labor (Taylor, Martin, & Fix, 1997).

This outside labor force was composed primarily of Latinos migrating from other regions of the US, as well as, Mexico and other Latin American countries (Taylor, Martin, & Fix, 1997). With them came a different culture many residents in New Austin had never experienced. It was as if over night two cultures found themselves in a symbiotic coexistence, a diverse cultural relationship that would require a blending and mixing of two distinct cultures.

Indeed, cultures are composed of a vast number of norms and guidelines that rule and govern individual behavior. When numerous cultures exist side by side it is possible that cultural norms of the host group will be broken by members of the outside group. Humans are evaluative creatures and judgments are continually being made about the behaviors and
characteristics of others. What may be germane in some cultural circles could easily be condemned in others. What emerges is the labeling of the outsiders' culture as social deviance, the disapproval of behaviors, traits, characteristics, or conditions that generate a condemnatory rejection of others not like them (Goode, 1997). In a simple form this rejection can manifest as stares or gossip, yet an extreme outcome of this labeling process is a moral panic. A moral panic occurs when the behaviors of community outsiders are perceived to be very problematic to community insiders. The actions are thought to be a threat to the very fabric of society and that serious steps are needed in order to restore harmony (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994; McRobbie & Thornton, 1995; Victor, 1994, 1998).

Past research regarding the study of deviance in rural communities has focused on highly homogenous populations (Jobes, 1992) or primarily on White/Black racial groups (Davis, 1990; Morris & Vincent, 1990). Information is also available on how Latinos are affected by the construction and maintenance of deviant stereotypes by the dominant group (Endore, 1944; Acuña, 1981; Mazón, 1984; Mirandé, 1987; Mata Jr., 1998; Rodríguez, 1998). However, the bulk of this research focuses primarily on Mexican-Americans in the Western and Southwestern United States. For example, Mazón (1984) discusses the Zoot-Suit Riots (1943) that ensued following the
Sleepy Lagoon murder (1942) in California. The riots were sparked as a result of negative stereotypes and hostile attitudes directed toward the Latino community. Little information is available pertaining to the construction of deviant stereotypes in Midwestern regions. New insights into the construction and maintenance of deviant stereotypes can be offered by studying interaction between Latinos and Anglos in Midwestern rural communities.

Hence, the purpose of this paper is to explore how perceptions of deviance are formed, maintained, and consequently, developed into a moral panic. Specifically, the study focuses on how perceptions of deviance are formed by the long-time Anglo community members of New Austin, and how those perceptions affect attitudes towards newcomers, and subsequently, how these attitudes affect the socialization process between long-time residents and newcomers.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The changing demography of New Austin is representative of what is occurring in many rural communities across the Midwest, which traditionally have been Anglo throughout their entire history. In large part, the re-structuring of food processing industries throughout the 1990s is responsible for this dramatic shift (Burke and Goudy, 1999).

Immigration in the Midwest

Although race/ethnic relations traditionally has been examined in urban centers, there is a growing body of literature pertaining to immigration and non-European ethnic diversity in rural areas (Bjerklie, 1995; Broadway, 1995; Gouveia & Stull, 1995; Grey, 1995; Griffith, 1995; Burke & Goudy, 1999). For example, 32,643 persons of Hispanic descent were reported living in Iowa by the US Census Bureau in 1990. Although the majority of counties had fewer than 100 Latinos, the most recent estimate suggests the Latino population grew by more than 74.4 percent, or an increase to 56,936 since the 1990 count (US Census Bureau, 1990; US Census Bureau, 1998).
Since 1980, the United States has admitted almost 15 million legal immigrants including 3.5 million Mexicans (Immigration & Naturalization Service, 1992). Most Latino immigrants reside in urban areas, but an estimated 2 to 5 million are living in rural or agricultural areas. The fruit, vegetable, and specialty crop sectors of US agriculture have employed Mexican migrant and immigrant labor for decades. Yet, a need for economic survival for immigrant farm workers has in the past usually required moving to urban areas in the Southwest, as well as the Midwest (Broadway, 1995). In the 1990s, a higher proportion of Latino immigrant workers spread beyond the Southwest and Florida to the Midwest than in years past. Many of these migrants have chosen to settle in the region with their families (Immigration & Naturalization Service, 1992).

The “Browning of the Midwest” has occurred as many immigrants are moving to rural areas where the food processing industry is a major attraction. Meatpacking plants offer year-round jobs that pay at least six to seven dollars per hour, which equates to twelve to eighteen thousand dollars per year. Seasonal farm workers earn only half as much as meatpacking workers at five to seven thousand dollars per year (Bjerlklie, 1995; Borjas, 1997). While, meatpacking jobs offer a greater wage than seasonal farm work, the annual income in most cases is still below the poverty line.
Nevertheless, there are more opportunities for families to survive in meatpacking communities than in areas where seasonal farm work is the dominant source of employment. As a result, the demographic face of many Midwestern rural communities has changed and raised new issues for many rural ranging from bilingual education to requests for providing public services in languages other than English (Aponte & Siles, 1994; Burke & Goudy, 1999).

Several areas of the US (i.e., California, Florida, New Mexico, etc.) have a strong Latino presence, leading to highly visible ethnic communities. The Latino communities in these areas offer services to Latinos by Latinos. The Latino community of New Austin does not have a long historical presence, therefore, many immigrant meatpacking workers are forced to obtain goods and services from Anglo providers contributing to an increased visibility. The visibility can lead to problems, as when law enforcement officials harass Latinos (Muñoz, Lopez, & Stewart, 1998). Conversely, the new population can also be of benefit to the community as an economic stimulant which would, for example, lead to extra services, as when banks and newspapers add Spanish-speaking personal to serve new customers (Carlson, 1994; Taylor, Martin, & Fix, 1997).

In many Iowa communities, the recent arrival of immigrants and US-Latinos began in the 1970s. First came
single men, including those who were recruited by employers in US-Mexico border regions and within Mexico. Then came the families of the single male Latinos who learned that they could afford to bring their families to rural Iowa because wages afforded family support for housing and other living costs. The third step included friends and relatives of earlier settlers, both documented and undocumented, who used social networks to get jobs with employers willing to hire immigrants with no English and little education (Bakan, 1971). This influx contributed to increased racial/ethnic tensions due to the Anglo belief that Latino immigrants were responsible for an increase in social deviance (McGraw, 1998).

Social Deviance and Moral Panics

Social deviance is the disapproval of nonconformative behaviors, traits, characteristics, or conditions that run counter to societal norms. All races and ethnic groups follow specific norms which are culturally germane. Consequently, when several cultures coexist in one community the risk of social deviance occurring is much greater than in a homogenous community. Perceived deviance and hostility are extensions of each other. Once categories of “us” versus “them” are established, deviants are identified and extremely small deviations from the norm become noticed, debated, judged, and
rectified (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Whenever strong emotions are activated, especially strongly negative ones, selective perception, stereotyping, and an inventory of predictable and readily recognizable elements usually accompany them. Stereotyping permits the insiders of a society to feel justified in strong, even savage condemnation. If an individual is a member of a despised category that is believed to share a host of undesirable characteristics, then unambiguous hostility toward them should not only be expected, it is demanded (Young, 1971; Cohen, 1971; Goode, 1973; Goode and Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

Jack Young (1971) and Stanley Cohen (1972, 1980) developed and effectively instituted the concept of “moral panic.” Their studies explore how agents of social control, like the police and community leaders, play a role in amplifying deviance. A special leadership status accompanies the positions of law enforcement and community heads. Therefore, if individuals in these positions react negatively to a specific group they are setting the response that the remainder of the community should share (Young, 1971; Cohen, 1972, 1980). They also developed a vocabulary for understanding the powerful part played by the media. As a result attention became directed to the ideological role of the media and the active construction of specific kinds of

During a moral panic, the behavior of particular members of a society is thought to be so troubling to the whole that serious steps must be taken to control the behavior, punish the perpetrators, and repair the damage. The threat represents a crisis for that society which must be dealt with immediately. A major strategy entails strengthening the social control mechanisms of society (i.e., law enforcement, education, or socialization), which can include renewed legal codes, as well as intense public hostility and condemnation (Goode, 1994; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). The feeling generated by this threat can be referred to as a kind of fever. It can be characterized by heightened emotion, fear, dread, anxiety, hostility, and a strong feeling of righteousness. The supposed individuals responsible for the threat posed to society are regarded as “folk devils” (Cohen, 1972), deviants, and outsiders, thus legitimizing them as “deserving” targets of anger, hostility, and punishment.

A moral panic is defined by five elements or criteria: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility (Goode, 1994; Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). First, there must be a heightened level of concern over the behavior of a certain group of people and the consequences that this group’s behavior presumably has for the rest of society. The
concern should be manifested or measurable in concrete ways, through, for example, public opinion polls, public criticism in the form of media attention, and social movement activity.

There must also be an elevated level of hostility toward a group or category of people thought to be associated with the threatening behavior. Members of this group are collectively designated as the enemy of society. Their behavior and presence is viewed as harmful or threatening to the values, interests, and sometimes the existence of a segment of that society. A clearly identifiable group (e.g., by skin color, ethnic background, age, language) in the society must be seen as responsible for the threat. As a result a distinction is made between "us" (i.e., the good, decent, and respectable) and "them" (i.e., deviants, undesirables, outsiders, and criminals). The dichotomization includes stereotyping, or the generation of folk devils and heroes (Cohen, 1972).

There must be substantial or widespread consensus that the perceived threat is real, serious, and caused by the outsiders. Moral panics come in different sizes, some affecting the vast majority of the members of a society at a given time and others creating concern only among several of its groups or categories. Consensus that a problem exists and should be dealt with can grip the residents of a group or
community, but may be lacking in the society as a whole. This does not mean that a moral panic does not exist, as some discussions do not even assert widespread public concern as an essential defining element (Zatz, 1987).

Disproportionality is the implicit assumption in the use of the term moral panic that there is a sense on the part of many members in a community that a more sizable number of individuals are engaged in the behavior in question than actually are. In addition, the threat, danger, or damage said to be caused is far more substantial than a realistic appraisal would support (Davis and Stasz, 1990). The term moral panic conveys the implication that public concern is in excess of what is appropriate. This could be observed through an analysis of crimes recorded in comparison to public perceptions.

Lastly, by their very nature moral panics are volatile. They erupt suddenly, may lie dormant for long periods of time, reappear from time to time, and subside with equal rapidity. The degree of hostility generated during a moral panic tends to be fairly limited temporally. The heightened emotion that characterizes a society during the moral panic and its course is typically not sustainable over a long stretch of time. In that respect, it is similar to fashion, fads, and crazes; the
moral panic is, therefore, a form of collective behavior (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994).

Moreover, a moral panic is identifiable when four dimensions overlap: deviance, social problems, collective behavior, and social movements (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 1994). Deviance accounts for the moral aspect of a moral panic, that is the behavior regarded as immoral is more likely to generate public concern and fear than is more traditional behavior. The definition of a social problem accounts for the public concern of a moral panic. A social problem is identifiable when a large portion of the population is aware of and concerned about a given condition. Panic represents a heightened form of awareness and concern. Collective behavior accounts for the volatility in moral panics. Like fads, moral panics erupt suddenly and are usually unexpected. Social movements address issues of organization and mobilization of concerned segments of the population which have the capabilities to change social conditions. This is observed when community forums institute and implement laws to rectify the perceived problem.

A Historical Perspective of Latinos/as and Moral Panics

There are numerous examples depicting Latinos as folk devils in moral panics (Goode & Ben-Yehuda). The attitudes
toward Mexicans during the time of the Mexican-American War were of disdain and disgust (Mazón, 1984; Mirandé, 1987). The contempt held for Latinos served as the foundation for the numerous social injustices that occurred. The hostility and hate stemmed from unfounded stereotypes likening Mexicans to mean and blood-thirsty savages. When Anglos took over what is presently the Southwest United States, it was more than a political victory, but rather a racial and ethnic conquering. DeLeón (1983) contends the friction between Anglos and Latinos was due largely to racist undertones. It is argued that most Anglos had no prior experiences with Mexicans, and due to their pious Puritan backgrounds, automatically viewed Latinos as an inferior and barbaric race. The negative attitudes manifested by many Puritan Anglos were perpetuated by the ethos of manifest destiny, the belief of being predestined by God, in this case, to rule over others (Mirandé, 1987).

Throughout US history anti-Mexican feelings have been especially intense when the United States has been at war, due largely to antagonistic sentiments towards those regarded as foreigners. Because of American engagement in WW II after the infamous Pearl Harbor attack by Japan, American hostilities were directed to the many Japanese-Americans living in US coastal regions. During this time many Japanese-Americans were moved inland from the coast to re-location camps. Many US servicemen redirected hostile feelings from
the once visible Japanese-American (foreigners) to Mexican-American (foreigners), particularly, those individuals who dawned the identifiable zoot-suit. The aggression directed toward zoot-suiters during the 1943 Zoot-Suit Riots symbolized the eradication of the (foreign) adversary. The Zoot-Suit Riots had an important symbolic function, the annihilation of an enemy and a means for dealing with tensions, innuendoes, and frustrations experienced by American servicemen (Mirandé, 1987).

The Zoot-Suit Riots occurred against this backdrop of hate and vengeance toward the Mexican-American community in Los Angeles the night of June 3, 1943. Eleven sailors on shore leave stated that they were attacked by a group of Mexican pachucos⁵ (Mazón, 1984). In response to this, a group of over 200 uniformed sailors chartered 20 cabs and charged into the heart of the Mexican-American community in East Los Angeles. Any Mexican-American zoot-suiter was fair game to attack. On this and the following nights, many zoot-suiters were beaten and stripped of their clothes. Nine sailors were arrested during these disturbances and not one was charged with any crime. On subsequent nights servicemen again invaded East Los Angeles, breaking into bars and theaters, and assaulting anyone in their way. Not one Anglo was arrested by

⁵ This term is a pejorative term which is a synonym for lower-class, uneducated, and/of recently arrived Mexicans.
the police, in fact, the servicemen were portrayed in the local press as heroes hampering the tide of the "Mexican crime wave." Time Magazine later reported, "The police practice was to accompany the caravans of sailors in police cares, watch the beatings, and jail the victims" (Time Magazine, June 21, 1943).

Classically illustrated by the Zoot-Suit Riots, the symbolic annihilation of Latinos in popular media and historical accounts can be viewed as the outcome of moral panic (Mazón, 1984; Mirandé, 1987; Valdivia, 1998). Anglos showed heightened concern about Mexican-Americans. Hostility was clearly illustrated through the attack by servicemen on the East Los Angeles Mexican-American community and consensus was displayed by the agreement among servicemen, law officers, and the media that Mexican-Americans were responsible for a crime wave and posed a threat to society. Additionally, the presence of disproportionality was evidenced by every Mexican being deemed as criminal. The volatility of the episode was clearly demonstrated when the riots erupted and quickly ended in little more than one week.

Unfortunately, Latinos continue to be the victims of police abuse and injustice, the outgrowth of their typical portrayal as a violent and criminally prone group of people. Media accounts of Latinos greatly impact the formation and perpetuation of negative stereotypes. Throughout history
Hollywood has chosen to typecast Latinos in what Berg (1997) has identified as six distinct stereotypes: the bandido, the half-breed harlot, the male baffoon, the female clown, the Latin lover, and the dark intelligent, attractive, and enigmatic woman who is willing to double-cross her Anglo lover (Tuchman, 1978). Media portrayals are quite significant, because they shape and reify public conceptions of Latinos held by Anglos and negatively influence social interaction between Latinos and Anglos (Mirandé, 1987). In other words, because Latinos have lacked the power to create and shape images of themselves, social injustices can be committed against them with relative social acceptance (Mirandé, 1987).

The historical acceptance of police brutality directed towards Latinos can be seen with the unjustifiable killings of Latinos along the border. The Center for Immigration Research at the University of Houston (1999) estimates every year at least 300 migrants die along the border (Gonzalez & Rodríguez, 2000). Abuse by law enforcement and social injustices are serious problems that reflect not only the attitudes of individuals, but are representative of American society. Undoubtedly, they are reinforced by anti-immigrant rhetoric apparent in immigrant reform measures and "English-Only" movements (Wirpsa, 1996; Nunberg, 1997; Santoro, 1999; Elvin, 2000). Most notable are media reports of powerful Mexican drug cartels taking hold of rural America (McGraw, 1998).
New Austin - Contributing Factors

Immigration to the United States has historically been ushered in with random levels of hostility and unfortunately New Austin is not immune. In 1990, the US Census Bureau counted 42 Latinos living in the Northeast county where the approximate 1,500 residents of New Austin are located. The 1998 estimate revealed approximately 147 individuals of Hispanic origin residing in the Northeast county, an increase of 105 individuals or 350 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1990; U.S. Census Bureau 1998; Burke & Goudy, 1999). It is imperative to be mindful that these numbers are merely estimates and that in fact the numbers are most likely conservative estimates. Many of these Latino workers are in the food-processing sector and are becoming permanent community residents (Burke & Goudy, 1999). This dramatic change in the population of New Austin has created the possible conditions for a moral panic to occur. In order to better understand and reveal how a moral panic is developed and maintained, and how it affects socialization processes, it is necessary to delve into the social realities of everyday life. The methods by which the social lives of Anglos and Latinos are explored in New Austin are discussed in the succeeding section.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Rural phenomena are not easy to study using quantitative methods such as questionnaire or secondary level data. Questionnaires, a widely used quantitative research tool, have the capability to offer a plethora of information; nonetheless, this particular research method was not the most appropriate to use for this study for several reasons. First, questionnaires do not allow for an exchange of dialogue to occur between the researcher and the subject. For example, when a subject indicates vague responses there is no opportunity for the researcher to follow with probes or seek clarification. Also, language itself can be a barrier with questionnaires. It is very important that questions be worded clearly and in a language that is comprehensible. When examining several different ethnic/racial groups language differences may become an issue such as between Anglos and Latinos. Qualitative research methods allow for face to face interaction between researcher and subjects, and consequently can take into account the need for languages other than English. Although English was the primary language used in interviews with Latinos, case study methodology allowed the
researcher the benefit of rephrasing questions to make them clearer.

Secondary level data are useful for generating a macro image, however they fall short in offering intimate details about individuals' attitudes and perceptions (Bogdan, 1975; Berg, 1998). For example, secondary level data are available on important sociodemographic characteristics, including the total number of Latinos and Anglos living in New Austin. However, the data fail to reveal the social dynamics surrounding Latino and Anglo interactions, such as how Anglos construct perceptions of deviance and subsequently how those notions affect the Latino socialization process.

Qualitative research methods are also an appropriate form of methodology for exploring diverse social settings and the people who live in those settings (Feagin, Orum, & Sjoberg, 1991), as in the case of New Austin. In this case, members of the Latino population may be transient, therefore not having an address where a questionnaire could be sent.

**Methods and Data**

This research utilizes qualitative case-study methods employing semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and media analysis. Case study methods involve systematically gathering enough information about a particular social setting
or group to permit researchers to effectively understand how it operates or functions. It is not actually a data-gathering technique itself, but rather a methodological approach that incorporates a number of data-gathering measures (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg, 1991; Sjoberg et al., 1991; Hamel, Dufour, & Fortin, 1993).

The scientific benefit of the case study method lies in its ability to open the way for discoveries (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1990). It can serve as an arena for insights and even hypotheses that may be examined in future inquiries. For many people, this reliance on a single case poses a problem of how far it is possible to generalize the results of such research. An approach to the problem of case study generalization is to seek a case which is "typical" of a certain cluster of characteristics. Subsequent researchers can then examine similar cases and compare the findings. New Austin is representative of what is taking place in many rural communities across the Midwest (McRobbie & Thornton, 1995; Victor & Hunt, 1997). Therefore, other researchers can examine comparable cases to the community and generalizations can be made as evidence is accumulated (Kennedy, 1979). If the investigators' findings and analysis are reliable and valid, subsequent research will corroborate this. Case study methods are as objective as any other data collection and analysis strategies used by social scientists.
This study focuses on the small rural community of New Austin, Iowa. The recent influx of Latino immigrant labor has allowed for considerable cultural (or subcultural) heterogeneity, and therefore, diffuse interactions and relationships between members. This case study approach allows for the systematic gathering of information provided through interviews with key informants, community events, and participant observations of activities. This approach offers insights into who takes part in community activities and events and for what purposes. It also allows for better examination of the social forces that bind community members together or keep them apart.

Entry into the Anglo and Latino communities of New Austin was facilitated through the Executive Director for the Division of Latino Affairs for the State of Iowa. The investigator and the Executive Director engaged into a conversation at a job quality conference and discovered a similar interest in migrant Latino communities in rural Iowa. The Executive Director revealed that the Division for Latino Affairs was asked for integration assistance from a New Austin business owner and long-time resident active in public affairs. The investigator was invited by the Executive Director to travel to New Austin and meet with community leaders fully aware of the research possibilities that could arise. As a result of this meeting, the investigator
eventually came into contact with an Anglo entrepreneur who would act as the study’s key informant.

The key informant was able to legitimize the investigator’s presence, give credence to the study, and aid in obtaining the population sample. Anglo informants were highly visible and respected community members. They were individuals Latinos usually turned to for friendship, advice, and counsel about such issues as those associated with documentation concerns. Fortunately, the trust Latinos had in Anglo key informants carried over to the investigator when they agreed to also participate in the study.

These initial key informants were then asked, at the end of interviews for the names of individuals they thought would have additional insights to offer. This technique of acquiring additional respondents through key informants is known as snowball sampling (Berg, 1998), and it further facilitated the investigator’s entry into and rapport within the community (Orum, Feagin, & Sjoberg 1991; Sjoberg et al., 1991; Berg, 1999).

In-depth interview data for this study were drawn from sixteen individuals (5 Latino and 11 Anglo) using semi-structured focused interview (Berg, 1998) sessions that lasted between 15 and 90 minutes. Informed consent, the knowing consent of individuals to participate as an exercise of their choice (Berg, 1998), was verbally obtained from each
individual involved in the semi-structured interview process. This was accomplished by informing interview subjects of the nature and scope of the study during the initial face to face contact as required by informed consent rules of Iowa State University (Berg, 1998). In participant observation it is not practical to obtain signed informed consent of all the subjects, as the subjects are numerous and changing and include persons who may only occasionally visit the research sites. Also, in ethnographic research, an effort is made to record social observations in a natural setting, and signed informed consent would disturb this setting. Signed informed consent often represents a barrier in the establishment of rapport, a quality in the subject-researcher relationship that is crucial to successful semi-structured interviewing.

The research protocol of the semi-structured focused interview (Berg, 1998) differs from the structured interview in that it does not utilize strict schedules or lists of questions. The interviews incorporated a number of predetermined questions that were typically asked of each respondent; however, questions were asked in a way that allowed for probing beyond respondents' initial answers. Researchers must develop, adapt, and generate questions and

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6 See Appendix A for more details regarding confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.
7 For examples of standard questions used in interviews please see Appendix B.
follow-up probes appropriate to the given situation and the central purpose of the research. This results in appropriate and relevant questions arising from interactions during the interview itself (Schwartz & Jacobs, 1979). The limited structure of the interview allows researchers to gain additional information about various phenomena that is observed by asking respondents questions. This type of interview is useful for establishing rapport when researchers are unfamiliar with respondents' life styles, religious, or ethnic cultures or customs.

The interviews took place in local shops, restaurants, and public areas such as sidewalks and park benches. In the majority of cases, interviews were scheduled through the key informants. In several instances, interviews were in progress when an acquaintance of the respondent voluntarily joined the interview session at the respondent's invitation. Respondents ranged in age from approximately 23 to 65 years. Eight females and eight males were interviewed. The majority of respondents were married with four respondents identifying themselves as single. Respondents' occupations ranged between entrepreneurs, journalists, educators, law enforcement officials, housewives, meat-packing employees, and retirees. Additionally, respondents' levels of education varied from some high school education to a four-year college degree.
In addition to interview data, approximately 30 hours of participant/nonparticipant observations (Berg, 1998) were conducted and field notes logged in order to cross-reference informants' responses. Observations occurred at various community events, such as Chamber of Commerce meetings or "Diversity Team" gatherings. Chamber of Commerce meetings provided an atmosphere to observe community entrepreneurs and their attitudes towards serving the Latino community. These meetings usually occurred weekly, typically over the lunch hour. Diversity team meetings offered insights into what a segment of the Anglo community is doing to promote integration and cultural understanding. These meetings were also held weekly, however they occurred in the evenings after the dinner hour. Observations obtained in these formal settings offered comparative insights to interview data concerning the attitudes and perceptions of Anglo community leaders. Observations at these meetings also gave insights into and the social forces binding together Anglo members of New Austin. At the time of this study there were no Latinos who belonged to the Chamber of Commerce or Diversity Team.

Observations also occurred in public areas - the community's main street, business district, and residential areas - at various times of the day. The purpose of making observations at different times of the day was to obtain a more complete composite of daily Anglo and Latino
interactions. The informal setting allowed insights into the commonplace interactions between Anglos and Latinos in the community. Such as, if Anglos and Latinos greet each other when passing on the sidewalk.

Finally, unobtrusive data collection techniques were utilized. Interviews and community observations, to some degree, are intrusive upon the individuals being studied. Through the examination of popular media accounts – any written, drawn, or recorded material produced for general or mass consumption – the individual respondent per se, is not as encroached upon hence the name unobtrusive measure (Berg, 1998). Media reports are a form of unobtrusive data. This type of data also works to substantiate subjects’ responses regarding moral panics and socialization processes. Anytime a researcher questions respondents about past events there is a risk of error due to incomplete recall. Media accounts can lend credence to respondents’ replies because they are documented social artifacts. Local weekly newspapers spanning the past decade were obtained and analyzed for indications of a moral panic. Weekly newspaper accounts, specifically editorials, were analyzed for themes relevant to the study.
Analysis

In terms of data analysis, frame analysis was utilized. Erving Goffman (1974) introduced frame analysis as being about the structure of experience individuals have at moments in their social lives. A frame refers to the, "inevitably relational dimension of meaning" (Goffman, 1974: xiii). In this study, the "dimension of meaning" refers to the meaning conveyed in respondent interviews, observations, and editorial opinions. In this sense, frame analysis is a theoretical perspective which can be applied to understand how individuals construct perceptions of their social realities.

Interviews, field notes, and popular media accounts are not amenable to analysis until the information has been condensed and made systematically comparable. An objective coding scheme can be applied to the notes or data in a process known as content analysis (Holsti, 1968; Berg, 1998). It can be thought of as a means for disseminating the words of a specific text, thus offering an applied understanding of the author of the words.

The five criteria for a moral panic - concern hostility, consensus, volatility, and disproportionality - were divided into categorical frames. Interview data, observations and editorial comments were analyzed for their content and meaning and then categorized into one of the five aforementioned
frames. Attention was given to specific themes, pertinent emphasis on various topics, and amount of space or time devoted to specific subjects. Separate files were kept for data that supported each frame. This strategy produced a rich examination of the contextual data and allowed for measurement of moral panic criteria.

In light of the above discussion on deviance, moral panics, and socialization processes, two general empirical questions emerged: 1) Has increased Latino immigration forged the necessary conditions for a moral panic to occur in New Austin? and 2) If so, how has this moral panic affected interaction processes between Anglos and Latinos. From this, several specific hypotheses are formulated using the criteria that determine the existence of a moral panic?

H1: New Austin Anglos’ predetermined beliefs that Latinos are criminally prone and engage in deviant behavior will lead to the development of a moral panic.

H2: New Austin Anglos will have deep concern over the increased presence of Latinos as well as their behaviors.

H3: New Austin Anglos will have heightened levels of hostility towards Latinos which will result in dichotomization, stereotyping, and the generation of folk devils and heroes.
H4: There will be substantial *consensus* among New Austin Anglos that Latinos pose a threat to their way of life.

H5: New Austin Anglos will perceive a *disproportionate* number of Latinos engaging in unlawful acts.

H6: New Austin Anglos' negative sentiments toward Latinos will be characterized by a state of *volatility*.

H7: The existence of a moral panic will negatively affect social interaction processes between Anglos and Latinos.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The findings of this research indicate general support for the existence of a moral panic. In particular there was ample support for H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, and limited support for H6. There was mixed support for H7 where a moral panic spurred negative interactions for Anglos, but showed little effect for Latinos. The following sections will expand upon these findings. It is important to note that support for hypothesis statements are not mutually exclusive and there is overlap. For example, interview responses, observations, and media accounts may have multiple characteristics of a moral panic embedded within their context. The subsequent sections will begin with findings pertaining to Anglo perceptions and then follow through with data on Latino insights.

Initial Anglo Perceptions

Latinos first began arriving to New Austin in 1991, as the result of employment opportunities in the meat packing industry. Initially, Latinos went largely unnoticed due to their low numbers, but even more so because of a preoccupation
with a growing Hasidic Jewish population. According to a local Anglo business owner,

We didn’t even really notice them at first. There seemed to be only several of them, maybe single guys. We were more concerned with the Hasidic Jews. They stuck out more and we didn’t know anything about them.

It was the consensus of many Anglo residents in the community that Latino migration was of minimal concern, not because the community was welcoming or open to the new ethnic group, but due to a lack of visibility. Latinos were tolerated and because their numbers were so few they did not pose a threat to the cultural fabric of the Anglo community.

Whatever acceptance the community had for the newcomers, it was short-lived. As more individuals began to migrate into the community the level of concern began to increase. Families and young single men began to arrive adding to the growing population. A local Anglo entrepreneur expresses,

I didn’t pay much attention at first. I knew they were there. Things seemed to be just fine until hordes of them started to move in. I don’t know if there was a sign some place that said, “If you’re Mexican, New Austin is the place to be,” but it sure seemed that way.
New Austin was at a loss, community attentions had been directed toward the Hasidic Jews through community forums aimed at explaining the characteristics and practices associated with Hasidic Jewish culture. Because they were the first "different" group to arrive and their numbers greatly outweighed those of incoming Latinos it was as if overnight, New Austin realized it needed to adapt to accommodate the growing Latino population that had virtually gone unnoticed. The findings of this study reveal that the conditions for a moral panic were not evident when Latinos began to arrive in New Austin. Over the past decade, however, the changing community dynamics impeded social interaction, integration, and the formation of mutual cultural respect.

Findings for H1

New Austin Anglos have a tendency to believe Latinos are a criminally prone group and regularly engage in deviant behavior. Interviews, observations, and media accounts lend general support to this notion. An Anglo housewife comments,

A lot of the problems in this community do come from the trouble Mexicans get into. If it’s not getting pulled over for OMVI (operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated) it something else. I really think it’s just the way they are.
The Anglo woman communicates a belief that Latinos are inherently prone to engaging in deviance. This belief, characteristic of many Anglos in New Austin, has led to the development of moral panic conditions.

Observations also support the Anglo contention that Latinos are criminally prone as researcher’s field notes indicate,

There is one white woman walking down the street.
There are several young Latinos about to pass her.
As they meet the young woman grabs her purse and pulls it close.

The young woman in this scene grabbed her purse because she was alarmed by the young Latinos presence. She was acting on the assumption that Latino men are criminally prone and may try to snatch her purse, thus causing her to hold it close.

Additionally, editorials found in the local New Austin newspaper support notions of Latino criminality. An Anglo woman writes,

... my husband and son were involved in an accident. The driver of the car has no license, no insurance, and failed to stop at the stop sign . . . I don’t know the answer to this problem, but maybe if the employers of these people that don’t speak English and say they don’t understand English, would have someone who speaks
their language explain to them that you don’t drive a car unless you have a license and insurance, and it’s against the law if you do, and someone has to pay for the damage that is done. I am so thankful my family wasn’t seriously injured. Will everyone be that fortunate?

The comments made in the editorial suggest all “foreigners,” or Latinos within the community are prone to this type of criminal behavior. The author of this editorial fails to take into consideration the number of Anglo individuals who drive without a license or fail to have insurance. The woman is specifically citing Latinos as those who perpetuate crime.

Lastly the combined support demonstrated for the following hypotheses though interviews, observations, and media accounts culminates in the general support for H1. The subsequent discussion will focus on the findings pertaining to H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, and H7, as relates to perceptions of Anglos and Latinos.

Findings for H2

There is a heightened level of concern regarding the Latino population in New Austin. Concern is measurable in several concrete ways: public opinion polls, public criticism in the form of media attention, and social movement activity.
In the case of New Austin, concern presents itself through newspaper articles, editorials, and collective behavior.

Table 1. Anglo Perceptions of Concern in Media Accounts

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(N = 26)

As the number of years Latinos have resided in New Austin increased, the number of media accounts also rose. In 1991, there were 0 articles/editorials in the local paper, however, in 1994 there were 6, and in 1998 and 1999 combined there were 20. The newspaper accounts indirectly address the Latinos by discussing the removal of a trailer park that is predominately composed of Latino residents. Additional criticisms have centered on lawn care, the use of public benches, and loitering. A New Austin Anglo writes in the following editorial,

We, the LONG TIME RESIDENTS of New Austin, are tired of the lack of respect and common courtesy from the diverse cultures toward us and our properties. This lack is causing a great deal of ill will. If the many newcomers to our town honestly want to live here peacefully and have
cooperation, I would think they would think they would want to have some pride in their homes and the town that they have apparently chosen to live in. I would not expect them to leave their customs and living habits and adapt to ours, but it seems that not all of the habits are conducive to healthy living. I believe I speak for the majority of Long Time New Austin residents when I say, "We do not want our town looking like ghettos of Mexico, or anyplace else."

Collective behavior is an additional medium to examine the presence of concern. One long-time Anglo educator revealed there were very few media accounts when Latinos initially arrived in the community, however, community residents were engaging in informal conversations to discuss their feelings regarding the incoming Latinos,

No, I can't say that I really remember anything being written in the paper when they first started to arrive. I do remember though that there were quite a few folks talking amongst themselves about how they weren't too thrilled with having Hispanics come to town.

In some cases, pockets of community residents would meet and then spread anti-Latino sentiments (i.e., rumors and negative
stereotypes) throughout New Austin. The gathering and organization of Anglos are reminiscent of the infant stages of social movement activity.

Observations reinforce respondents’ statements. The investigator was able to observe Anglo community members at a Chamber of Commerce meeting. During the meeting several New Austin residents engaged in conversation with the researcher. Field notes from that encounter reveal gossip involving Latinos,

Three young women just sat down at the table next to mine. They are talking about someone they suspect is involved with drugs. The person they are discussing is said to be Mexican. One woman comments she’s not surprised if the person is involved and that in her opinion all Mexicans do drugs.

Taking into consideration New Austin media accounts, the infancy of social movement activity, and observations, findings indicate general support for H2.

Anglo respondents additionally discussed concern in the context of language barriers. An Anglo meat-packing worker comments,

I don’t speak Spanish. It makes it really difficult to have to work next to someone you can’t communicate with. I think that’s one of the things
that really worried me most when more and more them (Latinos) began moving to the community. And you know, it’s hard too. Like when you go and you see some the Mexicans and it’s not like I can talk with them. Heck, most of them don’t speak English, so then what do you do?

Attempting to communicate without a common language is a challenge, and requires effort. Perhaps, as in the case of the aforementioned meat-packing worker, there were times when communication attempts needed to be made at work, however, when individuals are placed in a non-work setting there is no mandate forcing communication for either party.

Alternatively, findings indicate that Latinos were also aware of Anglo consensus about their increased presence. To illustrate, a Latino man from Guatemala tried to address Anglo concern through an editorial explaining who he was as well as others from Guatemala. It is interesting to note the distinction he makes between Guatemalans and Mexicans in his editorial. He states,

I ask God and also the people of New Austin that you realize my torment about the problems and difficulties that some of the Latin Americans are causing in this beautiful town. I want you to know that we are not causing problems, because they are Mexicans and we are Guatemalans. The difference is
that the Mexicans are violent, abusive, and don’t respect their elders. But, thanks to God, we still act with the respect our parents taught us. For this reason we ask not to confuse us with the Mexicans.

For the most part, Latinos interviewed for this study were aware of Anglo concern. However, the concern was typically perceived by Latinos as being the fault of other Latino groups. For example, if a respondent is Mexican, then Anglo concern is due to Guatemalan actions and vice versa.

Findings for H3

Hostility, as a component of a moral panic, occurs because the dominant group (Anglos) view others (Latinos) as a cultural threat. Findings do indicate support for H3 regarding the presence of hostility toward Latinos. The Latino residents of New Austin have been clearly designated by some as the enemy. An Anglo housewife comments,

I get so tired of driving down the street and always seeing them sitting on the corner. You would think they would have better things to do with their time than just sit.

A New Austin Anglo retiree indicates,
Several months ago they tried to rape a girl - it’s not safe if you’re a young woman to be around such men.

If the alleged rape was perpetrated by a young white man, the crime would not be generalized to the entire Anglo population of the community, however, it is in the case of the young Latino. The Latino presence is viewed as threatening to the values and interests of some New Austin residents. A distinction has been made between “us” and “them,” which has led to the creation of folk devils and heroes (Cohen, 1972).

Latinos are thought of as outsiders and are construed into one large homogenous group. An Anglo woman communicates, You don’t have to worry about our boys. They were brought up around here and you know they are good boys. Those Mexicans, though, you have to watch out for. You never know what could happen, especially when you get a few beers in them. I would not want to be a single woman alone with anyone of them.

Moreover, it is considered deviant for a Latino to sit on the public benches of New Austin. More telling, observations reveal a life-long Anglo resident is not perceived as deviant for the same action. The researcher’s field notes disclose, The two Anglo ladies are staring in disgust at the young Latinos resting on public bench. The ladies
are talking about how they are always there - just watching. Several minutes later the young men get up and leave and an elderly Anglo man stops to rest. The ladies begin to chat that it is so nice the benches are there for people "like Wilbur" to use and how much he gets a pleasure out of sitting and just watching the cars and people pass by.

Hostility is also measurable through negative stereotyping. An Anglo man in the food processing industry reveals,

There are a lot of people around here that think most of the Mexicans are involved in drugs. A lot of them are illegal too. I know, I see it working at the plant.

A retired New Austin Anglo woman adds,

I heard my neighbor say that she tells her daughters to stay away from those young Mexican men. She says they can be trouble, you know what I mean.

Stereotypes are detrimental and they greatly distort reality. The interview excerpts above reinforce the negative images of the bandido and Latin Lover (Berg, 1997). The response pertaining to documentation reveals how Latinos are viewed by Anglos. The idea that many Latinos are undocumented may or may not be true, however, it negatively impacts the Latino community by removing credibility and legitimization from
those who are documented. Interviews reveal a shooting that occurred in New Austin between two Mexican men. Following the incident, informal reports indicate approximately half of Latino workers left the community due to documentation issues and fear of INS involvement. However, the other half of Latino workers remained signifying the presence legally documented workers.

Sometimes hostility can be found in the most unlikely places. In this instance a retired Anglo woman who has lived in New Austin her entire life communicates shared feelings of animosity toward Latino Catholics,

My friends and I always went to 5:15 mass every Saturday evening. That was our time to go, but now we got this new priest and he’s trying to be accommodating to those Mexicans. You know what, mass on Saturday isn’t in English anymore. It’s in Spanish. I can’t speak Spanish...when am I supposed to go to church. All of us are upset about this.

Anglo hostility is felt by the Latino community. Latino respondents indicate an awareness of Anglo stereotypes and bitterness. It is interesting, moreover, that while Latinos are aware of the animosity, there is not a lot of daily focus on it. The following response from a Latina mother conveys this notion,
Anger could be there, but we don’t really pay too much attention to it. We have bigger things to worry about, like feeding our children. A lot of Mexicans also don’t speak English, so they just are not aware if anything negative is being said about them.

While, some Latinos shift focus from Anglo hostility to their daily lives, other Latinos have a more difficult time escaping it. The public school system is one place where hostility is quite apparent. A Latino youth explains,

The high school is the worst. I’d walk down the hall and I would see the white kids trying to start something. They’d be calling people names and really trying to get something going. It’s funny when you think about how whites always think we are the problem starters, but 9 times out of 10, it is the white kids who start it. You know these kids are hearing these bad things elsewhere, probably at home from their parents.

And some respondents indicated mixed feelings about the hostility. A Latina volunteer discloses,

I had to be careful of who I was around and what I said. I did have some good friends that I made, but there were also times when I would enter the lounge
and everyone talking would just stop and stare at me. I could tell my presence made them feel uneasy. Respondents suggested they were aware of hostile feelings directed towards them. However, most were unaware of the extent to which Anglos harbored hostility.

Findings H4

Research findings suggest general support for H4. Data indicate consensus of a perceived threat to the moral fabric of New Austin. Consensus is present when a segment of the "inside" (Anglo) population is in agreement that outsiders (Latinos) pose a threat to the moral fabric of society.

Similar to concern, consensus can be detected in the reinforced beliefs of negative ethnic stereotypes and mass behaviors such as rumor and gossip. Rumors appear in the form of unsubstantiated information spread informally, and often by word of mouth. They typically thrive in time of ambiguity, when people lack definitive information about important issues. For example, an Anglo retiree relays the following rumor,

I bumped into one of the ladies I used to work with. She told me that a bunch of Mexicans left town - they're all illegals. Not only that, but you know they're all into drugs too. Why I bet you just
about most of them Mexicans are selling some type of dope or another.
The retiree does not have clear information on the immigration status of Latinos in the community. Additionally, she communicates the gossip a former coworker passed on to her. There is no concrete evidence that most Latinos in New Austin are undocumented or have with substance abuse problems.

The notion of consensus implies that a problem exists and needs to be dealt with. An Anglo business owner who is highly active in community affairs relays shared sentiments by many Anglos in the community in an excerpt from an editorial,

We have a bench out in front of our other store and we had to remove it because of people sitting out at night, loitering and drinking beer. Each morning we had to clean up the mess and trash before we could open for business.

Consensus also appears when community residents support similar sentiments. An excerpt from an aforementioned media account described the concern an Anglo in New Austin had regarding the Latino community. Consensus emerged the following week though additional editorials. One letter demonstrating the presence of consensus states,
Myra Roberts is to be applauded for her letter in last week's paper. She verbalized very well the sentiment of the community regarding lawns, care of homes etc. This was a beautiful community when we moved here . . . Business folks, church and community supportive people are putting homes up for sale and leaving our once beautiful city . . . why? Because family homes are being bought and turned into multiple apartments and filled with numerous folks who play loud music, drink, and therefore, neighbors are having to contend with unsatisfactory living conditions. We need to come to terms with the fact that only the caring citizens of New Austin can "take back" our sleepy little town." If people don’t want to shape up, they can ship out.

Latinos are increasingly visible in the community and there is a growing consensus among Anglo community members that the increasing Latino population is an issue.

The Latinos interviewed for this study did appear to be aware of the Anglo consensus which perceives them as a threat to the traditional Anglo culture of New Austin. One young Latina indicates,

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* A pseudonym is being used.
Sometimes it seems like its "us" against "them."
They have there summer softball teams and they have
their different groups, but no Latinos are ever
involved. It makes me sad sometimes because I know
my brother would like to play. He and his friends
will watch the summer teams play, but no one ever
invites them on their team.

The community of New Austin has done a poor job of providing
positive recreational outlets. The primary entertainment that
New Austin has available is the downtown bar scene -
consisting of two local taverns. It has been suggested that
the community begin summer soccer or include Latinos in
softball leagues - it has yet to happen.

The generation of folk devils is also a part of consensus
formation. A young Latino man shares,

It's like they think we are all bad. Parents don't
want us to date their daughters. We're not supposed
to go out and have a good time. We're not even
supposed to use our yards. They're [Anglos] too
picky.

Latinos are viewed with disdain and disregard in New
Austin. More telling, young Latino men have been turned
into folk devils. Observations support the young
Latino's claim. The researcher's field notes reveal,
I watched them (Anglos) playing ball. There were lots of Latinos sitting on the edges of the field—wanting to play. No one offered, no one asked. As I was watching I overheard a mother tell her daughter not to wander too far off—"especially by the Mexicans." No daughter of hers was going to end up with one of them.

On several occasions the investigator witnessed Latino gatherings within and around a private residence. The typical response from Anglos passing entailed stares and facial grimaces. Additionally, media accounts lend support through the aforementioned editorials discussing lawn care and public bench usage.

Findings for H5

There is a sense in New Austin that most members of the Latino community are participants in deviant acts. Anglo residents perceive a disproportionate number of Latinos engaging in unlawful activities and if several individuals are found guilty of a particular act it is generalized to the entire population. An Anglo retired woman divulges,

There were some pumpkins missing around Halloween, you know it was the Mexicans that took them.

They're always getting into trouble like that.
When speaking with Anglo residents in New Austin about crime and deviance the blame always seems to be pointing in the direction of the Latino community. Observations at a Chamber of Commerce meeting support the sentiments of a local New Austin Chamber of Commerce member and businessman as he reveals,

Is there anything we can do to keep them out of trouble? Whenever something bad happens in the community everyone automatically assumes it has something to do with the Mexicans.

Disproportionality implies the implicit assumption on the part of New Austin Anglos that a more sizable number of Latinos are taking part in perceived deviance than actually are. The findings for H5 reveal general support. One Anglo New Austin law enforcement officer was interviewed for this study, however, no actual court data or arrest records were accessed. As a result, a weakness emerges in that there is no comparative arrest data with which to cross-reference Anglo residents' responses. However, there is interview and editorial data offering favorable Anglo sentiments toward the Latino community. Disproportionality is therefore demonstrated because negative Anglo contentions double those of favorable notions.

A New Austin law enforcement officer offers,
There is a lot of blame pointed towards Hispanics. I can't say I arrest them more than anybody else. I probably get calls from neighbors asking me to stop over at Hispanics' more than other folks, but it's usually just for stuff like loud music.

The officer clearly indicates from his response Latinos are arrested at no greater rate than Anglos. However, Anglo community members do make more phone calls requesting police intervention for Latino neighbors' music.

The Latino community of New Austin was very aware of Anglo sentiments regarding perceptions of deviance. All Latino respondents indicated they felt the majority of Anglos in New Austin felt Latinos were responsible for more deviant acts than reality reflects. A young Latina indicates, The men really get the bad rap. I never really hear too much about us, but there are lots of rumors going around about the guys. People always think they are up to something they shouldn't be doing. I see how people look at them as they walk down the street.

Observations made in public areas, such as New Austin's main street and business district reinforce the Latina's statement. Latino men are looked at as suspect and typically avoided if possible. Researcher's field notes indicate,
As the Anglo woman passed several other Anglos on the street she smiled and made eye contact. The next individual to pass her on the sidewalk was a Latino. The woman diverted her eyes and eventually crossed to the other side of the street before meeting the young Latino man.

There have been instances when young, single Latino men have gotten into trouble with law enforcement. Many Anglos in New Austin would suggest young Latinos are getting into trouble because of their ethnic background. However, a more credible reason is that anytime there are populations of young single men with nothing to do, deviance is likely to occur (Johnston, 1979; Goode, 1997).

General support for disproportionality was additionally demonstrated through favorable Anglo beliefs about Latinos. An editorial written by a meat-packing plant representative states,

It is our experience that our employees also take pride in the appearance of their homes. Several of our employees have purchased their own homes and, regardless of their ethnic background, have well-maintained homes. It may surprise you at who owns some of the well-maintained homes.

The meat-packing plant representative personally knows New Austin Latinos. The representative is trying to convey the
message that Anglo community members have an exaggerated perception of Latino deviancy as it pertains to lawn and home maintenance. In addition to media accounts, several interviews revealed positive comments pertaining to the Latino presence in New Austin. A business woman alerted the researcher that the community would not be able to survive without Latino labor. She indicates the following,

It’s true that they are not liked by many in the community - everyone is always thinking they are getting into trouble. But you know what? This community would not make it if they weren’t here. I think the majority are just good, hard-working people trying to make a living.

Although the majority of interview, media account, and observational content were placed within non-favorable frames, there were favorable Anglo messages about Latinos - lending support to the existence of disproportionality.

Findings for H6

Volatility, a form of collective behavior and the final characteristic of a moral panic, is similar to a fad in that it can erupt fairly quickly and then just as rapidly subside. Data suggest limited support for H6. A weakness associated with this measurement is that volatility is measured through
questions pertaining to past experiences and emotions. As time passes, the volatility of a specific moment can be lost due to the changing nature of hindsight.

A local Anglo New Austin woman recalls distinct periods of time when there seemed to be heightened levels of concern, consensus, and hostility towards the Latino community.

What’s really strange is to think back to when the Mexicans began to arrive. It wasn’t like the community freaked about it, but at one point I do remember a lot of people in the community discussing their presence. People were concerned and there was speculation concerning what the Mexicans were like and how it would be to have them as neighbors. Then people kind of forgot about them. It wasn’t until only a few years ago, when more of them started to enter the community that people really started talking again. The worst it’s been has been this last year, especially after the Mexican was shot.

New Austin Latinos are from diverse geographical regions. Due to regional and ethnic differences disputes have emerged within the Latino community. According to interview data and media accounts, in January of 2000, an argument occurred between two Latino individuals from Mexico. Although the two Latinos were from Mexico they were from different regions that have historically been rivals. The quarrel escalated to a
lethal level, resulting in the shooting death of one of the Latino men. The story of the murder was front page headlines for several weeks in the weekly New Austin paper. The media accounts combined with informal talk and speculation among Anglo community members contributed to a frenzy. The aftermath was additionally felt by the Latino community members. A young Latino meat processing plant worker mentioned,

There have been times when things seemed to be worse. Like almost a year ago there was a shooting and then everyone thought we were all dangerous. There was a lot of talk following that.

Volatility can take the form of panic and mass hysteria. People react to the perceived threat posed by Latinos with irrational and frantic behavior. Volatility appeared to be the least noticed of all the characteristics of a moral panic. It is the understanding of this researcher that the Anglo community was more aware of their heightened emotions than the Latino population. There are many negative sentiments toward the Latino community by New Austin Anglos, however, it is difficult to determine their contribution to a state of volatility. Therefore, findings for H6 indicate limited support.
Findings for H7

There has been a marked increased in Anglo concern, consensus, hostility, disproportionality, and volatility resulting from Anglo beliefs that Latinos are criminally prone and engage in deviant acts. This communal belief system has, therefore, led to the conditions for a moral panic to occur. With the circumstances of a moral panic present, it is important to examine how its existence will affect the social interaction processes between Anglos and Latinos.

Migrating to New Austin, Iowa was not an easy adjustment for many Latinos. A host of issues quickly arose for many of the newcomers. Problems ranged from isolation due to language barriers and discrimination due to racism. A Latino man explains,

It was hard at first. I’m an educated man from Guatemala, in fact I used to be a math teacher . . . When we moved to New Austin no one wanted to get to know us . . . Everyone just assumed we were stupid.

Latino respondents indicate it was a challenge initially adjusting to New Austin. For the most part, Anglos were not welcoming and willing to aide in the adjustment process. As a result of Anglos unwillingness to become acquainted with Latinos the assumption of Latino homogeneity was made. If the
Anglo community directed blame to one Latino, it was directed to all. One Latina exclaims,

When I came here it was tough. There weren’t many other people and it was hard to find others to talk with. I felt ignored at first, like no one really cared. I felt left alone but I also felt like I was being watched.

There are specific social factors that have had an effect on the relationship between Anglos and Latinos: diversity awareness, ethnic group organization, constructive outlets, and social class. Initially, when New Austin began to incorporate the Hasidic Jewish population there was an attempt to make the Anglo community aware of diversity issues as they specifically related to the Jewish population. Hasidic Jews were organized as a group and worked together to introduce themselves to the community. Community seminars were held explaining to Anglos the nuances of the Hasidic Jewish faith.

When Latinos initially arrived there was no attempt to better understand Latino culture. There were no seminars where the community welcomed the Latino population and there was no discussion about Latino culture. An explanation is that the Latino community is not formally organized. This may be, in part, because Latinos come from Mexico, Central America, and the Southwest US. For example, in New Austin there are groups of Latinos from several different areas in Mexico.
Historically, individuals from these regions have been rivals, however, the structure of New Austin forces these people, who do not like each other, to work and live together. Conflict occurs within these groups, sometimes resulting in the loss of life. This was the case with the shooting that occurred between Latino men from Mexico in New Austin. The conflicts coupled with Anglos’ views of Latinos as one big homogenous group causes stereotypes to be perpetuated and reified.

Language, is perhaps the biggest social barrier prohibiting integration and socialization. There are a limited number of Latinos that speak English and even fewer Anglos that speak Spanish. The public school in New Austin does not have one faculty member that is bilingual. The principal comments,

"Ya, it can be a problem at times. I, myself, don’t even know Spanish. So, when we need someone who can translate we get Carmen. She does a good job."

Carmen was a second grade student in the public school. Anytime faculty or staff needed a functionally bilingual person they pulled Carmen out of her classes and asked for her assistance. Additionally, service providers, such as clerks at the local grocery store were not able to assist Latino

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9 A pseudonym is being used.
clients in finding a specific product. As a result Latinos began to seek some services from other communities, some as far as 20 miles away. In the following interview excerpt a Latino man describes why shopping at a grocery store in community other than New Austin. The man indicates,

We like going to Richard's because not all of us speak really good English. There is one clerk who is a college student who can speak Spanish. She's really nice.

Nevertheless, Latinos seemed satisfied with living in New Austin and mostly concerned with events taking place within their daily lives and the activities of their family members. When asked if respondents liked the community there were very few negative comments and none which related to Anglos' perceptions. For instance, many people stated New Austin was a wonderful place to live and that it was an ideal location to raise a family. One person commented that it reminded them of where they grew up in Guatemala,

The land is beautiful here and it reminds me of where I'm from. People farmed where I'm from too. This is a good place to raise my family - it's quiet and I don't have to worry so much about my children's safety.

10 A pseudonym is being used.
The majority of respondents indicated New Austin was a pleasant place to live and that there was contentment associated with residing in the community.

Overall, the effect of a moral panic on the social interaction processes between Anglos and Latinos (H7) receives mixed support. Anglo respondents indicated, for the most part, an awareness of their perceptions and agitation with the Latino community. However, Latinos interviewed suggest that they are more concerned with and focused on their daily lives. One young Latina states it best when she says,

Several months ago the nearby college asked me to be part of a panel discussion on what it’s like to be a Latina in New Austin. It’s like everyone thought we were aware and upset about Anglo behavior. No, that’s not the case. People need to realize there is concern with our daily lives. How can I worry if some Anglo doesn’t like me if I am also worrying about making sure my family is taken care of. This is what I’m concerned with.
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

New Austin, Iowa is a complex community experiencing steady change due to its increasingly diverse ethnic composition. Latinos began migrating into the community looking for employment within the food-processing industry. They were successful, employment was readily available and jobs were soon filled that Anglos in the community had refused to take. When Latinos began to enter the community they were virtually non-visible.

Initially, ethnic/racial tensions seemed to be minimal. However, time passed and more Latinos entered the community tensions began to rise. Latinos, who had once not been visible were being seen as a growing segment of the community for the first time. Although Anglos were beginning to notice Latinos more regularly, personal interaction did not occur. The greatest barrier preventing this was communication. The majority of Latinos who migrated to New Austin had limited English or spoke no English at all. Conversely, only a minute portion of the Anglo population spoke Spanish. The ramifications of this were far reaching because when communication is unclear misunderstandings occur.
When several cultures exist side by side it is only a matter of time before cultural norms are broken and perceived deviance develops. The goal of this paper was to assess Anglos' perceptions of deviance, specifically, exploring the conditions necessary for a moral panic to occur. Subsequently, the paper also explores how Anglos' perceptions affect attitudes towards Latino newcomers and how these attitudes influence interactions between Anglos and Latinos.

It was difficult for many Latinos at first because there were so few Anglos that could communicate with them. For instance, no one at the public school was bilingual which made it difficult for children with no English skills. No one working at the local grocery store spoke Spanish, creating a challenge when trying to ask for a specific product. As a result of being misunderstood and a lack of empathy on the part of Anglos, tensions and hostilities began to rise. It is interesting to note, however, as time has progressed, Latinos have become more comfortable within community while Anglos have experienced an increased uneasiness.

The lack of constructive outlets for Latinos (i.e., recreation and entertainment) has created a problem in New Austin. There have been instances when young, single Latino men have gotten into trouble with law enforcement. Law enforcement may be biased. Historical accounts discussed in the literature review reveal it is a common occurrence to have
biased law officers (Mirandé, 1987; McGraw, 1998; Elvin, 2000)

Many Anglos in the community would respond by saying it is because they are Latino and it is in their nature. However, this explanation does not take into consideration Anglos who are guilty of engaging in similar deviant acts. The real issue is that anytime there are populations of young single men with nothing to do, deviance will most likely occur (Greeberg, 1977; Goode, 1997).

A social factor which may influence Anglos’ feelings toward the Latino community is social class. Latinos are regarded by many in the community as being second-rate citizens. Work at the meat-packing plant carries little prestige or power and the wages are minimal. The meat-packing plant began to encourage Latino labor from outside the community due to the lack of Anglos willing to work in the meat-processing industry.

Immigrants’ status is an additional element which plays a role in social class placement. The community of New Austin is composed of individuals from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds that have social class backgrounds different from the majority of the Latino population. For example, the Hasidic Jews have an ethnic background dramatically different from that of long time Anglo residents, however, their social class position appears to be higher than Latinos. The Hasidic Jews came into the community of New Austin with a class level
which afforded them access to resources through a cultural broker or liaison. These resources, in turn, allowed them access to additional resources which made the transition into New Austin easier. Individuals with an immigrant status do not have the luxury of having such access to resources. To illustrate, the majority of Hasidic Jews are fluent in English. Language plays a role in how we define groups—perhaps in New Austin language is one of the criteria involved in deciding “us” and “them.” Also, the Hasidic Jewish population established a private school for Hasidic Jewish children. The ability of an entire population to send their children to a private school spread a message throughout the community of New Austin that Hasidic Jews occupied a higher social class position.

Future Research

There are immense possibilities for future research within the community of New Austin. This study specifically examined perceptions of social deviance and how they led to the development of a moral panic. Future studies of this nature should contain several components that this study did not have. First, future studies should devise quantitative measures for studying the presence of moral panics in immigrant communities. The new methodology would allow for a
wider area to be studied. The results from the quantitative findings would be an appropriate supplement to the qualitative data gathered in New Austin. For example, a future study could include a quantitative technique for measuring disproportionality. As mentioned earlier, this study was unable to construct a valid measure for the variable, however, the examination of information, such as arrest records for New Austin, can aid in strengthening support for disproportionality.

A future study could also be longitudinal. It would be interesting to see if the attitudes of the respondents will change over a specified number of years. This study relied upon respondents' recall capabilities. When a population is asked to recall information from several previous years details will be lost. Additionally, it would be beneficial to use quantitative research such as survey research. For example, questionnaires allow for an examination of the community as a whole. Valid and reliable information could be obtained more easily as the stability of migrant populations increases.

Future research should also delve deeper into non-Latino residents and their perceptions of young Latino men verses Latino families. Findings of this study indicate there may be a difference in how Anglo perceptions are constructed for young single men and families. Many times when a problem
arises and two different racial/ethnic groups are involved. Blame is placed on cultural differences. In the case of New Austin, however, one must not be too quick to place the blame solely on cultural differences; other factors may all be at work such as gender and social class. For instance, how much is associated with culture as compared to issues associated with a significant population of single young men? A future study could better assess this question.

Research findings indicate general support for the occurrence of a moral panic in New Austin. However, future research should address the possibility that the community is experiencing the early phases of Latino integration. If, over time, the support for a moral panic subsides it is likely New Austin is undergoing integration adjustments. Inquiry should coincide with the examination of community dynamics between all existing racial/ethnic groups in New Austin (i.e., Hasidic Jews, Ukrainian, Latinos, and Anglos). Researching the ancillary groups can lend a greater understanding to the nuances associated with community socialization and integration.
Problem Statement: The purpose of the proposed research is to examine the perception of deviance in rural communities in conjunction with the increase in cultural pluralism. Specifically, the study proposes to research a rural community in Northeast Iowa of approximately fifteen hundred residents. The community has predominately been a homogenous farming community until the establishment of a Latino community. The study focuses on how perceptions of deviance are formed by the dominant (non-Latino) community members and how those perceptions affect the socialization process of, and attitudes towards newcomers (Latinos) of the community.

Methods: The proposed research will utilize qualitative case-study methods, employing participant observation and semi-structured interviewing. The project will focus on the community of New Austin, Iowa. Snowball sampling also will be used, with those interviewed asked to suggest additional individuals. When possible, interviews will be taped, and later transcribed and coded. Participant observation and untaped materials will be recorded in field note form and later coded for analysis.

Instruments: As is characteristic of semi-structured interviewing no formal interview schedule will be employed. Rather, the interviewing will proceed as a “directed conversation,” utilizing a mental questionnaire (Berg, 1998) of topics to be covered. This ‘questionnaire’ will be inductively generated and continually refined during the course of the fieldwork, using the techniques of ‘grounded theory’ (Berg, 1998). (“Grounded theory” is a strategy in which specific research and interview questions emerge through a systematic interplay of inductive and deductive reasoning during the actual course of the research. In this way, both the research focus and the information generated is closer to, or ‘grounded’ in, the actual field context.)

Informed consent. In participant observation it is not practical to obtain signed informed consent of all the subjects, as the subjects are numerous and changing and include persons who may only occasionally visit the research sites. Also, in ethnographic research, an effort is made to
record social observations in natural setting, and signed informed consent would disturb this setting. Signed informed consent often represents a barrier in the establishment of rapport, a quality in the subject-researcher relationship that is crucial to successful semi-structured interviewing (Berg, 1998).

Modified informed consent, however, will be obtained in verbal form from each individual involved in the semi-structured interview process of the study. In addition, initial discussion with all interview subjects will include the following points, as per the requirements of informed consent:

1) I would like to visit with you about Postville. I am particularly interested in (non-Latino residents - how you feel about the changing racial and ethnic composition of the community; Latino residents - how you feel about the community and how you are perceived).

2) I hope this research will provide insights on how perceptions of deviance are formed by the dominant (non-Latino) community members and how those perceptions affect the socialization process of, and attitudes towards newcomers (Latinos) of the community.

3) If you have any questions regarding my procedures and purposes, please feel free to ask. I will give you a business card with my name, number, and address in case you have any questions after we meet.

4) Feel free not to answer any question I may have, or even to end the interview at any point for any reason. If you have second thoughts at any time and would like to withdraw your participation, I will return any tapes and transcripts to you.

5) In any publication or other write-up of the materials gathered for the participant observation portion of this project, your name will not be used. Should you desire your biographical details will be changed. All records of this interview will be strictly confidential with me and other qualified researchers. Other steps will also be taken [see 9 below], and I will be happy to describe them if you wish.
6) This interview should not take more than an hour or so of your time.

Confidentiality and Anonymity. For subjects requesting confidentiality, biographical details will be changed, in accordance with their wishes, in any write-up of the materials. Transcribers will be required to sign a statement promising to maintain confidentiality. Access to tapes, field notes, and transcripts will be granted only to professional sociological researchers who will be similarly required to sign a statement promising to honor the confidentiality of the names and any biographical alteration requested by the subject.

All materials will remain in the possession of the principal investigator. Ten years following the completion of the research the materials will be destroyed. Changes in these measures of confidentiality will only be made at the request of the individual study participant.
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Personal Questions
1. What is your age?
2. Describe your educational background.
3. What do you do for a living?
4. How many people in total live in your home?
5. How many years have you lived in New Austin?

General Questions about New Austin
1. How do you feel about your community?
2. What do you like about New Austin?
3. What do you not like about New Austin?
4. What would you like to see change or different in New Austin?
5. Are you active in community organizations?
6. If yes, which community organizations do you belong to?

General Questions About Ethnic Relations in New Austin
1. Has ethnic hostility in New Austin increased, decreased, or stayed the same since 1991?
2. Between which groups is the level of hostility the greatest? Why?
3. How would you describe the relations between the other groups?
Questions Related to Immigration

1. What impact has immigration had on New Austin?
2. Have Latino newcomers taken jobs from Anglo workers?
3. In your opinion, do Latinos experience discrimination in the local workplace? If so, by whom?
4. Are language differences an issue in New Austin?
5. As an ethnic group, how much solidarity exists between Latinos and Anglos?
6. What are the issues that divide and unify Latinos?
7. How would you describe interaction among New Austin’s ethnic groups (i.e., in schools, churches, civic affairs?)
8. What do you think is the biggest problem now facing New Austin?
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