

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.**

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# U·M·I

University Microfilms International  
A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



**Order Number 9207052**

**Central American immigrants in New York: Settlement and  
adjustment issues**

**Brown, Judith Gordon, D.S.W.**

**City University of New York, 1991**

**Copyright ©1991 by Brown, Judith Gordon. All rights reserved.**

**U·M·I**  
300 N. Zeeb Rd.  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106



A

CENTRAL AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN NEW YORK:  
SETTLEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT ISSUES

by

JUDITH GORDON BROWN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare, The City University of New York.

1991

© 1991

JUDITH GORDON BROWN

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Social Welfare.

9/23/91  
Date

Michael J. Smith  
Chair of Examining Committee

9/23/91  
Date

James S. [Signature]  
Executive Officer

Michael J. Smith  
Carmen Ortiz Hendricks  
Robert Salmon

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

**Abstract****CENTRAL AMERICAN IMMIGRANTS IN NEW YORK:  
SETTLEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT ISSUES**

by

Judith Gordon Brown

Adviser: Professor Michael J. Smith

The New York metropolitan area has had a substantial Hispanic population for many years. Over the last twenty years, however, the composition of this population has changed significantly as manifested by the rapid growth of the Central and South American subgroups.

This exploratory study addresses the need to learn more about the characteristics of recent Central American immigrant groups in the United States. Using Westchester County, a suburb north of New York City, it provides a demographic picture of this new Hispanic population and explores the factors that have contributed to adaptation of Central American immigrants to life in the United States.

Research questions addressed include:

(1) What are the demographic characteristics of Central American immigrants in the United States? (2) What are their motivations for emigrating and experiences with the immigration process? (3) What has been their experience with social, economic, and educational institutions and how has this experience affected

adjustment and settlement? (4) How have immigrants' values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, and familial roles been affected by immigration, and how have these changes contributed to immigrants' adjustment to life in the United States? (5) What are the views of recent immigrants regarding settlement in the United States and what are the determinants? (6) What variables appear to be associated with immigrant adjustment and settlement?

The study entailed 30 face-to-face semi-structured interviews with first generation Central American immigrants in households within Westchester County and ten interviews with key informants at agencies serving the Hispanic community. Family interviews explored variables including: household composition; educational level; language facility; family roles, patterns of interaction and socialization; kinship ties and assistance; housing location and characteristics; entry and immigration status; employment; religious affiliation and practice; and experience with social institutions. These variables were studied and analyzed in terms of their relationship to the concepts of settlement and adjustment.

The overall purpose of the study was to gather preliminary data and formulate recommendations for use by service providers rendering educational and social services and administrators responsible for shaping policy affecting this group.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Numerous people have offered me guidance and support in the execution of this project. I wish to acknowledge their assistance.

I am particularly grateful to Dr. Michael J. Smith, my dissertation advisor, who thoroughly reviewed my drafts and provided numerous comments which enabled me to strengthen the final manuscript. The contributions of Professor Carmen Ortiz Hendricks and Dr. Robert Salmon, the two other members of my committee, should also be noted. My committee conveyed to me a sincere desire to be helpful and a level of support and encouragement for my work which was most gratifying.

My colleagues at the College of New Rochelle, particularly Dr. James Magee and Dr. Sue Wesselkamper, deserve recognition. Their confidence in my work and unflinching interest in my progress enabled me to persevere.

I owe special thanks to my fellow doctoral students, especially Beth Lewis, Emilicia Mizio, and Dominique Moyse-Steinberg, who offered helpful suggestions and bolstered my spirits throughout the process.

Because my study population was predominantly non-English speaking, the contribution of Migdalia Soto, who assisted with the interviews, was particularly vital. Migdalia's energy, ability to put the respondents at

ease, and perceptive comments were invaluable.

To the Central American immigrants who assisted me in my work, I am deeply indebted. Their pride, dignity, humility, warmth, and kindness were most humbling. I shall always have profound respect for them and the lives they have built for themselves and their families in a too-often hostile environment. I also thank the clergymen and health and human service professionals who contributed their knowledge of relevant programs and services and assisted me in gaining entree to the Central American community.

My children deserve special commendation. Jason's willingness to care for his younger brother during the lengthy interview process was most helpful. I am also grateful to him for his good sense of humor and ability to help me put things in perspective. Evan was a real trooper - adaptable, good natured, and precocious in his expression of respect for Mom's goal, recognition of the milestones along the way, and praise when the end-product finally emerged.

Lastly, I wish to thank my parents, George and Elsie Gordon, who conveyed pride, confidence, and total support for my endeavor.

To all of the members of my support system - fellow students, friends, neighbors, colleagues, family - my sincerest thanks. I could not have done it without you!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
CHAPTER I.	1
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, SIGNIFICANCE, AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Significance of the Study	5
Research Questions	7
CHAPTER II.	9
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
U.S. Immigration History	9
International Migration	15
Immigration Adaptation	16
Models of Immigrant Adjustment	17
Immigrant Socialization	20
Social Service Access and Use	23
Methodology for Identification of Hispanics	25
Hispanic Subgroups	28
Case Studies of New Immigrants	31
Alternative Research Approaches	34
Research Methodology	35
New York State's Hispanics	37
Hispanics in Westchester County	38
CHAPTER III.	41
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	
Study Design	41
Population and Sample	42
Procedures	46
Operational Definitions	49
Variables	49
Data Analysis	50
Resolution of Anticipated Problems	52
CHAPTER IV.	54
FINDINGS	
Introduction	54
Description of Sample	55
Sample Case Histories	59

Major Themes for Discussion and Analysis	68
Motives for Emigrating and the Immigration Process	69
Length of Stay - Quality of Life Issues	88
Family Roles and Relationships	104
Occupational Choices and Issues	116
Educational Issues	124
Religion and Religious Concerns	135
Health Care	143
Social Welfare Knowledge and Use	153
Values, Attitudes, and Behavior	160
Program and Service Suggestions	166
 CHAPTER V.	 170
SUMMARY	
 CHAPTER VI.	 180
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION	
Discussion	180
Implications	192
Conclusion	204
 APPENDICES	 211
APPENDIX A	
QUESTIONNAIRE	
English Version	211
Spanish Version	218
APPENDIX B	230
PLAN OF STUDY	
APPENDIX C	
INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWS	
English Version	233
Spanish Version	234
APPENDIX D	235
LIST OF PROVIDERS OF SERVICE INTERVIEWED	
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 236

CHAPTER I.  
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, SIGNIFICANCE,  
AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Introduction

An analysis of New York State's population over the last two decades reveals a net loss of Whites and Blacks coupled with a net gain of Hispanics. The high rate of growth of the State's Hispanic population has led some sources to speculate that this group may become the State's largest minority by the end of the century (Governor's Advisory Committee for Hispanic Affairs, 1984, p. 9).

New York State's Hispanics are highly urbanized, more so than the general population, and are heavily concentrated in New York City and its environs. Although the New York metropolitan area has had a substantial Hispanic population for many years, the composition of this population has changed significantly over the last twenty years. This change has been manifested by the rapid growth of non-Puerto Rican groups in both absolute and relative terms. Other changes have occurred in socioeconomic level and residential distribution of the Hispanic population, but data to substantiate these changes is sparse.

Although the literature includes an abundance of studies of the adjustment and assimilation of various ethnic groups, there is a paucity of material on the recent Hispanic immigrant groups. This is especially

significant because of their lack of homogeneity with other Hispanic groups. While relatively little literature exists concerning Central and South American immigrants in New York City, even less exists about these groups in Westchester County, despite the fact that, according to the 1980 Census, the County had the highest proportion of Hispanics outside of New York City. Moreover, Westchester, Queens and Nassau were the only three counties in the State in which Puerto Ricans were not the largest Hispanic subgroup (Governor's Advisory Committee for Hispanic Affairs, 1985, pp. 12-15).

#### Statement of the Problem

Since the late 1970's, large numbers of Central Americans have been coming to the United States fleeing conditions of war, violence, repression, and economic hardship. It is estimated that several hundred thousand have entered the United States without documentation or have entered legally but stayed beyond the period specified at the time of their legal entry (Rodriguez, 1987, p. 4). Overall, there are thought to be about 1.3 million Central American immigrants currently living in the United States, the majority of whom are undocumented (Ruggles and Fix, 1985, p. 45). Salvadorans account for approximately two-thirds of this group, and Guatemalans account for another 15-20 percent. The Honduran and Nicaraguan populations are judged to be considerably

smaller, possibly five to ten percent of the total. There are also small numbers of migrants from Costa Rica, Belize, and Panama, but estimates are unavailable (Ruggles and Fix, 1985, pp. 45-47).

Central Americans have settled primarily in urban centers with large Hispanic populations. Forty percent of the total U.S. Central American immigrant population resides in Los Angeles, and the remainder is located primarily in San Francisco, Texas, Washington, D.C., and New York City and its environs (Ruggles and Fix, 1985, pp. 46-47). Although the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) was designed to discourage illegal immigration, it appears that its impact on new undocumented aliens who arrived after 1982 is not as great as envisioned. Since those who arrived post-1982 are not eligible for the amnesty program established by the legislation, they have tended to maintain a low profile to avoid deportation (Gelfand, 1989, p. 23).

A number of factors have impeded the assimilation of Central American immigrants. First, the U.S. government's failure to grant them refugee status has blocked their access to government sponsored relief services. As victims of generalized violence, Central American immigrants are not judged to qualify as refugees under U.S. law (Ferris, 1987, pp. 121-122). Political asylum status has similarly been denied to the vast majority of Central American applicants. Despite

the fact that 175,000 individuals have lost their lives in civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala, less than two percent of the asylum applications from these countries in the last ten years were approved (CARECEN, 1990). The national movement to provide protection to Central American refugees through the public sanctuary process has gained momentum since its inception in 1982 but helps only a small percentage of the total migrant population (Ferris, 1987, p. 128).

Second, Central Americans who emigrate to the United States are generally lacking in resources and in need of a variety of services, especially health care. However, most of the provisions of the basic public entitlement programs, such as public assistance, SSI, Food Stamps, and Medicaid, specifically exclude them. Moreover, the SAVE (Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements) program, established under IRCA, requires that states verify the immigration status of all aliens applying for federally supported benefits (Bogen, 1987). IRCA's prohibition against the hiring of aliens who lack work authorization, and imposition of civil and criminal sanctions against employers who do so, poses an additional obstacle in the assimilation of Central American immigrants.

Jenkins (1985) has proposed a potentially mitigating factor in the settlement and adjustment of new immigrants. She views ethnic associations which

link immigrants' old and new lives as lessening the negative impacts of dislocation and fulfilling a number of the social service functions critical to rapid acculturation. The applicability of this concept to individual immigrant groups, in this case, the Central American population, merits exploration (see Discussion section).

#### Significance of This Study

The social work profession is deeply affected by recent immigration policy which prevents undocumented aliens from attaining a satisfactory quality of life. The task of providing services to clients whose non-resident status disqualifies them from most of the basis entitlements is an onerous one. Social workers must assist clients in finding services that are available largely outside the mainstream of public social welfare agencies (Gelfand, 1989), while, at the same time, advocating for change in public policy to broaden eligibility for entitlements and end discriminatory practices.

This research study responds to the need to learn more about the characteristics of Central American immigrants, a group that is largely unknown in the scholarly literature (Suarez-Orozco, 1989), using Westchester County, a suburban county north of New York City, as its focus. Such study is deemed important because of this population's rapid and continued growth

within the County, as well as its potential and actual impact on social and economic institutions.

Because of the newness of the Central American immigrant population, the rapidity of its growth within the County, the low profile maintained by members of this group, and the public's tendency to lump all Hispanics together, relatively little is known about its size, composition, distribution, and demographic characteristics. Even less is known about its immigration process, adjustment to daily life in the United States, employment patterns, and changes in lifestyle and attitudes which facilitate settlement in this country, in New York State, and in the County of Westchester. This study contributes to social science knowledge in these defined areas. However, it is recognized that its generalizability is limited given its small sample size and exploratory design. Nonetheless, it is hoped that it will be a stimulant to further, more rigorous research concerning this population.

Despite its small sample size, the findings of this study should be of considerable value to those engaged in direct practice. Social work practitioners are increasingly coming into contact with Hispanic clients in school, hospital, social agency, employment and other settings. Their ability to adequately assess the needs of this population, discern differences between

subgroups within the overall Hispanic population, display sensitivity to cultural differences, and provide appropriate intervention is linked to their familiarity with this population and its distinct subgroups.

It is also anticipated that the findings and recommendations contained in this study will be of value in the formulation and analysis of policy. Awareness of the presence and attributes of these distinct Hispanic groups should influence both the review of existing policies in such areas as health, education, manpower, housing, and social services, as well as the design and implementation of new policies responsive to the needs and characteristics of Central American immigrants. Moreover, the study should serve to call attention to this generally unnoticed segment of the population and its distribution in the County and distinct communities.

#### Research Questions

In a general sense, this study was designed to explore what factors have contributed to the adaptation of Central American immigrants to life in the United States.

Research questions include:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of Central American immigrants in the United States?
2. What are their motivations for emigrating and experiences with the immigration process?

3. What has been the experience of Central American immigrants with social, economic, and educational institutions and how has this experience affected their adjustment and settlement?
4. How have immigrants' values, attitudes, patterns of behavior, and familial roles been affected by immigration and how have these changes contributed to immigrants' adjustment to life in the United States?
5. What are the views of the recent immigrants regarding settlement in the United States and what are the determinants?
6. What variables appear to be associated with immigrant adjustment and settlement?

CHAPTER II.  
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

U.S. Immigration History

Investigation of the settlement and adjustment issues experienced by Central and South American immigrants in the United States cannot be undertaken without first considering the more general issue of immigration in American society. Through a cursory review of the social and legislative history of U.S. immigration, it is possible to identify shifts in immigration policy and theoretical positions reflective of varying views of the desirability of new immigrants and the role of the immigrant in U.S. society. Such reviews are provided by Bogen (1987), Cafferty (1984), Kritz (1983), and Portes (1980).

Immigration is not a new phenomenon in this country. Likewise, ambivalence toward immigration is not new. For more than 200 years, people from all over the world have been coming to the U.S. in search of the better life. At times, policy has been encouraging and has promoted the influx of large numbers of people. At other times, it has been restrictive, seeking to stem the flow and purportedly safeguard American economic and social institutions.

During the greatest part of the nineteenth century, immigration policy was largely non-restrictive. The rapid economic expansion which the country was undergoing provided an impetus for the incorporation of

large numbers of new workers. One notable exception were Chinese laborers who were totally excluded in 1882. Immigration policy in the twentieth century has reflected more ambivalence. The criterion of desirability has been more at issue; restrictionists have sought to exclude certain national origin and racial groups.

In 1911, the Dillingham Commission, appointed by Congress to study U.S. immigration problems, issued a 42-volume report which embodied the restrictionist views of the times. This report served as the basis for the National Origins Act of 1924. Through this act, quotas were assigned based on the distribution of national origins present within the White population of the United States, and Asian immigrants were excluded. Under this Act, Britain received 42% of the visas; Ireland, Germany, and Scandinavia together received 30 percent; and the southern and eastern European countries received a total of 15%. The independent nations of the Western Hemisphere were accorded a privileged neighbor position; they were not affected by the quota system.

The McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 retained the national origin quotas while at the same time introducing a preference system by which half of the visas were set aside for persons with needed job skills, while the other half were reserved for relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent resident aliens. It also lifted

the ban on Asian immigration although formidable barriers were retained. The act's retention of the national origin quota system was based on the assumption that northern Europeans were more easily assimilated than southern and eastern Europeans, Asians, and Africans.

The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 altered this view in favor of a more humanitarian stance. It repealed the national origin quotas and gave all countries in the Eastern Hemisphere equal access to immigration visas, establishing a cap of 20,000 visas for any single country and a hemisphere cap of 170,000 annually. It introduced, for the first time, a limit to immigration from the Western Hemisphere, in the form of a total annual ceiling of 120,000, with no per country limits. Under the new law, family reunification received greater emphasis; three-quarters of all visas were to be set aside for family members, and one quarter were to be used for refugees and for people with scarce job skills.

An unanticipated consequence of the new legislation was the dramatic increase in the percentage of immigrants from Asia and the Americas. Whereas in 1960 this group comprised 46 percent of all immigrants, by 1980 it had risen to 80 percent. As Bogen (1987) points out, the policy of retaining the majority of visas for immediate family members favored recent immigrants as they were the ones who most often still had close family

abroad (p. 23). A more predictable and more problematic consequence of the new law was the growth of unauthorized immigration as a result of the closing of the border between the United States and the countries to the south.

The influx of undocumented immigrants from the Western Hemisphere during the period 1960-1980 may be attributed to a number of factors: the booming economy of the southwest which created a "pull" for workers; the 1976 Amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act, which instituted a 20,000 per country visa limit and preference system for the Western hemisphere; the increased role of the media in familiarizing foreigners with life in the United States; and the availability of moderately priced direct flights from the Latin American countries. Apprehension of illegal entrants by the Immigration and Naturalization Service was stepped up during the 1970's, and by 1983 the rate had reached 1.2 million a year. At present, it is estimated that some three to six million undocumented aliens reside in the United States with an additional one million arriving annually (Bogen, p. 24).

Concern with illegal immigration resulted in the establishment in 1978 of the Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy which was charged with the task of making recommendations for a major overhaul of the immigration law. Interest in revision of U.S.

immigration was heightened in 1980 when: (1) 140,000 Cubans and Haitians landed on the shores of southern Florida; (2) the number of Indochinese refugees peaked at 160,000; and (3) the total number of refugees, other legal entrants, and "boat people" rose to 808,000, the highest since 1921. However, this concern did not result in the adoption of new legislation until 1986 when the Simpson-Rodino bill, officially titled the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA), was passed. The law: (1) bars employers from hiring foreign-born workers without proper work authorization and imposes sanctions against those who do so; and (2) establishes an amnesty program under which aliens who can prove illegal presence in the U.S. prior to January 1982 are eligible for legal temporary residence and, eventually, permanent residence.

The 1986 legislation was, in large part, a reaction to public definition of the increased Hispanic and Asian immigration as a major social problem. The "new immigrants", are so named because they are perceived to be different from all previous entrants due to their large numbers, non-White skin color, often illegal status, poverty backgrounds, lack of requisite education and work skills, propensity toward retention of their language and culture, and lack of commitment to American society and values (Cafferty and McCready, p. 39).

In October, 1990, the U.S. Congress passed a law

granting Salvadorans, who arrived in the U.S. before September 20, 1990, "temporary protected status". This status prevents their deportation for an 18-month period and enables them to obtain work authorization. In addition, the law provided for the release of Salvadorans being held in INS detention facilities. While hailed by many legal experts as "the most sweeping change in the field in over fifty years" (Central American Legal Defense Program, 1990, p. 1), the law offers no guarantees of confidentiality thus presenting the possibility that at the end of the 18-month period, those who registered for protected status could be referred for deportation proceedings. On the other hand, it is also possible that applicants could be allowed to apply for political asylum or be granted amnesty.

In December of the same year, a court settlement was reached which under which Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees who had their political asylum applications denied are entitled to re-apply for asylum, this time under an improved adjudication process, and, as asylum applicants, are guaranteed work authorization. According to CARECEN, Central American Refugee Center, "an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 Salvadorans and Guatemalans in New York are likely to benefit under this settlement" (CARECEN, 1990).

## International Migration

Several alternative approaches are commonly used to conceptualize international migration and its relationship to development. The dominant of these is the "push-pull" approach, the "push" referring to conditions of poverty and political instability and the "pull" referring to higher wages and greater job opportunities (Kritz, chapter 7). Using this theory, migration decisions are attributed to the individual's perception of the net benefits. Transportation and communication costs, and the migration policies of the sending and receiving countries are viewed as mitigating factors.

The major alternative approach, the historical-structural framework, rejects the "problem orientation" of push-pull, defining migration as the consequence of successful growth within a particular type of political economy. Under this view, nation states form an integrated pattern of economic and social development. Households serve as the decision making unit, controlling the selectivity of migrants and their destinations. According to this conceptualization, kinship units pool multiple sources of income and devise survival strategies which enable selected members of the unit to migrate while others stay at home (Bach, 1983).

## Immigration Adaptation

International immigration theories focus not only

on origin, impetus, directionality, and stability over time, but also on uses of migration for the receiving economy and the adaptation of new immigrants. Immigrant adaptation, a major focus of the proposed research, has been explored in the literature in the context of assimilation theory. Gordon (1964) advances three theoretical perspectives vis a vis assimilation: Anglo conformity, the "melting pot" theory, and cultural pluralism. Anglo conformity involves rejection of the immigrant's culture of origin and adoption of the behavior and values of the Anglo-Saxon culture. The "melting pot" theory proposes the merger of Anglo-Saxon groups with other immigrant groups and a blending of their cultures to produce a new indigenous American type. Both of these approaches postulate the disappearance of the immigrant's group as a distinct entity and the absorption of individuals into the American social structure (Gordon, 1964). Cultural pluralism, a concept introduced by Horace Kallen in the early 1900's, implies "preservation of the communal life and significant portions of the culture of the later immigrant groups within the context of American citizenship and political and economic integration into American society" (Gordon, 1964). Since the end of World War II, cultural pluralism has been the most commonly accepted of the theoretical perspectives and has received considerable emphasis in the literature

(Fuchs, Portes, Portes and Bach, Stepick).

An alternative view of immigrant adaptation is proposed by de Anda (1984). Rejecting the "melting pot" theory, the cultural deficit and the cultural difference models, she adopts Valentine's bicultural model which connotes dual socialization (de Anda, p.101). According to this conceptualization, members of ethnic minority groups are socialized into their own culture as well as into the dominant values, perceptions and normative behaviors of the majority society. De Anda identifies factors affecting the degree to which a member of an ethnic minority group is likely to become bicultural and postulates that these factors affect the minority group member's success in interactions with mainstream society.

#### Models of Immigrant Adjustment

Still another approach to understanding immigrant integration is proposed by Cox (1985) who presents a process model which includes four stages: pre-movement, transition, resettlement, and integration. Positive resolution of one is viewed as being necessary to progress to the next.

Cox identifies two dependent variables: 1) nature of social problems likely to emerge during integration; and (2) nature of welfare developments within the immigrant population and the host society; which he links to six independent variables: background of the

group and nature of its immigration; nature of previous contact with host society and consequent pre-arrival attitudes; socioeconomic political context on arrival; prevailing host society attitudes; nature of ethnic group development; and group's economic status. He also suggests six major levels of welfare intervention appropriate to the migration-integration process. These include: immigration policies and practice, reception-resettlement policies and practice (both of which relate to the pre-movement, transition, and resettlement stages), community education, equality of opportunity measures, community development, and provision of personal welfare services (which relate to the integration stage).

Guendelman (1981) also employs a four-staged process oriented adaptation model, less complex in formulation than Cox's. Stages include: arrival, which lasts for the first two to three weeks and is characterized by exhilaration and gratitude; next 5-6 months, marked by distrust toward people of the host country and compatriots due to the collapse of many expectations; six months to one year following arrival in country, marked by depression resulting from confrontation with obstacles preventing integration, multiple losses, low self esteem and anxiety; and entry, when immigrant has learned to cope and is able to settle down. Roe (1987) equates the difficult period of

transition experienced by Central American refugees with Guendelman's first three stages.

Stepick (1983) offers a more conceptual analytic model in which adaptation is seen as the product of characteristics immigrants bring, social diversity of the immigrant groups, the economic structure into which they are incorporated, and the immigrants' political expertise and power. Golan and Gruschka (1971) offer a task based conceptualization of the integration of the new immigrant. They propose an operational integration-absorption model which differentiates six potential problem areas: income maintenance, health, housing, education, leisure-time activities, and citizenship; details the specific problems that might be encountered in these areas; and delineates the requisite "material-arrangemental" and psychosocial tasks that must be undertaken by the new immigrant and the community. In this transitional process, the social worker functions as enabler, catalyst, advocate, and innovator dependent on the particular task and the adequacy of resources. The model, while useful in delineating the specific tasks involved, tends to minimize the institutional obstacles impeding rapid and successful immigrant integration.

#### Immigrant Socialization

The immigrant socialization process, which corresponds to the psychosocial axis in Golan and

Gruschka's model, has received considerable attention in the literature, particularly in terms of the roles played by family, household, kin, ethnic associations, and the labor market. Tienda (1980) analyzed the relationship between geographic mobility, kinship ties, and social status using data from a sample of 820 Mexican immigrants interviewed upon legal entry and re-interviewed three years later. Her goal was to determine whether and how familism (the maintenance of kinship ties in the host country) influenced the integration or structural assimilation (defined in terms of occupation and income attainment) of recent immigrants. Familism was found to be of significance in recruiting immigrants and providing aid and support during their early adjustment period. However, immigrants who received kinship assistance were not found to be in an advantaged position vis a vis those lacking such ties. Moreover, familism was shown as having little impact on the process by which immigrants are assimilated into formal structures in the economy.

Writing on a similar theme, Gurak and Kritz (1984) explored the effect of strong family ties and assistance from relatives on the immigrant settlement and acculturation process. They concluded that migrants receiving many kinds of assistance from relatives tended to be less assimilated (as judged by lesser English language ability, less knowledge of U.S. society, a

tendency to have fewer non-Hispanic friends, less intention to remain in the U.S. for extended periods of time, lower occupation status and lower income) than those who received fewer types of aid.

Cohen (1977) highlighted the important role played by women in emigration from the Americas and the finding that Latin American immigrant women work for a salary to a greater extent than latinas left behind and to a greater extent than other women in the U.S. labor force. Pessar (1984) explored the linkage between the household and workplace in her study of Dominican women, concluding that participation in waged work contributed to her subjects' improved self esteem and greater equity in their households. These household level changes, however, did not in turn stimulate modification in the workers' consciousness nor demands for improved conditions in the workplace.

Jenkins (1985) focused on the part played by ethnic associations in migrant socialization. She attributed to them the dual role of preserving ethnic identity and promoting acculturation, which she defined as "adaptation to the new society enabling newcomers to function in terms of communication, self-support and self-development" (p. 63). North and Houstoun (1976) explored another dimension of immigrant adjustment - labor market participation. Their 793-subject sample, however, consisted entirely of illegal aliens who had

been apprehended by immigration authorities. They concluded that this population "is likely to be disadvantaged persons with significantly less education and fewer skills than the U.S. labor force...employed in low level jobs...highly motivated and hard-working" (Summary, p. 3).

Negative impacts of the immigration experience, in terms of the toll it takes on family and individual well-being, are also explored in the immigrant adjustment literature. Cohen (1979) focused on disease and stress, linking latinos' behavioral problems with their physical health. She discussed the strains which surface in immigrant households, particularly among the women who tend to be underemployed and limited in their opportunities due to household obligations. Four major factors are identified as related to stress level: membership in community or school group, sex, level of job satisfaction, and household organization.

Grant (1983) explored the issue of family stability, arguing that the stresses on immigrant families make them more susceptible to instability. She identified stressors as including: economic vulnerability in the U.S. labor market, rapid redefinition of male-female marital roles in the family, and the disjunction between social status in country of origin and the United States. In her study of 150 recent immigrant families, she concluded that:

"Immigration apparently provokes a temporary broadening of family interactions both here and at home, but this breadth is not matched by a sense of significant mutual obligation. Rather the opposite occurs; the scope of the permanent functional kin unit narrows considerably" (p. 34).

#### Social Service Access and Use

In documenting the adjustment of new immigrants to life in the United States, the literature places considerable emphasis on social service delivery system access and usage. The U.S. alien population includes legal immigrants, illegal immigrants (also known as undocumented aliens), refugees, and nonimmigrants, such as diplomats, tourists, and students. Each of these categories has a very different impact on the social service delivery system. As mentioned earlier in this review, the majority of Central and South American immigrants are ineligible for most of the basic entitlements as they fall into the undocumented category. Moreover, cultural differences mitigate against immigrants' use of traditional social service organizations.

Jenkins studied what she termed the "ethnic dilemma in social services" (1981), exploring attitudes regarding poverty, welfare and ethnic discrimination; differing perceptions of service needs; and situations in which ethnic issues are likely to arise. Recency of

migration was cited as an important factor affecting the kinds of services needed and their ethnic content (p. 194). Magill (1985) stressed the dire needs of the undocumented for a total range of economic and social welfare programs, lamented their inability to obtain the help they need, and argued for a focus on the "condition and needs of the urban immigrants as a way of impacting public policy" (p. 199).

An area of special concern for government officials and other policymakers is that of the impact of recent immigrants on U.S. social service programs, and, more specifically, use of income transfer programs by the undocumented. These programs are defined as including social security, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, public assistance, food stamps and SSI. Blau (1984), Bogen (1987), Massey (1985), and North (1983), among others, explored this issue and concluded that there is a lower than average rate of usage among recent immigrants. Blau concluded that when age and other factors are held constant, immigrant families are considerably less likely to rely on welfare than native families. Variables cited as affecting impact included demographic characteristics of the alien group and their legal rights to the program. Nonavailability and inaccuracy of data were cited as barriers to the obtaining of reliable data.

Use of the educational system is considerably

higher since the right of all school-aged children, regardless of immigration status, to public education was established through Supreme Court action in 1982. Use of health care systems has, of necessity, also been higher despite the ineligibility of the undocumented for entitlements in this area. Writing about recent immigrants and their use of entitlements, Bogen commented: "The public focus on immigrants' use of cash assistance tends to obscure important questions about immigrants and their relationship to the rest of the social service system" (Bogen, 1987, p. 102).

#### Methodology for Identification of Hispanics

In studying the Hispanic immigrant population, an essential task is the identification of the groups under study. Less obvious than it sounds, this endeavor is impeded by the methodology used in the U.S. Censuses of 1970 and 1980 to identify and categorize Hispanics; the acknowledged high number of undocumented individuals of Hispanic origin; and the widespread assumption that all Hispanic groups have common characteristics. Sullivan (1985) discussed the definitional process in considerable detail, identifying critical variables that divide the Hispanic population in the U.S. into distinct subpopulations. These included: race, language, time of arrival, national origin, and minority status. Demographic studies vary considerably according to which key variable is chosen as the focal point. Because of

this ambiguity, the authors concluded, the review of data obtained from comparisons within the Hispanic groups, as well as data comparing Hispanics with other groups, is essential to an effective demographic approach.

Quality of data is a persistent theme throughout the literature on Hispanics. The most commonly used data source is the U.S. Census, because of its relative completeness, its selection as a sampling frame by government and private research surveyors, and its use for public purposes. A variety of identifiers have been used by the Census Bureau in recent years: country of birth, country of birth of parents, Spanish surname, Spanish mother tongue, language other than English, self-identification of Spanish origin. Because of the variety of identifiers used, figures reporting size and composition of the Hispanic population vary substantially according to which identifier is used.

The current literature appears to rely most heavily upon self-identification data. However, even this identifier is problematic. First, individuals' responses as Hispanic or non-Hispanic vary over time. Second, incorrect responses frequently occur as in the 1980 Census in which many respondents from the midwestern and southern portions of the United States identified themselves as "Central or South American".

Census data has also been criticized by advocates

for the Hispanic community because of its severe undercount of their community. Return rates for the 1990 Census, from which data was just being released as this study was nearing completion, were reportedly low throughout the country. Donald Byrnes, the U.S. Census Bureau's district manager for southern Westchester, a region of focus for the present study, stated that return rates for the Hispanic areas were "well below" the county average. Clarifying his statement, Byrnes noted that "recent raids by the Immigration and Naturalization Service in...parts of the county had discredited the census in the eyes of many undocumented residents" (McWhirter, p. 14).

Data-related issues are emphasized in the literature in almost all of the overview works and subgroup surveys concerning Hispanics in the U.S. Orlov and Ueda (1980) highlighted the problem of separating out individual national groups from the aggregated immigration and census statistics for Hispanics. Alvarez (1981) devoted considerable attention to problems of definition of Hispanic subgroups and limitations of available data sources. Hernandez (1985) underscored the incompleteness and defectiveness of population data, particularly as it relates to new immigrants and suggested alternatives to use of traditional data sources, primarily in terms of localized data collection by community area or census

tract and neighborhood population studies. He proposed five "community types" or ecological situations for study of new immigrants. Included among his list were older neighborhoods of satellite cities of metropolitan areas (often mistaken for suburban settlement), and scattered suburban settlements (p. 113). These categories would seem to have applicability to the proposed Westchester study.

Jaffe, Cullen and Boswell (1980) based their interpretive study on the 1970 Census but recognized the limitations of the census designations, notably the lack of reliability of the self-identification data for those of Central and South American origin. For this reason, they relied solely on country of birth information in their analysis of data for these subgroups.

#### Hispanic Subgroups

Each of the identified Hispanic subgroups has its own immigration and settlement history, demographics and socioeconomic status, and cultural traditions and family socialization patterns (Ford Foundation, 1984). Recent literature on Hispanics has placed increased focus on the changing demographic picture. Jaffe, Cullen and Boswell (1980) addressed this changing picture in their analysis of five Spanish American subgroups: Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, and the Hispanos.

Since the Census Bureau has published few separate

statistics by country of origin, Central and South American immigrants have been treated in the literature as a single population. Jaffe, Cullen, and Boswell (1980) pointed out the misleading consequences of this aggregation, citing the extreme diversity within the countries represented. Summarizing their overall findings, these authors concluded that despite the great diversity within this group, Central and South Americans as a statistical aggregate can be considered quite similar in demographic and economic characteristics to the U.S. non-Spanish white population. However, it is significant to note the publication date of their work. The influx since 1980 of hundreds of thousands of Central Americans (Salvadorans, Guatemalans, and Nicaraguans) fleeing violence and economic repression may have altered their composite picture considerably. Gann and Duignan (1986), for example, underscored the role of civil strife, repression, and guerilla activity in the sending countries as a stimulant to emigration.

Papademetriou (1983) selected as his source of intercensal data on new immigrants the Immigration and Naturalization Service's annual alien registration forms. However, this data source is no longer available as these forms and the filing process were discontinued in 1981. Moreover, he noted several other factors which invalidated its use: the fact that illegal aliens do not file, the voluntary nature of compliance with the

procedure, and the high rate of non-compliance among certain ethnic groups. INS data on new entrants who come to the U.S. as permanent residents is suggested as an additional data source. Nonetheless, Papademetriou's data analysis of new immigrants to Brooklyn and Queens is unique because of its breakdown of national origin groups by geographic area of settlement.

Ruggles and Fix (1985) took a different approach to collecting data on new Hispanic immigrants. Focusing their attention on the Central American population, they acknowledged that it is difficult to estimate the overall magnitude of this population since most Central Americans are undocumented, potentially deportable, and thus highly motivated to hide from the authorities. For this reason, the approach they used involved identifying nine areas of the country containing about 80-90 percent of the total U.S. Central American population. In these areas, they gathered information from groups working with these migrants in the U.S., reviewing records and discussing with them the characteristics of the migrants they serve. Groups contacted included voluntary organizations providing direct aid to the migrants, offices of the INS at both the district and national levels, and officials in charge of administering various public assistance programs at the national, state, and local levels (pp. 41-42).

One important finding that emerged from their study

is that there were substantial differences among the nine sites studied in terms of the makeup of the local Central American population. According to respondents' estimates, California appeared to contain the greatest concentration of Central American immigrants in the U.S. And certain U.S. cities were found to contain clusters of Central American immigrants from certain countries, or even regions or villages. Thus, Nicaraguans were found to be highly concentrated in Miami and Hondurans in New Orleans. Salvadorans and Guatemalans (who together make up the bulk of the Central American population in the U.S.) were found to be more widely dispersed.

#### Case Studies of New Immigrants

A number of case studies focusing on specific new immigrant groups and/or particular geographic areas of settlement have been carried out in recent years. Papademetriou and DiMarzio (1986) studied undocumented aliens in the New York metropolitan area, administering an extensive 363-question instrument to 697 respondents from the northern rim of South America, Central America and the Caribbean. While emphasizing labor force participation among the undocumented, the study covered a wide spectrum of topics including sociodemographic characteristics, socioeconomic characteristics prior to coming to the U.S., reasons for and methods of coming, including the role of extended household, the process of

settlement, employment history, participation in social insurance and benefits in the U.S., participation in payroll deduction programs, and income transfer and remittance behavior while in the U.S.

Tienda (1980) sampled 820 Mexican immigrants to examine the relationship between geographic mobility, kinship ties, and social status. Gurak and Rogler (1980b) explored Hispanic diversity in New York City, and offered more in-depth analysis of the Dominican and Colombian subgroups in terms of their employment, factors associated with settlement, and adjustment and adaptation processes (1980, 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985). Also focusing on the Colombian community in New York, Cheney surveyed immigrant workers through some 50 structured interviews with informants, casual conversations, and participant observation in households, workplaces, and social gatherings over a two-year period.

North and Houstoun (1976) focused on the characteristics and role of illegal aliens through their study of 793 apprehended illegal aliens in 19 sites across the United States. Cohen (1979) carried out an ethnographic study of new Latin American immigrants in the Washington, D.C. area. Rodriguez (1987) identified the different undocumented Central American populations in Houston and explored aspects of their settlement, work and motivations for emigrating. He used

a "multifaceted methodology of interviewing undocumented immigrants, employers and organizations, collecting life histories, and observing community life in areas with concentrations of undocumented Central Americans"

(p. 7). One of his major conclusions was that "the larger the social network that serves for organizing the undocumented migration, the greater the social and economic resources than can be mustered for settlement leading to greater household stability (p. 17). He also concludes that although social networks are important, it is work conditions that determine the final settlement outcome. The Rodriguez study, because of its focus on settlement issues for undocumented Central Americans, its geographic base in a single geographic area, and its methodology was of considerable utility for the proposed Westchester study.

A distinct approach was taken by Suarez-Orozco (1989) who focused on Central American refugees in U.S. high schools. His study is valuable in its depiction of the migrant experience and its explanation and illustration of the dual frame of reference which results in Central American youths' comparing their current reality with what they left behind. Based on his observations and work in school settings, this author suggested that "in general, immigrant Hispanics tend to do better in American educational settings than mainland Puerto Ricans or Mexican Americans" (p. 46).

His conclusion that: "a dream to achieve a better tomorrow through self-sacrifice has enabled many of the recent arrivals, parents and children alike, to endure marginality...and to move toward attempts to succeed despite the unfavorable climate of the American inner city" (p. 47) coincided with the belief of the present researcher and was one of her motivations for this research.

#### Alternative Research Approaches

Approaches to the study of new immigrants fall primarily into the case study category. In this type of study, one-time interviews are generally conducted with subjects. Studies of this nature have already been discussed in this review. The Rodriguez study in Houston (1987) and Pessar's study of Dominican women in New York City (1987) deviated from the straight case study model in their use of multiple data collection strategies, such as interviews, home visits, observations and open-ended questioning.

A lesser number of studies adopt a longitudinal approach. One such effort was the Portes and Bach study of Mexican and Cuban male immigrants which was carried out over an eight-year period (1985). The work described economic, social, and cultural adaptation, models of occupational and income advancement, immigrants' perceptions of U.S. society and social relationships within ethnic circles and in the larger

community.

### Research Methodology

Cornelius (1982) offered methodological tips for interviewing the undocumented. Contending that difficulties in surveying this population can be surmounted, he suggested strategies for identifying and gaining access, modifications in questionnaire formats, and criteria for the selection and training of interviewers. "Local notables", such as heads of community organizations, priests, merchants, directors of immigrant counseling centers, teachers and administrators, employers, Spanish speaking doctors, social workers, and "women who serve as informal community brokers" were suggested as resources for identifying nondetained undocumented aliens (p. 385).

Cornelius emphasized the importance of enlisting the support and cooperation of these "notables", apprising them of the nature and objectives of the study, and providing repeated assurances that participants will not be exposed to a "higher risk of detection and apprehension by immigration authorities" (p. 386). The utility of "snowball sampling", in which interviewees are asked whether they have any other friends or relatives living in the same U.S. city or near-by, is emphasized and deemed preferable in cost-benefit terms (p. 393). This method is favored as it takes advantage of the extensive kinship/friendship

networks to which the vast majority of the undocumented belong.

Cornelius advocated the inclusion of respondents of varying legal statuses in study samples. Both "long stayers" who maintain year-round residence, hold urban based jobs with "cover-up sponsorship", and have stable living arrangements, and newcomers whose residency may be short-term are suggested as appropriate subjects.

Papademetriou and DiMarzio (1986) also discussed issues of design, methodology and training in their work on undocumented aliens, touching on the important areas of translation, pretesting, and professional behavior. In his discussion of methodological issues, Rodriguez (1987) favored the use of open-ended questions because they enable respondents from different countries to "use their own cognitive and experiential categories, enhancing the ability to analyze behavior that undocumented populations sometimes perceive differently among themselves or differently from other members of U.S. society" (p. 7).

Hernandez (1985) cautioned against surveys that are too massive, as well as those that have a one-time focus. The importance of achieving mutual understanding and confidence between interviewer and interviewee and "new immigrant control and ownership of research" was emphasized (p. 117).

### New York State's Hispanics

The geographic focus of the proposed study is a suburban county of New York State. In 1980, 9.5 percent of New York's population was Hispanic (1,659,300 out of a total population of 17,558,072). New York ranked third highest among the states in proportion of Hispanics. Careful analysis of available data revealed that Hispanics in the U.S. are an extremely diverse group of which Central and South Americans comprised approximately 7.7 percent. Since most of the 1980 Census reports do not disaggregate the Hispanic group, a New York State breakdown of Hispanic subgroups was not available. Disaggregation, when it did occur, reflected the proportions of subgroups nationwide rather than statewide (Governor's Advisory Committee for Hispanic Affairs, 1984). The Governor's Committee presented a fairly comprehensive demographic portrait of the State's Hispanic population but did not include breakdowns by country of origin.

One approach to studying Hispanic diversity within the State was presented by Gurak and Rogler (1980a) who used sources such as Board of Education censuses, marriage records, and ethnographic accounts of specific communities which are reflective of not only legal but also undocumented immigrants. Papademetriou and DiMarzio (1986), Pessar (1987), Gurak and Kritz (1984), Jenkins, Sauber and Friedlander (1985) and Mann and

Salvo (1986) carried out studies of Hispanic immigrants in New York City and its environs, some of which include Central and South American respondents. However, none of these researchers made the Central American population a primary focus. Ruggles and Fix (1985) offered statistical data and some sociodemographic analysis regarding Central Americans in the New York area but based their report exclusively on secondary sources. They estimated the Central American immigrant population residing in the New York area at 75,000 to 150,000 (p. 46). CARECEN estimated 135,000 Central Americans in New York State of whom about 90,000 live on Long Island (1990).

#### Hispanics in Westchester County

While relatively little literature exists concerning Central and South American immigrants in New York State, even less exists about these groups in Westchester County, despite the fact that Westchester is one of seven counties in the State with the highest proportion of Hispanics (only the five NYC counties had a higher proportion than did Westchester). In Westchester, the Hispanic population grew 89.2 percent in the last decade, to 86,194 or 9.8 percent of the County's population (Hearth, 1991). The proportion of Hispanic subgroups comprising this total is not yet known. Data on the nationalities of Hispanic people are not expected to be available from the Census Bureau

until late 1991 or early 1992 (Hearth, p. 27). As of 1984, Queens, Nassau, and Westchester were the only three counties in the State in which Puerto Ricans were not the dominant Hispanic group. In Westchester, 44.7 percent of the Hispanic population was classified as "Other Hispanic" (Governor's Advisory Committee, 1984).

Concern with the County's Hispanic population was evidenced by the 1988 publication of "Westchester Hispanics: An Agenda for County Action", a report of the Westchester County Hispanic Advisory Board (1988). While presenting an excellent overview of the population and its concerns in the areas of government, education, economic development, housing and health, the report offered no analysis of the Hispanic subgroups which comprise the County's Hispanic population.

Alisse Waterston prepared an empirical case study of Hispanics in New Rochelle, the only such study found for Westchester County. The unpublished work focused on the Mexican and Colombian communities in the City of New Rochelle and attempted to identify barriers to service delivery, informal immigrant coping mechanisms, and formal organizations which can be used to strengthen service delivery, provide information, and promote effective program planning and policy development.

Waterston contrasted the Mexican and Colombian immigrant groups and discussed their migration to New Rochelle, work force participation, family patterns,

religious customs, and source for obtaining needed services. Issues related to housing, health, employment, affirmative action, education, child care, youth, social organization, and local Hispanic leadership were presented, and recommendations for amelioration in these areas were offered. The focus was local but possible applicability to the County of Westchester as a whole was implied.

Golan and Gruschka (1971) pointed out that social workers "have paid little attention to the unique adjustment problems encountered by immigrants and the communities to which they come..."(p. 82). This study was undertaken in an attempt to address one overlooked immigrant population.

### CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### Study Design

The nature of this study is exploratory-descriptive. This approach was selected because the investigator's purpose was "to provide a beginning familiarity" (Babbie, 1989, p. 86) with the theme and "to describe situations and events" (p. 87). The subject of study, recent Central American immigrants, was deemed "relatively new and unstudied" (Babbie, 1989, p. 86), and thus an exploratory approach was chosen.

In explaining the value of exploratory studies in social scientific research, Babbie writes: "They are essential whenever a researcher is breaking new ground, and they can almost always yield new insights into a topic for research" (pp. 86-87). Because so little has been published about the recent Central American immigrant population, particularly in terms of the process by which immigrants adjust to their new lives in the United States, an exploratory-descriptive approach was pursued. In selecting this approach, the investigator was cognizant of its principal shortcoming, that is, its inability to provide adequate answers to research questions and its tendency to instead "hint at the answers" (Babbie, p. 87).

This study was carried out using field research and qualitative research methods. In describing the type of data obtainable through the use of these methods, Patton

(1980) writes: "Qualitative data consist of detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions, and observed behaviors, direct quotations from people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts....The data are open-ended in order to find out what people's lives, experiences, and interactions mean to them in their own terms and in their natural settings" (p. 22). Because the investigator was interested in exploring the selected theme from the immigrants' perspective, she adopted this methodology.

The literature on qualitative methodology distinguishes between two component techniques - participant observation and intensive interviewing (also known as unstructured interviewing). This study employed the latter but not the former. Lofland (1984) describes intensive interviewing as: "a guided conversation whose goal is to elicit from the interviewee rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis...to discover the informant's experience of a particular topic or situation" (p. 12). Through the use of household interviews with immigrant families, the investigator sought to elicit such data.

#### Population and Sample

For purposes of this study, only Central American immigrants were included, since the unique aspects of their immigration experience was the area of major focus. It has been estimated that 750,000 - 1.3 million

Central Americans reside in the United States (Ruggles and Fix, 1985, p. 45), of whom about ten to fifteen percent live in the New York metropolitan area.

CARECEN, Central American Refugee Center, located in Hempstead, New York, has estimated New York State's Central American immigrant population at 135,000, the third largest Central American refugee community in the country after Texas and California (CARECEN, 1990).

The population from which the sample was drawn was Central American immigrants residing in Westchester County, a suburban county contiguous with and to the north of New York City. According to early data from the 1990 Census, Westchester's Hispanic population was reported as 86,194 or 9.8 percent of the County's population. This represents an 89.2 percent increase during the last decade; in 1980 the Hispanic population comprised 5.3 percent (Hearth, 1991, p. 1). Hispanic leaders, such as Luis Andrew Penichet, chairman of the County's Hispanic Advisory Board, a panel that advises the County Executive on the needs of the Spanish speaking population, judged the population to be much larger, adding some 40,000 to the reported figure. They attributed this difference to poor distribution of census forms among Westchester Hispanic communities (McWhirter, 1990, p. 1), as well as the large number of undocumented individuals whose social isolation and fear of deportation prevented them from participating in the

census (Hearth, 1991, p. 27).

Data from the 1990 Census on the nationalities of Westchester's Hispanic residents was not available at the time of preparation of this study. However, according to the 1980 Census, Westchester's Hispanic population included 44.7 percent "other Hispanic" (a terms which excludes Puerto Ricans, Cubans and Dominicans and includes individuals from Mexico and all of the Spanish-speaking Central and South American countries (Governor's Advisory Committee, 1984, p. 15). Although breakdowns by national origin were not available, it has been reported that Salvadorans and Guatemalans predominate in the New York metropolitan area (Ruggles and Fix, 1985, p. 98).

The study sample was drawn from the southern portion of the County and included the towns of Yonkers, New Rochelle, Mamaroneck, Port Chester, Larchmont, and White Plains, most of which have high concentrations of Hispanics, ranging from five percent to almost 33 percent of their populations (see Description of Sample for further detail). These towns were selected because of the investigator's access to respondents and because of their geographic accessibility. Thus, the distribution of respondents was not representative.

It was recognized that several towns in the northern part of the County had high proportions of Central American immigrants. In addition, their Central

American communities seemed to be comprised of a population with quite different characteristics, specifically, more rural in origin and less educated. While the desirability of sampling this contrasting population was recognized, it was determined that the time and resource limitations of the present study precluded including this group. However, it is recognized that this is a limitation of the present study. Replication of the study in the up-county area and the contrasting of findings with those obtained in the present study is seen as an important area for future research.

The study sample included at least one adult family member per household from 30 immigrant households within Westchester County. Only individuals residing with other family members or married individuals whose spouses were still in their homelands were included, since family roles and interactions were an important area of exploration. An attempt was made to achieve diversity of social class, length of time in the United States, age, marital status, household composition, work history, national origin, and documented versus undocumented status. Recency of immigration was judged to be an important study variable; thus steps were taken to ensure that the majority of the respondents selected had emigrated during the last decade (26 out of 30 respondents had done so). The four respondents of

longer tenure in the United States were viewed as valuable in terms of presenting possible contrasts in several of the areas of exploration such as language acquisition, immigration status, and family roles and interactions.

The sample was drawn using both the snowball method as well as reliance on "local notables" (Cornelius, 1982, p. 385). (See Description of Sample for sources of referral.) The sample was not representative; however, it was, with some limitations, purposive, i.e., chosen to "yield the most comprehensive understanding of [the] subject of study, based on the intuitive feel for the subject that comes from extended observation and reflection" (Babbie, 1989, p. 344). The sample bias, in terms of its preponderance of individuals from urban origins, has already been discussed earlier in this section.

#### Procedures

Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in respondents' homes by the principal investigator (U.S. born with good Spanish speaking ability) who was assisted in eight of the 30 interviews by a trained bilingual interviewer of Puerto Rican ancestry. Stipends were provided to encourage interviewees' participation and provide compensation for time and effort expended.

In order to assure subjects of their anonymity and

allay fears of public disclosure of personal information, several measures were taken. Initially, when the researcher spoke with prospective interviewees, she explained the purpose of the study and the interview process and content. Measures to safeguard confidentiality and reduce discomfort, such as the omission of subjects' names and the changing of details of respondents' stories (such as the number of family members, ages and sexes of children, etc.) in the written study report were described. The respondents' rights to refrain from answering any questions that made them uncomfortable was emphasized. Prospective interviewees were encouraged to ask questions about the study and the interview process. At the inception of each interview, this same information was reviewed with the respondent, and a written statement (in Spanish) describing the study and outlining the assurances detailed above was provided.

Interviews ranged from two to three hours in length. A written questionnaire was developed (see Appendix A) and translated into Spanish. The Spanish translation of the questionnaire was reviewed by a Salvadoran university professor, presently residing in the U.S., to assure conformity to Central American usage. The interview was conducted using what Patton (1987) terms a "standardized open-ended" format which "consists of a set of questions carefully worded and

arranged for the purpose of taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words" (p. 112). Respondents were encouraged to provide anecdotal accounts of experiences and to contribute impressions and opinions freely.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with five respondents; the two interviewers then met, discussed areas of weakness, and made modifications. For each of the eight interviews in which both interviewers participated, the investigator met with her assistant after the session to compare notes and insights.

In addition to the immigrant interviews, the investigator conducted eleven interviews with representatives of groups working with Central American immigrants, including religious leaders, health and social service providers, representatives of community organizations, and educators. It was felt that this approach would yield additional information about the characteristics of the study population, the issues they confronted, and responses of social institutions to their needs. Moreover, through comparison of data they provided with data obtained from immigrant respondents, the investigator sought to gain some measure of reliability.

#### Operational Definitions

This study utilized the concepts of immigrant

adjustment, assimilation, and settlement, as defined by Douglas T. Gurak and Lloyd H. Rogler in their work on Hispanic migrants in New York (Gurak and Rogler, 1980b, pp. 5-6). Adjustment is defined as "learning how to utilize institutions necessary for the maintenance of an accepted way of living" (p. 6). Assimilation is defined as "organizational and institutional integration...." (p. 6). It can involve "the loss of one's culture..., the process of change in the institutions and practices of both immigrant and receiving societies, or... a change in the relative social distances separating groups" (p. 6). Settlement is defined as "the process by which one's lifestyle and attitudes change so that the probability of long-term residence increases significantly" (p. 6). According to Gurak and Rogler's conceptualization, acculturation, assimilation, and adjustment are correlated with, but not the same as, settlement.

#### Variables

In his guide, Analyzing Social Settings (1984, pp. 71-92), John Lofland enumerates various categories of foci for field research. Those foci described by Lofland and included in the present research included:

- (1) meanings, including culture, norms, and world views;
- (2) practices, i.e., various kinds of behavior;
- (3) episodes, such as crime and illness; (4) roles related to the family, occupation, and ethnic group and

the behavior associated with them; (5) relationships; (6) groups, such as friendships and work groups; and (7) organizations, such as hospitals or schools.

In the present study, variables included household composition; educational level of family members; language facility; family roles, patterns of interaction, and socialization; kinship ties and assistance; housing location and characteristics; entry and immigration status; employment; religious affiliation and practice; and experience with social institutions. These variables were studied and analyzed in terms of their relationship to the concepts of settlement and adjustment. Due to the small sample size and as per the exploratory-descriptive nature of the study, patterns were sought for possible later study using a larger sample and, if possible, a quantitative approach.

#### Data Analysis

Because this study was carried out using field research techniques, it achieved a high depth of meaning, as evidenced by the nuances of behavior and points of view and the verbatim reports and illustrations provided by interviewees. Internal validity was high since findings were derived directly from participants' accounts of their experiences and feelings.

A number of factors were identified which posed

possible barriers to achieving a high level of reliability. Outstanding among them was the lack of trust evidenced by some respondents, particularly those whose immigration status was tenuous. This distrust manifested itself in omission and/or distortion of information, contradictory responses, and a general reluctance to share impressions and experiences. The personal and subjective nature of the conversations on which the data was based may also have affected reliability. In addition, the fact that the principal investigator was not Hispanic nor native Spanish speaking influenced the way she was perceived by those interviewed, her ability to express herself clearly to them, and her understanding of what transpired during the interview process.

Two inter-observer methods were used to increase reliability. First, debriefings were held with the bilingual interviewer, and second, "provider of service" interviews were used as a second data source, and material obtained from the two sources was compared. The external validity or generalizability of the study is, at best, unclear, as tends to be true in qualitative studies, due to the investigator's role in making observations and inferences; the absence of rigorous sampling and standardized measures of variables; and the lack of representativeness, and possible bias, of the sample. Yet, despite these limitations, it is the

opinion of the researcher that the study provides useful information of value to those formulating policy and providing services to the Central American immigrant community. Cronbach's notion of "extrapolation" in which "information-rich samples and designs" are used and through which "one goes beyond the narrow confines of the data to think about other applications of the findings" (1980, pp. 231-235) would seem to have applicability to this research effort.

#### Resolution of Anticipated Problems

It was anticipated that an adequate sample would be hard to obtain because those who were undocumented would be reluctant to participate because of their fear of exposure of their legal status and concern about possible deportation. This issue was viewed as affecting not only the recruitment of respondents but also the degree to which those who agreed to participate responded to specific questions. Recruitment did not prove problematic. The "local notables" contacted to obtain study participants were carefully and thoroughly briefed on the nature and objectives of the study and were provided with written explanatory information. Most were gracious and extremely helpful in providing names and in communicating personally with proposed subjects to promote their participation. Similarly, prospective respondents identified through the "snowball sampling" method were briefed, offered written

information, and encouraged to discuss the study with the individual who had referred them before making a commitment. Few of the prospective interviewees contacted in this way declined the interview.

The extent to which participants' status influenced their responses was more difficult to assess. In several cases, the interviewer was able to surmise through the manner in which questions were answered that interviewees were, in fact, concerned about the possible consequences of their sharing personal information, particularly as it might impact on their legal status. During the investigator's debriefings with the second interviewer, these problems were addressed, and alternative approaches to certain topical areas were devised.

Before the interviews were undertaken, the Puerto Rican interviewer's ethnicity was seen as an area of possible concern in terms of Central American respondents' preconceptions and negative stereotyping. However, this did not seem to be the case. Instead, her greater fluency in Spanish, as well as her capacity to relate to Hispanic culture and lifestyles, proved a tremendous asset. The two-interviewer sessions were more spirited and tended to elicit more active discussion and more sharing of ideas than did those conducted by only the principal investigator.

## CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

### Introduction

Over the last decade, the New York metropolitan area has witnessed a dramatic influx of immigrants from Central America. Prompted by conditions of violence, political unrest, and economic hardship, the migrants have fled their countries of origin in search of a better life. The United States government has categorically denied this group refugee status. Ruggles and Fix (1985) report that fewer than 100 Central American aliens have been granted this status. The majority has entered and/or remained within the country without the knowledge or permission of the U.S. Immigration Service. As the new arrivals move into different localities and become a visible element in the life of the community, their cultural characteristics, the nature of their adaptation and the factors which influence successful adjustment have emerged as issues of interest and concern.

While historians have provided extensive documentation of the European immigrant experience, much less has been written about the new immigrants, particularly in terms of their experiences once in the United States. Oral history, a methodology which is suited to the chronicling of individual life stories, has not been used extensively with the recent Central American immigrants, probably because of the anxiety,

distrust, and fear of disclosure which thwart candid discussion. In this study, an effort was made to overcome these barriers with a view to presenting both an overall vision of the lives of Central American immigrant families and an analysis of some of the salient themes which emerge as they share their experiences and reactions to life in a new land.

#### Description of Sample

The study sample included one or more respondents from each of 30 households. Sources of referral for study participants included: religious leaders (10), friends or relatives of respondents (8), staff of human service programs (5), professional colleagues (5), and volunteers involved in refugee assistance work (2).

In addition, eleven interviews were conducted with individuals providing programs and services to Central American immigrants. These included: two clergymen, a volunteer staffing a church-sponsored community office, the coordinator of a Women and Infant Care (WIC) program, an eligibility supervisor for a district office of social services, an immigration specialist for a county-based Hispanic organization, the executive director of another county-based Hispanic organization, a nurse-practitioner at a family practice clinic, a hospital director of social services, the coordinator of bilingual services for a local school system, and the director of development for a large Central American

refugee organization in a neighboring county.

Forty-one respondents participated in the household interviews. Of the principal respondents (those who took the primary role in answering the questions), eleven (36%) were of Guatemalan origin; 10 (33%) were of Salvadoran origin; 7 (23%) were from Nicaragua; and 2 (7%) were from Honduras. Most of the families (73%) were from urban backgrounds; 8 (27%) were from rural backgrounds. Four (13%) of the principal respondents arrived prior to 1980. Almost a fourth (23%) had been in the United States from six to ten years; 12 (40%) had been in the country from two to six years; and 7 (23%) had been in the States less than two years.

At the time of the interviews, all of the respondents were residing in Westchester County, a suburban county north of New York City. Half of the respondents were living in Yonkers, 5 in New Rochelle, 4 in Mamaroneck, 4 in Port Chester, 1 in Larchmont, and 1 in White Plains.

Eleven households had 3 or less members; 14 had between 4 and 6 members; and 5 had more than 6 members, with the largest consisting of 12 members. Almost all of the respondents (23) were married; 4 were living with a partner; and 3 were divorced or unmarried. Most of the couples in the sample (26) were living with children and other related and unrelated individuals. Two were single parents living with their children, and 2 were

single men.

All but two of the respondents had children. The majority had 2 children or less; 8 had 3 to 4 children; and 3 respondents had 5 or more children. Half of the respondents' children were under 5 years of age; 12 were between ages 5 and 12; 10 between ages 12 and 18; and 9 over the age of 18.

Principal respondents included one woman over 50 years of age; 4 individuals between 46 and 50; 10 individuals between 40 and 45; 7 individuals between 31 and 39; 7 individuals between 22 and 30 and one individual under 21 years of age. Half of the principal respondents were women and half were men.

Most of the respondents (57%) identified themselves as practicing Roman Catholics ; 8 stated that they practiced other religions; and 5 described themselves as not practicing any religion on a regular basis. Twelve respondents had completed primary education; 8 had completed secondary education; 9 had completed "bachillerato" (post-secondary) and/or university studies. Nine respondents rated their knowledge of the English language as poor; 15 rated it as fair; and 6 rated it as good.

Well over half of the respondents (60%) stated that they had changed their occupational or student status since emigrating. The predominant current occupation among respondents was domestic work. Almost three-

fourths of the respondents were employed in this field. Other occupations held by respondents included carpentry, painting, contracting, and mechanical work (6); factory work (4); homemaker (4); retail and management (3); landscaping (3); child care or elder care (1); driver (1); and other (psychologist, social service worker, insurance salesperson) (3).

Twelve respondents entered the United States with legal documentation and 18 entered without legal documentation. Of those who entered legally, 8 entered with tourist permits, 1 with a work permit, and 3 with visas obtained by family members already residing in the U.S. Twenty-six respondents had family in the United States who assisted them upon arrival.

Only ten percent of the respondents (3) emigrated with their spouses or partners. The vast majority (22) came at separate times; and three had spouses who were still back in their countries of origin. Eighteen respondents had relatives in their homelands to whom they were sending remittances (financial support) on a periodic basis. Eighteen had relatives who had emigrated to the U.S. subsequent to their arrival.

Almost half of the respondents (47%) described their current immigration status as undocumented; 40 percent (12) had become permanent residents; and 13 percent (4) had temporary documentation based on work permits, extended tourist visas, or asylum judgments. Of the 53

percent (16) classified as temporary or permanent legal residents, 20 percent (6) had obtained legal status through the amnesty provisions of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act; 13 percent (4) through family members' sponsorship; 10 percent (3) through work contracts; and 10 percent (3) through political asylum appeals.

### Sample Case Histories

The two case histories which follow encapsulate the immigrant experience as revealed through the interview process. They are intended to convey the range of topics covered, some of the predominant issues raised, and the candor and emotionality demonstrated by the respondents. Names of individuals and some of the details of their stories have been altered to protect their confidentiality.

The first case history portrays a Guatemalan family, of modest middle class background, whose motivation for emigrating was both economic and political and whose adjustment to life in suburban New York over the last several years has been characterized by financial instability, emotional upheaval, marginal living conditions, and a lack of permanency.

#### The Gomez Family

Sra. Gomez is a 41-year old Guatemalan woman married with one son, aged 21. Her husband and son left their country in 1988 and immigrated to New York. She followed about a year later.

At the time of the interview, Sra Gomez had been in the U.S. only ten months. She related in great detail her experience of traveling with a group of nine other Guatemalans (two women and nine men) from Guatemala through Mexico to the U.S. border, and crossing the border illegally. One segment of the journey involved their sequestering themselves in the back of a pick-up truck in sardine-like fashion. When the immigration authorities detained the truck, the group was forced to turn back, wait through the night and try again the next day. It took two more attempts before the vehicle made it across the border. The final step of the trip was made with 103 other individuals in a closed trailer. The impact of the harrowing journey on Sra. Gomez was evidenced by the fervor and intensity with which she recounted the experience. Her vivid account included such details as the color and manufacturer of each vehicle in which she was transported, the sum of money paid to the "coyotes" (expeditors who assist the undocumented in crossing the border), and the precise schedule followed.

Weak from hunger, stress, and fatigue, Sra. Gomez finally arrived in Los Angeles where she spent about three weeks in the home of her husband's niece before proceeding to New York to join her spouse and son. During her stay in Los Angeles, she was constantly on edge, convinced that "la migra" (the immigration authorities) was coming to get her each time she heard a siren. She characterized her condition during this period as "mordida" (wasted).

Originally natives of Quiche, a province northwest of the capital district, Sr. and Sra. Gomez owned a large private home in Guatemala City prior to emigrating. Characterizing the situation in Guatemala as one of economic disaster and lawlessness, Sra. Gomez reported that prior to her departure crime was rampant, and thefts were abundant with robbers staging their break-ins at any time, even when people were at home. In one case known to Sra. Gomez, a woman was decapitated during the theft of a television.

Sra. Gomez owned and managed what she described as a highly successful seafood business; her husband was working in his field of specialization, accounting; and her son was attending a polytechnic institute prior to their departure. The threat of their son's being inducted into the army and sent to the mountains to fight, as well as the deterioration of economic and social conditions, prompted the Gomez's to leave their home country. Since their arrival, Sr. Gomez and his son have been working painting boats in a yard in Mamaroneck. The work is seasonal, affording them little

income during the cold weather months. Sr. Gomez's lack of English language has precluded his being considered for a job in his field of specialization.

Upon her arrival, Sra. Gomez found her husband very changed and "more indifferent". She postulated that this change might be the result of the greater degree of preoccupation characteristic of life in the U.S. Alluding to an affair he had with a woman he met in New York during their separation, she candidly described herself as very sad and lonely. Her son recently married a Guatemalan who holds a resident visa, and they have a baby boy. At the time of the interview, mother and son were out of the country visiting relatives in Guatemala and Sra. Gomez was thus further saddened by the temporary loss of her only grandson.

Shortly after her arrival, Sra. Gomez accepted a live-in position as a housekeeper and nanny with a family in Mt. Vernon. Since her female employer was Puerto Rican, Sra. Gomez's lack of facility in English was not a serious handicap. The couple paid her \$140 a week to maintain the household and care for their two children. Anxious to assist her in developing her English language skills, they encouraged her to enroll in evening classes and took her five nights a week. They also offered to sponsor her for U.S. residency, but the stipulation of two years live-in status was a deterrent to her accepting their proposition.

Over the course of her employment with this family, Sra. Gomez grew increasingly disenchanted with the arrangement, and a series of misunderstandings developed over promises made by her employers which Sra. Gomez felt were not honored as well as care and maintenance of the host family's personal belongings. At the end of six months, Sra. Gomez left this job and obtained an apartment with her husband who had been living in a rented room. She secured two days a week of domestic work, and, at the time of the interview, was seeking additional day work.

The Gomez family chose New Yor as their destination because Sr. Gomez had several brothers and other relatives who were residing there. While he also had family in Los Angeles, he felt closer to his brothers and thus selected Westchester. Sr. Gomez stayed with them initially upon his arrival in the states. The couple maintains some contact with locally residing relatives, but did not appear to have a close ongoing relationship with them. Sra. Gomez has sent occasional remittances (financial support) to family members in Guatemala, specifically her father, sister and nephews. While she would like to assist family

members in emigrating, her brief ten-month tenure in the United States and failure to secure sustained employment have made this impossible.

When asked to compare her standard of living in the U.S. with that of Guatemala, Sra. Gomez's response was mixed. She highlighted the difficulty of finding decent affordable housing in this country and the extra expense of heat which one incurs here but not in Guatemala. Moreover, she has had difficulty adjusting to the cold and has suffered from arthritis. On the other hand, in terms of piece of mind, one is more at ease here, Sra. Gomez explained. "At home, we go out not knowing if our things and family will be there when we return."

The Gomez's live in a four-room second floor apartment on a busy, commercial thoroughfare. The space is shared with an unrelated Guatemalan and his son; each family unit occupies a room and shares common kitchen and bath facilities for which they each pay \$450 monthly. Sra. Gomez expressed extreme dissatisfaction with this arrangement, commenting on the crowded conditions and the strains of sharing space with strangers "with different habits." The rooms were sparsely furnished, including little more than beds, boxes, a table and a few chairs. The apartment was in disrepair, noisy and ostensibly overpriced for the limited space it offered. Sra. Gomez queried the interviewers about their knowledge of available rental units, clearly indicating a desire to relocate.

While Sra. Gomez characterized the decision making process between her and her husband as shared, her responses to specific questions conveyed otherwise. For example, she indicated that she had worked to enable her only son to study. At this point in the discussion, she pulled out several school certificates her son had earned and beamed as she lauded his accomplishments. She admitted that her son's schooling was not a priority of her husband's.

In discussing long-range residency plans, Sra. Gomez related that her husband was attempting to secure resident status for himself and their son, with the hope of being able to migrate between the U.S. and Guatemala according to the seasonal demands of employment. She, on the other hand, had set three years as the length of time she wished to remain in the states, and would consider leaving without documentation and reapplying for a visa if she wished to return. She explained that she understood that it was easier for "older people" to obtain visas. Her plan to return home is sparked by a desire to see her aged father who is still farming in the Guatemalan countryside.

Sra. Gomez reported that she does all the cleaning and cooking, but the shopping for groceries, clothing, and household items is shared by all family members. The goal of learning English is important to Sra. Gomez and her son. She pulled out a collection of instructional audio tapes which her son had purchased through a source advertised on television. However, she indicated that they have found it difficult to make time to practice with them. When asked about kinds of community services she viewed as valuable for newly arrived immigrants like herself, Sra. Gomez mentioned employment assistance. She did not refer to any experiences with social service providers.

The second interview presents a Salvadoran family whose emigration, initiated in 1981, was prompted by exclusively political motives and the threat of imminent danger. Highly cultured and educated, these family members have, by U.S. standards, adapted extremely successfully to life in the States. However, by their own criteria, husband and wife revealed extreme discontent and emotional malaise. Their story reveals the severity of the obstacles posed by language and culture and the all too frequent intransigence of those in positions of power to bend the system to accommodate new immigrants.

#### The Torres Family

I was referred to Senor and Senora Torres, a Salvadoran couple in their early 40's, by a religious sister of the Maryknoll Seminary who has been involved in assisting Central American refugees. Upon initial contact, Senor Torres expressed some reluctance to meet with me. He related that he had been involved in several interviews with members of the press and other parties who distorted his responses and portrayed his situation and opinions as they wished to see them, as opposed to the way things really were. I urged his participation, indicating that one of the purposes of my research was to dispel some of the myths and

misconceptions people have concerning Hispanics and Hispanic subgroups.

The Torres couple emigrated from San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, in 1981. Senor Torres, who holds a "licenciado" in philosophy, was a professor at the national university in San Salvador for fourteen years. He attributed his decision to leave his position and his country to the Salvadoran civil war and the deterioration of conditions at the university in the years following its inception. Government occupation of the university and distrust of its faculty and administration threatened his position and, ultimately, his personal safety. As a member of the Superior Council of the university, he was labelled subversive by the government. When friends alerted him that his life was in imminent danger, he rapidly fled the country, leaving behind his wife and children.

Senor Torres fled to Costa Rica where he hoped to settle, secure a teaching position, and set up a new home with his family. After three months of negotiating the government and university bureaucracies, he found himself in what he described as a "Catch 22" situation; the government would not issue a work permit without his having the commitment of a job, and the university would not offer such a commitment without his having a work permit.

Frustrated by the situation and impatient to relocate his family whose safety was in jeopardy in El Salvador, he went to Mexico with the intention of proceeding on to the United States. After crossing the border illegally with the assistance of a "coyote" (individuals who help undocumented aliens make their way across the U.S.-Mexican border), he continued his journey by plane with the destination of a suburban center in the New York metropolitan area where a relative was residing. Subsequently, his wife, son and daughter joined him there, entering the country with tourist visas.

Shortly after his arrival in New York, Sr. Torres initiated an application for political asylum. With the assistance of attorneys from an international human rights organization, he pursued his request through the courts over a period of several years. His struggle to gain U.S. government acknowledgement of his endangered status included numerous petitions, the active involvement of prominent legislators and the sponsorship of a bill on his family's behalf. At one point, in response to a request he received to prove that his life would truly be in jeopardy were he to return to his country, Sr. Torres responded, "It would be difficult to

bring you my cadaver."

A special permit issued by the U.S. Immigration Service during this period authorized him and his family to work and reside in the U.S. on a temporary basis. The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act in 1986 put a halt to his private petition but enabled him to pursue the granting of resident status through the amnesty program created by this legislation. Only in late 1990 did resident status finally become a reality for Senor Torres and his family.

During the first year of the Torres family's stay in the United States, they resided with Sr. Torres' sister and her family who had established themselves in Westchester County some ten years prior. When asked about the extent of help he received from his sister, Sr. Torres responded: "People change so much." He further explained his response quoting a Spanish expression: "No es lo mismo verlos venir que dormir con ellos" (It's not the same to see them coming as to sleep with them). The four members of the Torres family occupied one small room in the sister's home and were asked to contribute financially to the household. Relations were very strained during this period. In reflecting on this arrangement, Sra. Torres commented that she believes her husband's sister wished to see them struggle and suffer as she and her family had.

Sr. Torres has one other close relative, a brother, who resides in another section of Westchester County. Contact with his brother and sister and their families is initiated primarily during holidays and special occasions. A niece and a cousin reside in California and Florida. The Torres' have not been involved in facilitating the emigration of other family members. The political circumstances that prompted Sr. Torres' flight do not hold true for extended family, and thus they do not have the same impetus to leave.

The Torres' consider themselves Catholics but do not deem church participation of great importance. They attributed their infrequent church attendance in part to Sr. Torres' work schedule and in part to a distaste for some of the social accoutrements of church going. The Torres' have participated in some of the activities and programs of a county community action organization. Through this organization, they have made a number of friends and have found a forum in which to pursue their abiding interest in human rights efforts on behalf of fellow Central Americans.

Sr. Torres completed his "licenciado" (a five-year university level course of study) in San Salvador. His

wife pursued a secretarial course but did not work outside the home after their marriage. Sra. Torres has worked part time cleaning private homes since their arrival. She explained that she finds this form of work appropriate to her needs since it has enabled her to be available to her children at the hours that they needed her. She has taken some formal English instruction, both in classes and private lessons, but has not really achieved mastery of the language. Her husband attributed her failure to achieve fluency to her desire to return to her native country and her resistance to taking the steps leading to assimilation.

Throughout the interview, Sr. Torres spoke with great pride and dedication about his profession and about the extreme sense of frustration and loss he feels because of his inability to pursue his profession in the United States. His efforts to gain recognition of his academic credentials have been extensive but unrequited. The occupation and bombing of the National University in San Salvador by government troops have resulted in the destruction of student records. Sr. Torres has been unable to secure a transcript of his academic studies and related documentation.

The respondent spoke at length about a variety of contacts he has initiated over the last nine years with academic institutions in the New York metropolitan area in an effort to gain recognition of his credentials and secure employment. He attributed their intransigence to excessive bureaucratic red tape and to discriminatory attitudes toward Third World countries. One university has offered to accept most of his credits but would still require him to take one year of full time study or the equivalent to earn his bachelor's degree. Due to employment obligations and the necessity of supporting his family, Sr. Torres has been unable to pursue this alternative.

Sr. Torres has engaged in a wide variety of jobs over his nine years of residence in the U.S. He has worked as gardener, painter, maintenance man, and most recently limousine driver. He related one story of having gone to apply for a gardening position at a private home shortly after his arrival in the U.S. Asked about his experience in gardening, he explained to his prospective employer that he had never worked professionally in gardening but had tended his "finca" in El Salvador when he was not busy with his university responsibilities. After a lengthy interview, she agreed to hire him. Suggesting that she wanted to give him something he could use on the job, she disappeared into her house, and returned with a pair of work gloves.

His present position as limousine driver is financially remunerative but totally ungratifying. The schedule is erratic and entails his being away from his family many evenings and weekends. He spoke in a strained and bitter tone about the agony of doing something that one dislikes intensely. As evidence of the psychological block he has against accepting his position, he described driving passengers on routes he has covered frequently and knows well, yet getting lost and disoriented. He described these memory lapses as "obstaculos artificiales" (artificial barriers).

While his initial intention was to stay in the United States about six months, Sr. Torres now sees himself as residing in the U.S. indefinitely. He attributes this change of plan to the lack of anticipated improvement of conditions in El Salvador. Although he still does not think in terms of residing in the U.S. permanently, he is prepared to wait for the situation to change. "If I were to return now, they'd kill me," he lamented.

The Torres' reported that they participate jointly in decisions concerning their children's education, family expenses, use of free time, housing, and health matters. Domestic responsibilities are also shared. However, the division of responsibility for household chores has changed significantly since their arrival in the U.S. In El Salvador, Sra. Torres maintained the house and cared for the children while Sr. Torres worked outside the home. Here, his erratic schedule has resulted in his being home a lot more, and thus he has been much more involved in the functioning of the household. He cooks when he has time and often accompanies his wife to the laundromat, although, by his own admission, his wife does the laundry while he provides companionship.

One area in which the Torres' responses differed significantly from the majority of the respondents was that of friendships and the use of free time. Describing themselves as "misfits", the Torres' reported that they have few friends and tend to spend their leisure time by themselves. They attributed this phenomenon to the fact that so few people are in their situation. "No nos sentimos al gusto" (we don't feel at ease), they explained. A sense of instability and disassociation from other local Hispanics colors their social life and has impeded their adjustment. Describing their children as their focal point, they reported a very active involvement with them and their activities.

Both of the Torres children, now aged 19 and 20,

attended the local public schools in the suburban city where the Torres reside. Due to lack of familiarity with the school year calendar, which deviates from that of San Salvador, the Torres family arrived while their school year was still in progress but after the U.S. school year had already ended. Because of these differences, the children lost a year when they first arrived. However, their U.S. school experience has been extremely satisfactory. The Torres were especially impressed by the ESL (English as a Second Language) program, through which their children formed friendships with children of diverse nationalities, and the enrichment programs in the arts.

Both children have recently graduated and are enrolled at out-of-town colleges. Sr. Torres noted the complexity of the application and financial aid regulations and procedures and the difficulties this poses for a family from another country. He related how his son had spent a year working long hours at a part time job so that he could buy a car for college, only to discover later that this added income disqualified him from financial aid.

When asked about contacts with local social welfare agencies, Sr. Torres mentioned two with which he had some experience, a State employment office and a Hispanic multi-service agency. In both cases, he found the personnel to be inadequately prepared to deal with his needs. In the first case, he sought job referral assistance and was directed to jobs unrelated to his background and experience. In the second case, his INS immigration classification was misunderstood and he was summarily rejected from consideration for the amnesty program.

In response to a question concerning programs needed by new Hispanic immigrants, Sr. Torres identified the need for comprehensive orientation programs at all levels. He explained their function as including orienting newcomers to the educational system, addressing immediate needs, such as health, housing, basic rights and obligations, and providing information on where to go for different types of help. While emphasizing that this assistance should be provided in bilingual form, he also stressed that this should not diminish the importance of learning English. Most critical in service provision, he felt, is staff who understand the Hispanics' way of thinking. As an example of this concept, he cited the use of the term "authority" which in most U.S. circles is benign but which most Latin American immigrants equate with abuse and restraint.

## Major Themes for Discussion and Analysis

In order to gain greater insight concerning the immigrant experience, the investigator reviewed interview records and selected ten issue areas that emerged as recurring themes. These included: 1) motives for emigration and the immigration process; 2) factors relating to immigrants' length of stay and desire to settle in the U.S.; 3) family relations and patterns of family interaction; 4) occupational choices, work conditions, and difficulties; 5) educational issues and experiences with the educational system; 6) religious affiliation and practices; 7) health care, including available services and programs, eligibility, and encounters with the health care system; 8) social welfare services; 9) issues of diversity, including national origin differences, racism and discrimination, and attitudes toward other minority groups; and 10) suggestions for programs and services to assist new immigrants.

### 1) Motives for Emigrating and the Immigration Process

#### Motives for Emigrating.

The decision to emigrate is a weighty one, and the factors which motivate an individual or family to arrive at this decision are diverse. The Central American immigrants who have settled in the United States over the last 10-15 years have been driven by a variety of factors - economic, political, and social.

An individual's immigration history - impetus for emigration, the actual border crossing experience, financing of the trip, and choice and sequencing of destinations - all contribute to the ease and manner with which the immigrant adjusts to her/his new life. For the undocumented entrant (the vast majority of recent Central American immigrants fall into this category), life is often further complicated by continuing concerns related to legal status and its ramifications, as well as enduring memories of arduous and terrifying border crossing experiences.

In the present study, interviewees were asked what motivated them to leave their country of origin and how they arrived at their decision. While responses were not strictly divided along national origin lines, it is safe to say that the majority of Guatemalans and Hondurans interviewed based their decision on economic and social stimuli whereas most of the Nicaraguans and Salvadorans cited political factors. A general motivating theme which emerged throughout the interviews was the desire to lead a better life, secure better opportunities and "salir adelante" (get ahead). The image of the United States as a mecca where one could get rich fast was mentioned with some frequency, particularly among those who arrived in the U.S. in the 1970's.

Guatemalan respondents termed the economic

situation in their country extremely grave, describing dire poverty, food shortages, overpopulation of the cities and lack of employment, even for those with well developed skills. The scarcity of work was also cited as a factor fomenting robberies and assaults. Recalling gangs of roaming youths who stealed and raped and government agents who detained people in the cities, interviewees commented that they feared for their safety. One respondent commented that men were particularly vulnerable; while the army was not obligatory, "they could take whom they wanted," he recalled. One woman reported that when her son was ordered to join the army in the mountains, they packed up and left for the States.

A young woman whose two cousins had disappeared commented that her people "vienen por necesidad; si no, no estaríamos en su pais," (they come because they have to or we wouldn't be here). Another young Guatemalan explained that she came so she could eat, earn money, and send an allowance home to her seven siblings. One Guatemalan male lamented having withdrawn from medical school although he only had two years left to complete his studies. "It's very hard to land a good job," he commented, "and when you do, the salary isn't very good." A Honduran respondent attributed his emigration to the economic situation; business had declined and he couldn't make the payments on his house. So pressing

was his need that in 1984 he left his wife and three children behind to seek employment in the States. Although his plan was to have them join him, immigration quotas have prevented him from achieving this goal to date.

While also citing economic motives, Nicaraguan respondents more often linked economic and political factors. For example, a Nicaraguan carpenter reported that the Sandinista government's limitation of his purchase of materials and requirement that he work on projects they prescribed prompted him to seek refuge outside the country. As the father of six children and a grandchild, he felt it essential to think of their future and thus decided to emigrate. He chose to apply for a Canadian visa since the Canadian government provides immigrants with housing and education. While maintaining his interest in settling in Canada, he was forced to seek refuge in the States to avoid the imminent drafting of his two teenaged sons while awaiting the review of his pending application for Canadian residency.

Another Nicaraguan couple, both of whom were teaching at the national university before they emigrated, described the politicization of their jobs. Under the Sandinista regime, they were required to take courses in Marxism, paint murals and participate in other public works projects. They reported that they

were branded "counterrevolutionaries", subjected to classroom observation, and required to submit their lecture material for review by a Cuban scholar prior to its presentation. According to the female respondent, the authorities ordered that she include revolutionary content in all of her teaching, and accused her of turning students against the government. As a professor of psychology, she was asked to adopt an analysis which attributed psychopathology to capitalism and related self esteem to involvement in the revolution. Impelled by the hostile environment at the university, the loss of the clinic at which she had been a practicing psychologist (it was turned into a military quartel), the danger of her teenaged sons being drafted, threatened loss of her ration card, vigilance, and attacks on her home, she pressed her husband to flee. While reluctant to forfeit their home and jobs, he eventually agreed, and they sought refuge in the United States.

Similar experiences were reported by another Nicaraguan couple. The woman, who was teaching fourth grade, had to submit to a curriculum increasingly controlled by the state. Her husband, who held a government job, was pressured to carry out work for the government during his free time. He recollected that he felt psychologically pressured by the new government, found "lots of political talk mixed in everything," and

was given the sense that the U.S. government might attack at any moment. Faced with the threat of military service and increasing demands of loyalty to the government through his employer, he arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to emigrate.

A Nicaraguan businessman, who emigrated in 1986, expressed the feeling that it was not worth staying once his business permit was suspended because of his unwillingness to do work for the government. He subsequently lost his finca, car, and entire business and felt he had no choice but to leave. Like many other Nicaraguans who emigrated during that period, he was granted temporary asylee status and issued a time-limited work permit. With the recent change of government in Nicaragua, it is believed that the granting of temporary work permits will be suspended, yet this respondent judged it inadvisable to return home since his country is "still in shambles".

Yet another Nicaraguan reported giving up a good position, in this case a job as executive secretary and a university scholarship, due to demands by a local government representative for extra work without compensation. She sold all of her furniture and left, forfeiting her house which was taken over by the government upon her departure.

The Salvadoran interviewees all attributed their decision to emigrate to their country's civil war and

concomitant political and social issues. One respondent provided a chronology of his compatriots' emigration; he characterized the group who arrived in the U.S. in the 1970's as seeking primarily economic gain, and the group since 1980 as fleeing repression and strife. The latest wave of immigrants, he noted, includes a large number of unmarried campesinos (men from the countryside) with minimal education. Describing his former vocations as banker, teacher, and organizer, he alluded to political persecution at home which ultimately forced him and his wife to live clandestinely. In 1983, he escaped. His wife and three children were not able to join him until 1986.

A young Salvadoran woman recalled her former position as a teacher in a nursery school. Schools were being closed, she explained, and she was left without a job. She candidly admitted to having been hospitalized on two occasions for nervous breakdowns precipitated by the civil war and its impacts. In 1989, she emigrated to New York to join her boyfriend. He had arrived in the States in 1984 and remained until 1987 when he returned to El Salvador to see if he could find work. When he found things "even worse than before," he returned to the U.S.

A number of the Salvadoran male respondents linked their decision to emigrate to the threat of induction into the military. One interviewee who was living in

the countryside explained that he reluctantly left because his town was without food and supplies and "men were being taken away." Another young man related that he had been working as a chauffeur in a small town about three hours from San Salvador but couldn't continue at this job because "la situación se puso feo a la monte" (things got very bad in the mountains) and he couldn't earn enough to cover his family's expenses. In early 1990, after much soul searching, he left his wife and four children ranging in age from two to eleven to seek safety and a job in the States so that he could provide for his family.

A mix of political and economic factors was evidenced in a number of the Salvadoran interviews. A single mother attributed her decision to emigrate to her inability to earn enough to support herself and three children. When it became increasingly difficult to make ends meet, she made arrangements for her children to stay with their grandmother and came to the States to find work and establish a new life. She has been trying for several years to arrange for her children to come but administrative errors have prolonged the process.

The desire to "vivir en paz" (live in peace) was cited by one respondent as the basis for his emigration. Formerly a university student, he was unable to continue his academic work due to the civil war. "To be young in El Salvador is a crime," he observed. He recalled

worsening economic conditions, instability, and widespread violations of human rights, and reported that he felt his country was "going under". Another respondent characterized the mood of the Salvadoran people as "desesperación" (despair). The oldest child in a family of 12, she came to the States in 1990 to find work so she could send money home.

The most clearly political motive was articulated by a former Salvadoran philosophy professor. In 1981, he was forced to flee when accusations of his engaging in subversive activities at the university led to threats to his family and home. From 1981 through 1987 he was engaged in legal proceedings to establish that the level of danger under which he had been living was sufficient to warrant his having sought refuge in the States.

#### The Immigration Process.

In the study interview, the topic which evoked the most lengthy responses and the greatest demonstration of emotion was the border crossing experience. Despite the fact that the majority of respondents entered the States without legal papers, they were not reluctant to provide detailed accounts of the process and the documentation (if any) they used. It almost appeared that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss their journeys and found the sharing of the indelible experience cathartic. Regardless of their country of origin,

almost all of the respondents entered the U.S. by land through Mexico. The majority traveled north overland and crossed the border at either Tijuana (bordering San Diego, California) or Matamoros (bordering Brownsville, Texas). The route through Mexico to the U.S. border seemed to be the least expensive and the one utilized by most "coyotes" (guides). Most interviewees made the journey as members of groups of eight to twenty individuals, often of mixed sexes and national origins. Many of the respondents traveled with a spouse or other family member. Almost all had some relative living in the States to whose home they were headed or whom they had contacted to assist them with either money or temporary housing. Those traveling alone often linked up with a countryman and were invited to the home of his relative.

Some of the women were accompanied by children, and several were pregnant when they made the trip. Groups were typically accompanied by "coyotes", escorts to whom they paid \$500 - \$1500 a piece to assist them in crossing the border without requisite documentation. Some "coyotes" accompanied their groups for the entire trip whereas others offered help only with the border crossing segment.

Many respondents told grim stories of trekking through the mountains to reach the border. Women with children found the trip particularly arduous and

frightening. Interviewees also recounted tales of being sequestered in shabby hotels near the border, often for a week or longer with little or no food and inadequate sanitation. They described the Mexican government officials as callous, money hungry, demanding, and rude. Often money was extorted from individuals with legal Mexican entrance visas.

Several respondents described in great detail the surveillance methods used by U.S. immigration authorities. They recalled the radar which illuminated the route as they traveled through southern Texas, and explained how they had been cautioned to walk around the radar beam so as not to be spotted. Their drivers waited for them beyond the circumscribed path to carry them to the outskirts of their destination city. One woman pictured the helicopter which circled above her as she squatted in terror in the river below, admitting that at that point she regretted her decision to make the journey. This same respondent confessed that she cried constantly during her first few months in the States and reacted with alarm when she heard sirens or saw police. As she told her story to the interviewer, her ten-year old daughter stroked her arm tenderly, obviously sensitized to her mother's propensity to tears and depression.

Some interviewees stated that they crossed the border in vans, others in trucks hidden below crates or

other items, and many on foot, often swimming or wading across the river. Two young men reported that they lost their passports in this manner. Several recalled that they had been robbed and tricked by dishonest travel companions. In a few cases, individuals were seized en route by government authorities and incarcerated in work camps on the U.S. side of the border for periods of a week to several months. Those with family in the States were at an advantage as they were able to obtain funds to pay the fines levied against them.

One Salvadoran related his tale of having been caught on the U.S. side of the border and threatened with deportation. He was detained for a five-month period in Los Angeles during which he attended numerous hearings to plead his case for political asylum. After eight such appearances in Los Angeles and seven in New York, he was finally successful in having his request granted.

#### Destination Decisions.

Many respondents reported that their trips had been subsidized by family. Initial destinations were generally determined by the presence of relatives, friends, or a large community of the same national origin. Family assistance was not only provided by close relatives but by godparents, in-laws, aunts, uncles and cousins. In some cases, contacts were made and phone numbers obtained en route, and hosts received

only minimal notice of their guest's arrival.

Several of the interviewees settled initially in Miami, where there is a sizeable Nicaraguan population, but found it hard to obtain decent paying jobs and thus quickly used up their savings. Some of the Salvadorans tried Washington D.C., again because of the presence of a large community from their homeland, but subsequently decided upon New York, where reputedly it was possible to make a lot of money.

Consequences of Undocumented Status.

Concerns related to respondents' undocumented status were abundant. One respondent, who had been an acquaintance of the interviewer over a period of several years, became extremely agitated during the interview. She acted nervous and guarded in her responses, evidently trepidatious, despite her ongoing relationship with the interviewer. Her responses to questions related to the emigration process, length of stay issues, and immigration status were particularly abbreviated and halting. Moreover, several answers contradicted information provided in previous informal contacts between interviewer and interviewee.

At the conclusion of the interview, when she was asked to sign a receipt for the stipend awarded to study participants, she became especially agitated and inquired as to the rationale for payment. The following day, she stopped at the interviewer's home, requesting

to discuss the previous day's encounter. During the talk, she mentioned that she had reviewed the interview content with her husband, and he was concerned about the questions related to length of stay and the legalization process. The interviewer carefully repeated the purposes of the study, the steps being taken to safeguard the anonymity of the respondents, and her profound respect for their struggle to build a better life for themselves and their families. Apparently reassured and bolstered, the respondent then proceeded to share additional information about incidents that had arisen in her family's adjustment to life in the States. In this conversation, she referred to the application for residency being pursued by her husband through his employer and their concern that it not be jeopardized.

Other respondents raised issues concerning the perils of being apprehended by immigration authorities in their workplace. One young Guatemalan explained that he had accepted assignment to a night shift because there was less chance of being caught. Another interviewee recounted that she had given up a position at a fast food restaurant shortly after a raid by "la migra" (immigration officials). One woman recalled an incident that had occurred shortly after her arrival in the States. One morning on her way to work, she was waiting at a bus stop and saw a police car approaching from the distance. She became unnerved, believing that

the officer was coming to pick her up due to her undocumented status, and quickly returned home forfeiting her day's employment.

A Salvadoran, who will soon complete his seventh year in the U.S., related his plans to apply for residency rather than the continuation of his asylee status, which is a more tenuous designation. He recalled that his first five years in the States were extremely hard, and he lived in constant fear of deportation. Initially, he was afraid to use his real name for employment purposes. Even now, he has maintained various safeguards, such as omission of his name from the directory in his apartment building. Recently, his wife's income tax return was rejected because she had listed a social security number which was derived from a falsified social security card he had used during his initial years in this country. Only after they received reassurance from their immigration attorney were their fears allayed, and they submitted a revised version.

#### The Legalization Process.

Because of the myriad of complications and preoccupations which relate to immigration status, the process of legalization is a central focus for most new immigrants from Central American. Methods of legalization most commonly employed by study respondents included work contracts, family sponsorship, amnesty,

marriage to a citizen, and asylum. Respondents utilized private attorneys, immigrant rights groups, Hispanic or other community organizations, church groups, and employers for consultation and assistance in pursuing issues related to legal status.

Payment of substantial fees, such as \$500 for the obtaining of a work permit, was not uncommon. Several interviewees angrily recalled experiences with unscrupulous lawyers who made claims they were unable to fulfill. Lack of familiarity with the legal system as well as the English language impeded respondents from handling routine matters themselves. The absence of requisite items of proof, such as passports, birth certificates, marriage licenses, and rental leases, posed further obstacles to immigrants' successful resolution of legal status matters.

The practice of entering the country with a tourist visa and staying beyond its date of expiration was cited by several interviewees. However, it was noted that tourist visas were generally granted only to individuals from reputable, economically secure families. Several interviewees reported that they had obtained resident status through the amnesty provisions of the 1986 immigration law. Others cited this avenue as one they had tried to pursue but had abandoned due to lack of requisite documents and/or the complexity of the process. One individual referred to the amnesty issue

as "causing a certain panic among undocumented persons." However, he qualified his answer stating that he judged his lack of English language skills as more of an impediment to his successful adjustment than the legal status issue. Another respondent reported that although he was eligible for amnesty, he had not chosen to pursue it because the process seemed too involved. Instead he arranged a work contract through his employer.

The handful of respondents who sought political asylum recounted sagas of numerous lengthy hearings at which their motives and claims of imminent danger were challenged. The December 1990 federal court decision (American Baptist Churches v. Thornburgh) ordering the Immigration and Naturalization Service to stop the deportation of Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees in the United States and to re-adjudicate all of their claims for political asylum appears to support respondents' stories of unjust and arbitrary treatment. Marc Van Der Hout, spokesperson for the National Lawyers Guild and lead attorney for the plaintiffs, stated: "This settlement is a major victory for all Salvadorans and Guatemalans in this country whose claims for political asylum were being summarily denied for purely foreign policy reasons....The tragedy, however, is that it took 10 years for the government to reverse its policy of putting support for the military governments of El Salvador and Guatemala over its human rights obligations

to grant asylum to legitimate refugees" (National Lawyers Guild, 1990).

According to CARECEN, a Long Island based refugee center, 15-20,000 of the estimated 135,000 Central American refugees in the New York area are likely to benefit under this settlement (CARECEN, December 20, 1990). Underscoring the anticipated dramatic impact of the decision, an organization spokesperson noted that in the last ten years, less than two percent of asylum applicants from Guatemala and El Salvador were granted asylum. The court decision follows in close succession the October 27, 1990 passage of the "safe haven" bill by the U.S. Congress. This law allows Salvadorans who entered the United States before September 20, 1990 to legally live and work in the United States for an 18-month period. According to Duke Austin, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, the safe-haven provision was intended as a humanitarian gesture to provide a respite for people fleeing war (The New York Times, November 2, 1990).

Several of the organizational respondents interviewed during the study reported active roles in handling immigration concerns. Two religious leaders with large Central American parishes described immigration consultation and advocacy programs available through their church offices. In one case, an immigration lawyer had been retained to provide a

monthly clinic. In the other parish, an immigration specialist had been sent weekly by the archdiocesan office over a period of four or five years. At the end of this period, church personnel were sufficiently trained to continue the service on their own.

As a component of the study, an interview was also conducted with a full time immigration specialist employed by a multipurpose Hispanic organization based in White Plains, the county seat. She explained her role as providing guidance in the general area of immigration problems, but with primary focus on individuals seeking amnesty under the provisions of the 1986 immigration law. Reviewing with the investigator service statistics for a three-month period (December 1988 - March 1989), she noted over 300 requests for assistance, with the largest numbers of requests coming from Mexicans (141), Colombians (79), and Guatemalans (26) (Westchester Hispanic Coalition, June 1990). She cited the requirement of proof of U.S. residency prior to 1982, and applicants' reluctance to ask employers for evidence, as impeding prospective applicants from going ahead with the process. Employers' reluctance was based on fears of being fined for giving jobs to "illegals".

The most comprehensive program of immigration assistance for Central Americans outside of New York City appeared to be provided by CARECEN (Central American Refugee Center), based in Hempstead, Long

Island. The center, staffed by attorneys, paralegals, social workers, paraprofessionals and trained volunteers, offers a wide range of services to recent immigrants, primarily from El Salvador.

With the passage of the 1990 immigration law and the court decision affecting Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees, the center has been deluged with request for help. An informational videotape, as well as simple pamphlets in Spanish, augment the services of program staff. A center administrator spoke of the agency's commitment to involvement of the target population in service delivery. Special efforts have been made to recruit and train Central American staff, strengthen community leadership, and empower refugees through involvement in program planning and implementation. Despite its geographic base on Long Island, the organization has received requests from other areas, including Westchester, the focus of the present study.

## 2) Length of Stay - Quality of Life Issues

Just as the factors which motivate individuals to leave their countries of origin are diverse, so too are the factors which influence their adjustment to life in their new home and their thinking about settlement. In the study sample, most respondents reported having altered their initial intentions regarding length of stay. When asked what had been their plan at the time of arrival, the majority stated that they had intended

to stay a few years, save a substantial amount of money, and return to their homelands. Through the interview process, a range of intervening factors was identified which led them to modify their plans. These factors included positive aspects of life in the States; elements of their lives in their homelands which they missed; and issues which pulled them in both directions. The factor of greatest influence seemed to be the positive aspects of life in the States.

In this category, economic and occupational opportunities were most frequently cited. A related theme, the accessibility of foodstuffs, utilities, services, and material items, was also often mentioned. One respondent commented that in the U.S. it was possible for him to wind up with money at the end of the week whereas at home in Guatemala, he was always spending. Another reported that what he earned in a week in the U.S. was comparable to what it took him a month to earn in Guatemala. The opportunity to "superar" (excel) and to "salir adelante" (get ahead) was mentioned as making it worth enduring the hectic pace of life in the States. Many of the interviewees reported that they appreciated the facility with which they were able to buy a wide range of grocery products, televisions, automobiles and electrical appliances. In their home countries, such purchases were out of range for the average consumer, they commented. Housing was

the major ongoing item mentioned as being considerably more costly in the States than in Central America.

Lack of employment in their countries of origin represented a major deterrent to immigrants' returning home. One interviewee stated that he had gone home after three years in the States but returned when he was unable to find work. His revised plan, as articulated after six years in the States, is to save money so he can go back, start his own business, and buy a house. Echoing this theme, another respondent stated that he arrived with the preconception that he could make a lot of money in a short time which he would then use to buy a house in El Salvador. Finding the cost of living higher than he had calculated, he has now abandoned his original plan. He candidly admitted to having been won over by the conveniences that are so integral a part of life in the U.S. and much less important in his country of origin. One Salvadoran interviewee, who arrived in 1977, commented that he had come with the intention of staying a year. During that time, his country changed, and he found more opportunities in the States than he had imagined. He now definitely plans to stay, he reported.

Reflecting on changed intentions, another respondent acknowledged that he had gotten caught up in setting up a household and acquiring the things he and his wife felt they needed. The two- to three-year stay

they had originally envisioned had already been extended to four, he reported, and would probably extend a few years more, depending on the speed with which things "return to normal" in his country of origin, Nicaragua. This same respondent reported that he enjoyed a higher standard of living in Nicaragua, owning a home and working a regular 9-5 job. In the States, he and his family have been living in a two-bedroom apartment, and he has been working two jobs to meet their budgetary needs. Like many of the interviewees, this respondent conveyed a belief that the poor economic conditions in his country were temporary, that the situation would rectify itself within a period of a few years, and that long-term residency in the United States was not a prospect which he was ready to accept at this time.

The majority of the Nicaraguan respondents reported that they had lived better in their home country before the Communist regime took power. This group welcomed the recently elected government, but acknowledged that the country still had a long way to go before the government stabilized, life returned to normal and economic opportunities improved. Several of the men interviewed spoke with regret of abandoned businesses they had owned and expressed a desire to again be their own bosses, an opportunity not open to them in the States due to their undocumented status and limited English fluency.

Salvadorans cited their country's continuing civil war as the major factor preventing their return home. One respondent recalled that at home he had worked very hard, but his life was his own. He acknowledged that the war had made it impossible for him to remain. Characterizing his state of mind before he left as a "pánico horrible" (horrible panic), he commented that each morning when he left for work, he did so wondering if he would be able to return home at the end of the day. The recent receipt of permanent residency status in the U.S. has tempted him to abandon his intentions to return to his homeland, he admitted.

A common theme raised in the context of discussion of quality of life issues was one of the most basic human needs - safety. Most respondents described unsafe conditions in their homelands and an increased sense of personal safety in the U.S. Guatemalan respondents were particularly vocal in their descriptions of unsafe conditions in their homeland. One woman reported that in her country, she felt she couldn't go out or go to the market. "At home they take your purse and pull out your earrings," she complained. She acknowledged feeling more secure and safer since she arrived in the States. A young Salvadoran man recalled that he never slept well or felt calm at home. The frequent sound of bombs and the threat of being seized by the government disturbed him, he reported. Since arriving in the U.S.,

he has been able to "vivir en tranquilidad," (live peacefully) he noted.

Not all of the study participants judged their level of personal safety to have increased since they arrived in the States. Many respondents, particularly those living in marginal inner-city neighborhoods, expressed concern over the perils of their new communities. The positive elements of suburban life, which many Westchester County residents enjoy, were not available to most of the study participants.

The majority of the families interviewed were living in cities, usually in typically urban neighborhoods characterized by substandard housing, high crime rates, and other social problems. (It should be noted that the study sample was drawn exclusively from the southern part of the county and thus excluded areas of lesser land density where there is a preponderance of small towns or village with mostly private homes.) Cost seemed to be the primary deterrent to families' securing better housing. There was no evidence that discrimination had played a role in limiting their housing options. While most respondents' residences were very modest and, in a number of cases, poorly maintained, they were meticulously clean, tidy, generally well furnished (televisions and VCR's were evident in most households), and carefully decorated with wall hangings, photographs, and artefacts from

Central America.

One couple described their street as bad and dangerous and stated that they did not let their kids go out alone. After school and during vacation periods, the children were made to stay in the house if no adults were available to take them out. Another respondent noted that there were "bad influences" on the streets and in the schools. In this respect, there was less of a threat in Nicaragua, she commented, since there they could go where they wanted without worrying.

A Nicaraguan family living adjacent to an African American neighborhood, expressed concern over personal safety. They reported being scared to go out, fearing drunks, drug addicts, and, more generally, the unknown. As a consequence, they have kept to themselves and only related to church friends. A young Salvadoran woman, living in a first floor apartment facing the street, described herself as very nervous, and overly attentive to noises and people on the street. She admitted a consuming concern over drug problems and vagrants. These fears had been reinforced by her husband's having been assaulted on three separate occasions while walking home from work. The couple spoke with anger over the failure of the police to provide appropriate emergency assistance in these instances.

Second only to economic considerations in its influence on respondents' decisions to remain in the

States were educational factors. Although most interviewees appeared satisfied with the quality of education in their home countries, the majority reported that educational opportunities were limited, and free education seldom extended beyond the primary grades. One Salvadoran interviewee who attributed his decision to emigrate to political persecution acknowledged that although it had not been his original intention to bring his family, now that they were here, he felt it important to provide for his children's future by enabling them to attend school in the States. Another respondent explained that although he had a house in Honduras and found it more tranquil there, he wanted his children to be able to benefit from the U.S. educational system.

A Salvadoran interviewee reported that he had come with the intention of staying only three years. However, the birth of his son has prompted him to reconsider his decision, since he would like him to be educated in the States. Echoing the sentiments of these respondents, a Nicaraguan interviewee stated that she appreciated the opportunity for her children to study and get their education in the States; in Nicaragua they would have had to win a scholarship to continue, she explained. Another Nicaraguan reported that she had come to the States with the intention of staying five years but was now thinking in terms of staying five more

so her children could complete their education.

However, she emphasized, they were not interested in residing permanently in the States.

Like educational needs, health and nutritional needs were generally considered to be more adequately met in the States. Several mothers reported that their children were better off in the U.S. since milk was not readily available and was very costly in their own countries. One mother proudly pointed to her daughter whom, she noted, had gained a substantial amount of weight since her arrival.

A laudatory, yet somewhat unexpected, motivating factor in respondents' decisions to remain in the States was the desire to help other Hispanics. In explaining his desire to stay, one respondent noted that there were other Hispanics who needed help, and he would like to work with them as a means of re-paying the education and health care he had received. Another interviewee described his personal mission as assisting other Central Americans like himself who immigrated to the States. Reflecting on the difficulties he had gone through, one study participant commented that he had no regrets. Through his experiences, he has met lots of Hispanics and now finds himself in a position to help them, he said. Reinforcing his position, he added that he sees it as a bad decision on the part of the U.S. government not to help new immigrants, since they have

the potential of contributing to the economy.

Comparing life in the U.S. to their lives in their countries of origin, many respondents made comments indicating that they had experienced a loss of status. For example, one young woman reported that she welcomed the greater stability here but missed the "vida mas distinta" (more special life) she had led as the daughter of a military family in Guatemala. Another female respondent mentioned that she enjoyed considerably more freedom in her country of origin, actually owning her own home in Guatemala City.

A Salvadoran couple related that they not only owned a home in El Salvador, but also maintained a "finca" (ranch) which employed 40 men. Citing their children's education as the chief advantage they enjoyed in the States, they were explicit in pointing out that in their country they belonged to the middle class, whereas in the U.S., they were considered members of the working class. A Nicaraguan couple noted that they had lots of money at home, but things were so expensive that they couldn't buy anything. Their standard of living is much reduced in the States, but at least the things they want are obtainable.

Differences in customs were observed by many interviewees. One woman stated that she had never felt comfortable; customs were different and she just didn't have the number of friends she did at home. Describing

her weekly activities as "routine", she observed that she feared life would pass her by, and it would be impossible to pursue her goals if she stayed. While she had already exceeded the length of time she had originally intended to stay, she admitted, she still harbored the plan to earn a set amount of money and then leave.

Differences in child-rearing practices were described by a number of study participants. One woman noted that in Guatemala there was more "carino y respeto" (affection and respect). She argued that because children can't be hit here, they don't respect their parents nor pay attention to them. On the positive side, she praised U.S. laws which protect women and children from abuse. Another respondent judged that children are given too much freedom here. She reported more family involvement in her home country, Nicaragua, maintaining that child abuse appeared to be more prevalent in the U.S. She clearly stated her intention to maintain her Nicaraguan customs, regardless of where she ultimately settles.

Many of the respondents spoke about sending remittances to relatives. Some reported forwarding payments on a regular basis, while others described their practices as more sporadic, based on availability of funds. The age and level of need of family members at home seemed to be the major determinants. The

sending of medicine and clothing was also common. One interviewee, a Salvadoran of almost 20 years residence in the States, explained that she manages a shipping business whose primary function is to expedite the sending of money and packages to Central America. Some researchers have reported that there is a correlation between the frequency of remittances and an immigrant's degree of permanency. That is, individuals who maintain an ongoing role in providing financial support for family members in their homeland are less likely to settle in the States than are those who do not do so or whose contributions are more sporadic. Unfortunately, interviewees' responses in this area were inadequate to evaluate the validity of this hypothesis.

As noted earlier in the text, housing was one item that was uniformly cited as being more costly and less satisfactory in the States. Many respondents complained about high rents, inadequate space, poor maintenance, and unsafe neighborhoods. In several situations, individuals were sharing housing with unrelated adults whom they did not know as a means of reducing costs. One single mother residing in a two-bedroom apartment with her two young daughters explained that she was renting a room to a South American gentleman to make ends meet. This arrangement had already proved a source of great irritation for her, she complained, due to his abuse of the phone, failure to clean common spaces,

entertaining of guests, and general intrusion into their lives. The respondent admitted that she was nervous about his behavior with her two young daughters and wanted very badly for him to move out.

When queried about her intentions to remain in the U.S., a young Guatemalan mother became misty eyed and responded, "not for always." She cited factors of housing expense and landlords' reluctance to rent to families with children. In Guatemala, she explained, there's housing but no work.

Several of the study participants were residing in apartments purchased by a church sponsored community corporation and renovated under a sweat equity program. Having participated actively in readying the dwellings for occupancy, they had received credit which was being applied to their eventual purchase. The units were spacious and attractively renovated, but the neighborhood in which they were located was run down and unsafe. Respondents seemed pleased with the space but registered concern over the block which was noisy, dirty, and reputedly unsafe. Several interviewees reported participating in local organizing efforts for neighborhood betterment, but admitted that their efforts had little impact.

Assessing her family's quality of life since their arrival in the U.S., a young Salvadoran woman criticized housing, which she found to be cramped and unsafe, and

health care, which she characterized as extremely costly. "It takes being in the States to see some of the advantages of life in El Salvador," she noted. When asked what aspect of her new life she most appreciated, the woman replied, "They don't turn the utilities off here."

Separation of immigrants from a spouse or other significant family member was frequently cited as a deterrent to successful adjustment. A recently arrived Salvadoran, whose emigration was precipitated by economic and political concerns, reported that he was sharing an apartment with a nephew, having left his wife and two children in El Salvador. "El dinero no es la felicidad de la persona" (money isn't happiness), he noted, recalling his family's sadness on his departure. He explained that he very much wants to bring his wife and children to the States but will not do so unless he can arrange a less harrowing journey and easier entry than he endured. His general demeanor was somber and depressed, despite his success in readily finding housing and employment.

Many of the young married women interviewed cited separation from their parents, especially their mothers, as a painful and not easily forgotten loss. One respondent reported that she had to discontinue her phone service because she ran up enormous bills speaking with family in her home country. Noting that the

absence of a telephone was a real hardship, particularly in terms of emergency needs, she explained that having the phone in the house was just too tempting. Several respondents noted that their parents visited them periodically, but in few cases did they choose to remain permanently because of their difficulty in adapting to life in the States.

Many of the study participants owned houses and/or property in their countries of origin and had left them rented or in the care of a family member rather than selling them upon their departure. This enduring connection with their homeland seemed very important to them and enabled them to think realistically of returning home at some future point. Planned returns seemed to be based on children's finishing school, retirement, or the restoration of stability and economic well being in their countries. Respondents' unsatisfactory experiences with confining apartment living in the States seemed to reinforce the desirability of reclaiming their owned houses in Central America.

Some of the interviewees who did not own property in their countries of origin also articulated the goal of returning to their homelands to settle down. The plan of setting aside savings for the eventual purchase of a little house back at home was mentioned by several study participants.

Couples sometimes differed in their level of interest in remaining in the States. One Salvadoran young man described his adjustment as very successful and his desire to settle as strong, but candidly acknowledged his wife's interest in returning home. He attributed this interest to her desire to be with her mother and to live in the house she owned. When asked how they would resolve this difference, he stated that he had already told her she would have to go without him if she chose to return home. He added that he doubted she would act on her expressed preference. Another respondent spoke of her mother's pleas for her to return home. However, she explained that she and her husband were in agreement that they should stay so their children could reap the educational and economic benefits of life in the States.

Family differences regarding ease of adjustment and desire to remain in the U.S. were most evident between adults and their children. Recalling with longing her more tranquil life in her homeland, a Guatemala respondent explained that her adult son was established and happy in the U.S. and would never consider leaving. For this reason, she too will remain, she explained, since she feels bound by his decision. Another Guatemalan woman whose family had come with the intention of staying one or two years admitted that she had been swayed by her children's successful adjustment

to life in the States. Due to pressure from their children, she and her husband have altered their plans and now plan to stay until the kids are on their own, she explained. She conveyed the impression that she has been most profoundly affected by this change, since she is the family member most bothered by climate, housing, and safety considerations.

### 3) Family Roles and Relationships

Family plays a critical role in the lives of new immigrants, influencing their choice of destination and providing financial, material, and emotional support during the transition. The family unit experiences extraordinary strains as a consequence of the immigration process, strains which affect family members who emigrate as well as those left behind. Family functioning is altered as the settlement process progresses. Cultural values, particularly as they relate to family life, are reevaluated; traditional family decision making styles are challenged; and family members' roles are often redefined to meet the needs of the new milieu. An important focus of the study interview was the family, and participants' perceptions of family life were explored with a view to connecting these perceptions with the settlement and adjustment processes.

A majority of the respondents cited the presence of relatives as the primary determinant of their

destination. Most interviewees spent their initial weeks, and often months, living with extended family. In addition to providing housing, relatives provided clothing, meals, employment assistance, and general orientation. Levels of involvement of family members varied, as did the ease with which the merged families related to each other.

In several cases, assistance was not offered initially, but was volunteered when immigrants ran into trouble during their entry into the country. For example, one respondent whose brother was residing in the States received no initial help from him, but was bailed out by him when she was detained at the border. He subsequently opened his home to her and her family, with the result that ten people, five of whom were adults, were living in his small apartment. Another interviewee and her spouse spent five months in the apartment of a married brother and a sister. During this time, rent costs were covered and food was provided until they obtained employment.

Unaccompanied males not only chose the homes of family members as their destinations but also tended to remain living with their relatives over an extended period of time, often as long as several years. A Honduran respondent settled in Newburgh, New York with his two brothers who, as he recounted, helped him "in all respects." He subsequently relocated to Port

Chester only because his employer, a supermarket chain, offered him a promotion which involved transferring to a new store. A young Salvadoran moved into his sister's house upon his arrival in the New York suburbs. He remained there for two years, finally renting his own apartment when his girlfriend arrived from El Salvador.

Sometimes, the securing of a new job provided the impetus for individuals to leave relatives' homes. For example, upon arriving in the States, one interviewee headed for his parents' home in the Riverdale section of the Bronx where his brothers and sisters were living. Once he obtained a job, he found his own apartment. A Nicaraguan woman and her daughter spent their first few months in the States at the home of the woman's sister-in-law in Queens. As a result of the in-law's orientation and job referrals, the woman became increasingly independent and was soon able to obtain an apartment in Westchester County for herself and her daughter.

Family support, in several cases, took the form of emergency crisis intervention when relatives in transit were detained at the border. One Salvadoran respondent, who was seized while crossing the border and incarcerated, attributed his successful release to his brother's intervention. He acknowledged that he was very indebted to his brother for getting him out of jail, providing him with housing and helping him find a

job. He stayed on with his brother and his wife for five years, ultimately moving out when he got married. A young Nicaraguan woman was detained for three months by Mexican authorities and sent to a holding facility in Texas. In desperation, she contacted her aunt in New York who was able to assist her in gaining her freedom. Upon arriving in New York, she moved in with her aunt and cousins.

Although family assistance and housing were readily offered, it was evident that in many cases relations between the new arrivals and their relatives residing in the States were strained. A Salvadoran who stayed with family when he first arrived commented, "La gente cambia tanto" (people change so much). Reflecting further on his reception, he noted, "No es lo mismo verlos venir que dormir con ellos" (it's not the same to see them coming as to sleep with them). To illustrate his point, he reported that his family was given one small bedroom and was asked to pay for the space. He described his relatives as not very helpful, ostensibly wanting his family to suffer as they had. Although the relationship was very strained, the arrangement lasted a full year, he noted.

Other respondents echoed the experience of encountering significant changes in their relatives' behavior. One interviewee reported that he had found his brother's relationship with his wife changed as a

consequence of living in the States and explained that this made it awkward living under the same roof with them. A Nicaraguan family recollected that they had been accommodated in a relative's home for a four-month period. They noted that other relatives had paid their way but not offered housing and attributed this reluctance to their living very well and not wanting their less prosperous relatives to intrude on the well-to-do lifestyle they had established.

The practice of relatives sharing housing was quite prevalent, not only as a stopgap measure upon initial arrival, but also as a long-term arrangement to reduce costs and facilitate division of the tasks of daily living. In one situation, six adults and two children were sharing a two-bedroom apartment. The group included an older adult couple with two daughters one of whom was married and had a child, and an adult cousin. The family unit reported dividing the \$750 monthly rent as well as other expenses among the working adults. These respondents expressed little dissatisfaction with their communal living situation. Rather, they seemed more frustrated by their lack of resources to acquire needed furnishings and by the location of their apartment which was a third floor walk-up in an unsafe, run-down neighborhood.

A Guatemalan family, including husband and wife and six children (two of whom were over 21), invited the

study investigator to their tiny four-room apartment in a drug-ridden area of the city. Although the two adult children were attending college in New York City, a considerable distance from their home, the alternative of their renting an apartment closer to school had not been considered, since they were counted on to contribute to the rent and household maintenance.

The most cramped accommodations viewed by the interviewer were those of another Guatemalan family, in this case an extended family consisting of six brothers, three married with children, residing in a three-bedroom apartment. Each family unit was allocated a bedroom, and the unmarried brothers slept in the living/dining room. During the interview, the respondent's three-year old son played in the limited floor space between the double bed and his crib. At one point, when he asked to go to the bathroom, his mother apologetically pulled a potty from beneath the bed. The respondent admitted that it was very hard for her to live with other families, despite the fact that they were all related. Unlike the other merged family units, this group was not sharing food purchasing and preparation. The interviewee noted the difficulty of having only one stove and one refrigerator and acknowledged that she would much prefer to be living separately.

Another area in which family members supported each other was in terms of sponsorship of their immigration.

Family members in the States often paid for their relatives' trips from their homeland to the U.S. Other forms of support included the obtaining of necessary entry permits, and the provision of a range of services on arrival like transportation, temporary housing, meals, employment assistance, and orientation to life in the U.S. Most often financial sponsorship was provided for siblings, whereas other forms of help were provided for extended family and friends. Unmarried siblings were more frequently sponsored than were married ones. Respondents described the assistance they had offered in a variety of ways, using such phrases as, "We brought him;" "we sent for him;" "we helped him come;" "we paid his way;" "we sent money for him to come;" each phraseology implying a slightly different level of commitment and involvement. In a few cases, interviewees appeared disheartened that the individual whom they had assisted did not seem grateful.

When queried as to whether they had ever assisted a family member or friend in emigrating, several individuals responded that they would have liked to, but could barely support themselves with their incomes. In one case, a Nicaraguan woman emphatically stated that she discouraged other family members, telling them that it wasn't worth it. She went on to describe the struggles she had endured to create a decent life for herself and her daughter in the States, and concluded

that she preferred to send money to relatives residing in her homeland, rather than promote their taking on a new life which was "just too hard".

Proximity of relatives seemed to ease the adjustment of many of the recently arrived Central American families. A majority of the respondents had selected the city or town in which they initially settled because of the presence of relatives. Most of the study participants had family members living in the U.S., although in many cases they were residing in other states and stayed in touch only by phone and correspondence. Out-of-state locations included New Jersey, Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New Orleans. Appropriately, the only respondents who indicated that they had visited relatives living out-of-state were a couple who had been residing in the U.S. for more than a decade.

In those situations where extended family was residing in the same or neighboring towns, contact was generally frequent. Such contact might include provision of child care, sharing of weekly meals or outings, and/or getting together for holiday celebrations. One respondent cited the arrival of older adult parents as the impetus for the reunification of a dispersed family group. However, in a few situations, strains had developed as a result of changed relationships following relocation, and communication had been reduced or

curtailed.

The stresses of life in the States not only impacted on interfamily communication but also spousal relationships. A Salvadoran male respondent who initially emigrated to the States without his wife, experienced serious marital difficulties subsequent to her arrival. He attributed their difficulties to his machismo, lack of understanding of the dynamics of U.S.-style marriages, and the impact of their having been separated for a two-year period. Unable to resolve this crisis, he sought help from a Puerto Rican psychologist. Through several months of counseling, he was able to significantly improve his relationship with his wife and develop greater understanding of her needs, he reported.

A Guatemalan woman whose arrival in the States preceded her husband's by about a year, candidly shared the crisis she had experienced when she learned he was involved with another woman in Guatemala. He eventually joined his wife in the U.S., and they were forced to confront their estrangement and work out some level of accommodation. She acknowledged that relations were still strained between them, and admitted that she presently viewed their marriage primarily as one of convenience.

Separation from nuclear family was cited by several respondents as a factor impeding their adjustment to life in the States. However, it did not appear to

sway them toward returning to their homelands. Rather, respondents in this situation, in both cases males, had thrown themselves into their work, sending money and maintaining frequent contact with their families back home. One of the men had retained an attorney to help him with his family's immigration, but due to national origin quotas, he had been advised that it would take several years until they were approved for admission into the country.

In discussing family issues, interviewees revealed adherence to strongly held cultural values, in some cases, and a questioning of their value positions, in others. Respect for the integrity of the family unit was evidenced in a large number of the interviews. Many of the participating families reported that they spent the majority of their free time as a family unit. One Salvadoran couple noted that their weekends were devoted to attending cultural and sports events in which their children participated. A Honduran couple described their children as their "best friends". Evidencing disdain for women who watched "the soaps" and painted their nails, the respondent spoke with enthusiasm about her family's outings and the quality time they spent together.

U.S. childrearing practices were criticized, particularly in terms of what respondents saw as a lack of discipline. One couple who was planning to return

home reported that their youngest son had expressed a desire to stay. They were steadfast in their refusal to let him remain with his adult brother, explaining that if he grew up in the States without them, he was likely to develop "vicios" (bad ways). Another respondent, who had come to the States with her son in 1980, spoke with evident pride of his achievements, emphasizing his good conduct. She explained that she had watched him closely as he was growing up and "no queria que se dane" (didn't want him to go astray).

When queried regarding assignment of roles and responsibilities within the family, respondents cited some changes from their patterns in their countries of origin, but not to the extent that had been expected by the investigator. Despite the literature's depiction of strictly defined male and female roles within the Hispanic family, most of the respondents described much greater sharing of work and home responsibilities. Many of the female interviewees reported that their husbands routinely participated in child care, shopping, and household maintenance. In many cases, respondents described the family unit as working together on household tasks, especially on the weekends. Reliance on older children for care of younger siblings, laundry, and cooking was common.

Some interviewees mentioned that changed household circumstances had been an impetus for role redefinition

since their arrival in the U.S. In their countries of origin, they explained, they had housekeepers who did everything. In several cases, the man's work schedule was mentioned as a deterrent to his sharing in certain household tasks. However, even in these cases, participation of both partners in shopping and cleaning was mentioned as routine. While cooking was most often attributed to the woman, a few respondents reported that the man of the house took responsibility for meal preparation on occasions when he arrived home from work before his wife. One Salvadoran, whose job in the U.S. resulted in his being home a lot during the day, reported that he accompanied his wife to the laundry. With some embarrassment, he told the interviewer that he carried the laundry but she did the wash.

Family decision making was characterized by a majority of the respondents as extremely democratic. Many of the couples reported that they made all important decisions together, and that neither would do anything important without the other's approval. One respondent mentioned that he had instituted a monthly family meeting in his household; everyone was included, he noted, even his in-laws. Another family also reported making use of family meetings, particularly whenever something important had to be decided. They indicated that the whole family was involved; even the children.

Most of the women interviewed stated that they played the primary role in identifying what was needed in their homes. However, they reported that it was their husbands who determined if they had enough money to buy these things. A Salvadoran male respondent described himself as "a little more responsible" in the area of decision making, as per Salvadoran custom. Yet, he indicated that purchases for the house were a woman's domain. He acknowledged that his wife made all the meals, noting that he expected this. A young Nicaraguan woman described her role as bringing matters to her husband's attention. She observed that he generally agreed and then told her when they would buy the item she had mentioned.

#### 4) Occupational Shifts and Issues in the Workplace

A dominant theme in the interviews dealt with the interviewees' employment status and the occupational shifts they had undergone as a result of their emigration. A large number of respondents spoke of academic preparation and training in their homeland for careers they were unable to pursue in the United States due to language, credentialing, legal status, or other eligibility requirements. Lack of resident status and English speaking ability were the most commonly cited obstacles preventing the obtaining of jobs comparable to ones respondents had held in their homelands.

There was a general consensus that their

occupational decisions in the U.S. were based on practicality, and that the overriding goal needed to be earning sufficient income to meet their families' needs and commitments in their homelands, rather than achieving personal or professional fulfillment. Some of the occupational categories cited included carpentry, gardening and landscaping, factory work, deliveries, food service, cleaning, maintenance, teaching, and health care.

For those respondents who were forced to work outside their area of occupational training, the choice was not made without personal costs. Many interviewees lamented their loss of job satisfaction, expressed frustration over being forced to do menial jobs, and reported depression over the severing of professional ties. The table which follows shows some of the occupational shifts which respondents reported:

<u>Former Occupation in Homeland</u>	<u>Current occupation in U.S.A.</u>
Teacher & banker	Carpenter
Raising animals	Landscaper
Commercial secretary	Housekeeper
Lawyer & public administrator	Window cleaner & building maintenance supervisor
Social worker	Domestic worker
Notary & business manager	Factory manager's asst.
Assistant in husband's clothing business	Domestic worker
Nurse	Home health aide
University professor	Limousine driver
Biology teacher	Shoe salesman
Medical student	Party rental equipment delivery person

Even respondents with limited education and training

expressed dissatisfaction over a variety of employment related issues. Their concerns focused on difficulties in securing positions, low wages, lack of benefits, unsafe work conditions, and unrealistic employer expectations. Women who had formerly stayed at home to care for children and tend to household tasks reported that they had no choice but to go to work once they arrived in the U.S. because the cost of living was so high.

In eight of the 30 families interviewed, at least one family member had completed two or more years of study at the university level in their country of origin. Fields of study included law, medicine, public administration, and philosophy. Only two of these individuals reported present employment in a field closely aligned to their area of specialization at the university level. The others were employed in such jobs as carpentry, maintenance, gardening, factory work, limousine driving, painting, home health aide, and domestic work. Reactions to the change of occupational category and status ranged from extreme dissatisfaction and frustration to acceptance and resignation.

One young Salvadoran reported that he had worked as a teacher and a community organizer before emigrating to the U.S. Despite his completion of two years of law school and two years of psychology study at the university level, he has been forced to work as an "off

the books" carpenter since his arrival. He reported dissatisfaction with his wage level and noted that his employer justified his rate of pay scale by his lack of a car. Nonetheless, he commented matter-of-factly: "If you can't work at what you like, you work at what you have to do." A similar point of view was conveyed by a Nicaraguan lawyer who held a government position prior to his emigration to the U.S. He now works two jobs, washing windows in commercial buildings during the day and supervising cleaning crews in offices at night. Echoing the sentiment of the Salvadoran, he expressed gratitude that he was able to land two good jobs and earn enough to provide a good life for his wife and children.

A less salutary attitude was reflected in an interview with a former Salvadoran professor who presently works as a limousine driver. This individual expressed extreme dissatisfaction and depression over not being able to work in his chosen profession. He spoke at length about his inability to accept his current vocation, citing incidents of failure to remember familiar routes and poor driving as evidence of the "bloque psicologico" that he has experienced. He interpreted his behavior as introducing "artificial obstacles" to prevent him from adjusting to his imposed occupational status. He queried the interviewers about whether they knew how hard it is to work at something

that you dislike intensely.

Respondents from rural backgrounds, of whom there were only a few in the study sample, reported less dramatic occupational changes. Their work in their countries of origin was most often in the agricultural field, and included the care of crops and animals. These new immigrants tended to secure positions in gardening and landscaping. While places of employment were geographically dispersed, many of the immigrants in this line of work were employed in northern Westchester and southern Connecticut where large estates and residential properties are plentiful.

Although statistics are not available concerning concentrations of the various national origin groups in specific geographic areas, informal sources reveal that the northern part of the county includes a sizeable and growing Central American immigrant population, primarily of rural origin. One local Hispanic advocate reported that the Hispanic workers residing in the area held "many low-paying jobs that no one else seemed to want, particularly in landscaping, restaurant work, housekeeping and caring for children" (Hearth, 1989, p. 17).

In response to the proliferation of Central American immigrants in the up-county area, a countywide Hispanic service agency recently opened a satellite office to address the needs of this burgeoning

population. Another community-based organization, the Mount Kisco Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council, undertook a study to find out more about the local Hispanic population and its service needs. The study concluded that the village of Mount Kisco has been "... fairly successful in coping with the problem of absorbing a wave of immigrants whose social, cultural and economic background didn't appear to be the most adequate preparation for life in suburbia" (Hearth, 1989, p. 17).

The majority of the women interviewed were employed in domestic work, some working in a separate home each day during the week and others working in only a few homes a week. Most of the interviewees stated that they had not worked outside the home in their countries of origin. Several commented that formerly they had employed domestic workers to take care of their housework, and thus it felt strange to now be doing this work for others. Nonetheless, most respondents seemed content with their domestic positions, attributing their satisfaction to the flexibility of hours, opportunity to cultivate relationships with "Anglos", lack of required training to master the job, potential for learning and practicing English, absence of need for legal documents, and prospect for acquiring legal status through employer sponsorship.

A Guatemalan interviewee described her extended

employment as a housekeeper for a family with a 20-room home in an affluent suburban community. She chose her employer to be godmother to her daughter, maintaining close ties even after she left the job. Recalling the quality of the experience, she commented, "She opened many doors for me." Another respondent reported that she had maintained the same five cleaning jobs for the last 15 years. In El Salvador she had help in cleaning her own house, but it was not too difficult to adjust to the change, she commented.

One highly enterprising interviewee described her current employment which included 10 house cleaning jobs as well as a full time position as an insurance agent. She admitted that this workload was exhausting and excessively pressured, while at the same time reflecting pride in the clientele she had established and the savings she had amassed.

In general, respondents commented on the lack of rigid class distinctions in the U.S., noting that it would have not have been appropriate for them to perform domestic work in their home countries. One interviewee, who worked as a nurse in her home country and has become a home health aide in the U.S. due to language and credentialing problems, reflected: "At home I had servants waiting on me. Here I'm a servant."

A number of the interviewees complained about health problems they had developed in the performance of

housework, such as high blood pressure, arthritis, and back pain, and expressed preoccupation over the prospect of having to give up their positions as their health continued to decline with advancing age.

In discussing the conditions under which they worked, respondents highlighted the lack of benefits, especially health insurance and sick days; the seasonal nature of jobs such as gardening, painting, and contracting; the tendency of employers to increase work load and level of responsibility without commensurate pay raises; and the assigning of workers to night and weekend shifts, again without appropriate compensation. One male respondent spoke of his ten years employment on the four to midnight shift at a local factory. Over this time span, he was assaulted on three separate occasions while commuting on foot from work to home. The last attack produced a punctured lung, leading to extensive hospital care and a permanent disability. While his employer did provide some assistance during the initial period of incapacitation, full medical and compensation benefits were not made available.

Level of satisfaction with salary varied among the respondents. When asked whether they felt they were adequately compensated for the work they were doing, a number responded affirmatively. Others were emphatic in their feelings of dissatisfaction with pay scale, explaining that employers took advantage of their lack

of documentation and language skills to justify low pay, lack of promotion, and withholding of benefits. Several respondents noted that American co-workers were receiving twice what they were for the same jobs.

The passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, which mandates sanctions for employers who hire undocumented workers, seemed to have some impact on the obtaining of employment but did not thwart determined job seekers. The continued use of false purchased documents, especially social security cards, as well as the failure of prospective employers to comply with the documentation standards of the legislation, enabled workers to obtain employment.

Respondents of Nicaraguan origin cited a government policy under which they were able to obtain temporary work permits from the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Several Nicaraguans reported making periodic trips to Miami to renew these permits, explaining that the process appeared to be quicker and more efficient there than in New York. In later interviews, carried out prior to the ouster of the Sandinista regime, respondents indicated anxiety over whether the practice of granting permits would be continued and, if not, how they secure their work status.

##### 5) Educational Issues

Education proved to be of great importance to all

of the respondents. Those interviewees who were parents were especially focused on educational issues affecting their children. A majority of the respondents, both those with and those without children, expressed educational concerns relating to the acquisition of English language skills and the pursuit of additional education for themselves. Given the recency of their emigration, it is not surprising that many of the interviewees contrasted the educational systems in their countries of origin with that of the United States. Overall, respondents judged their own educational systems to be more rigorous, advanced, demanding of discipline, and focused on learning facts, particularly in the areas of geography and history. Nicaraguans were especially outspoken in praising their country's educational system. This sentiment was echoed by several of the Salvadorans, including one young man who described the U.S. system as "muy blando" and not sufficiently demanding. Another Salvadoran labelled the U.S. system as "deficiente" (deficient), designed to separate out those who will continue (the achievers) from all the others.

The Guatemalan responses were more diverse. While some interviewees gave a good rating to their country's educational system, many noted the lack of availability of schooling in the provinces, especially beyond the primary level. Those students who wished to continue,

they reported, had to seek scholarships so they could go to the capital to study. One Guatemalan respondent noted that those who had opportunities in Guatemala were motivated and pushed to do well. He contrasted this with U.S. students who "know they will pass." Commenting on the increased accessibility of education in the U.S., another respondent noted that this universal access enabled everyone who was interested to "llegar a ser algo" (to become something).

While many families noted that their children experienced initial difficulties due to the change of environment and language, only a few reported enduring problems. Many respondents' children were initially enrolled in ESL (English as a Second Language) programs which were available during the school year and, in a few of the larger districts, in the summer as well. The majority of the children spent a relatively short time in these classes. Most families who had been in the U.S. for a period of a year or longer reported that their children spoke English well. Language appeared to be more of an obstacle to the parents since their ability to help their children with homework was impeded by their minimal knowledge of English. Moreover, their children's use of English in preference to Spanish sometimes created familial conflicts in the household.

Pride in their children's ease of adjustment and academic performance was evidenced by many of the

interviewees. Several reported that their children had been selected for talented and gifted programs. One Guatemalan mother proudly recounted that her children had assumed the role of informal tutors to other kids in the neighborhood because of their recognized academic ability. Another mother boasted that her son had a perfect attendance record and had earned the best citizen award at his school.

A few respondents noted that their children had completed secondary education in the U.S. and were now enrolled in college. Eligibility standards for financial aid posed an obstacle to some families. One Salvadoran father explained that his daughters did not qualify for financial aid when they first entered college because of their undocumented status. He scraped together the money for the first semester but later they were forced to drop out for a year and a half until their papers came through and they could qualify for aid.

One of his daughters, who will be soon be completing her undergraduate work in biology at a college in the New York area, spoke of her interest in attending dental school. She explained to the interviewer that she was prepared to take out a loan for her graduate studies, believing that the professional degree was worth it. She further commented that she wished to be able to repay her parents for all the

sacrifices on her behalf and even envisioned herself buying a house some day and having them come live with her. Another respondent also addressed the issue of financial aid for higher education. He described a nephew who had been attending a local university but was not going to be able to re-enroll due to a new requirement that he produce proof of residency to continue to receive financial aid. Describing the plight of young people with the observation, "todas las puertas se cierran," (all the doors close), he concluded that he understood why kids turned to drugs.

The problem of restrictions on financial aid was addressed by an Episcopal priest who reported that many of the children of families with whom he had contact were being prevented from entering college due to the newly imposed restrictions on the granting of aid. Undocumented students were no longer being approved for financial assistance, he explained. He further noted that many kids were disillusioned and had been dropping out of high school since they knew they would not be able to enter college.

Many interviewees portrayed themselves as very much concerned about their children's education and engaged in regular contact with school personnel. It was evident that they had high educational aspirations for their children and were prepared to become involved to promote their attainment.

Language barriers were cited as deterrents to parents' participation in conferences and school functions. One mother recalled that in the initial months after her child's enrollment in school, she received many forms which she was unable to understand, and was invited to teacher conferences at which there were no interpreters. She indicated that at that point, she was "ready to give up." More recently, interpreters have been provided and notices are being issued in Spanish, she noted. The father of a Nicaraguan youngster reported that he walked out of a meeting at his child's school when he discovered that it was being conducted exclusively in English. Much to his gratification, subsequent meetings were conducted in English and Spanish.

A Catholic priest, whose parish included a high percentage of Hispanics, described himself as an advocate for the Hispanic members of his community. He noted a lack of respect on the part of the public schools for the needs of Hispanic children and described his job as "plugging holes" and "trying to provide social supports." Although the Catholic school in his parish had 49 percent Hispanic enrollment, he evidently saw his job as advocating for the educational needs of his parishioners regardless of where their children were being educated. Reflecting on the same geographic community, an Episcopal priest noted that the schools used to be very rejecting of Hispanic youngsters, but

that their attitude had changed significantly in recent years. He now finds much less need to intervene, he reported.

A Guatemalan mother expressed gratitude that her daughters were getting the chance to study in the U.S. since in Guatemala, they would have had to pay after completing the primary grades. She also noted the benefits they were deriving from the school lunch program which was being offered to them without charge due to their low family income. Her older daughter was attending a middle school with which she had little contact due to the absence of Spanish speaking staff. Her younger daughter was enrolled at an elementary school where a Colombian teacher was available to translate during teacher conferences thus facilitating her involvement.

In Port Chester, a Westchester village whose Hispanic population has almost doubled in the last decade and now constitutes almost one third of the village's population (Hearth, 1991), local schools are deeply affected by the influx of Hispanic families. Dr. Charles D. Coletti Jr., the assistant superintendent of the Port Chester-Rye School district, noted that according to recent census figures, Hispanic students constituted 38.2 percent of the district's total enrollment in 1990 as compared to 19.1 percent in 1980 (Hearth, 1991). He articulated the district's goal as

enabling students to communicate in English while retaining their own language. Commenting on the posture of the Hispanic community in regard to children in the schools, Dr. Coletti stated, "They are very interested in the education of their children" (Hearth, 1991).

The coordinator of bilingual services for the Port Chester school system provided additional information on the system's involvement with recent Hispanic immigrants. She highlighted new immigrants' constant fears about undocumented status as evidenced by their reluctance to fill out routine school forms or enroll in special programs such as the school lunch program. Noting that the administrative offices of the school district had been instructed not to ask new entrants for social security cards, she explained that a passport or birth certificate and a record of immunization were the only documentation requested. In cases where social security numbers were lacking, she explained, information and the requisite forms were routinely sent home so that families could secure cards for their children.

The bilingual coordinator reported that children recently arrived from Central American seemed to be more poorly educated due to the closure of schools as a consequence of internal strife in their countries of origin. Because of their limited school attendance, many were not performing up to grade level, she noted.

She also commented on the "incredible" responsibilities given to eight- and nine-year old youngsters, who often cooked, cleaned, and took care of younger siblings while their parents worked.

The bilingual coordinator cited a variety of steps being taken within the district to promote understanding of the new Hispanic population and to facilitate the involvement of families in school activities and in the educational process. Observing that there was not an adequate knowledge of cultural differences among school personnel, the coordinator described an in-service course she had initiated for regular teachers to sensitize them to cultural differences and needs and to train them to use bilingual methods in their classrooms. Nineteen teachers voluntarily enrolled in the course, she reported proudly. According to the coordinator, parent education and awareness programs are offered in Spanish as much as possible to involve non-English speaking families in their children's education, to emphasize parents' important role in helping children in their own native language, and to dispel myths about the detrimental effects of speaking Spanish in the household.

Interpreters are routinely made available for parent conferences, she stated, and use of siblings for interpreting is strongly discouraged. Every second week, Spanish speaking youngsters take a book home from

the library in Spanish as a means of emphasizing to their families the importance of language use and retention. In concluding, she noted with satisfaction that educators and specialists within the system seemed to be making significant strides in their ability to discern real learning disabilities from language related issues.

Relocation impacted on children's schooling in a variety of ways. Several families had difficulties enrolling their children in school due to differences in the school calendar. In one case, an attempt was made to register children upon a family's arrival in March, but the school denied them entry on the basis that it was too late in the academic year. Officials finally acquiesced after the family went to the Human Rights Commission for assistance.

A Nicaraguan couple reported that their youngest daughter was traumatized by the trip from her homeland and, as a consequence, was forced to repeat a grade. A Guatemalan family noted that their youngster cried and vomited during her initial months at school. A six-year old Nicaraguan girl refused to go to kindergarten because she was afraid someone would harm her father while she was away from home. When her parents forced her to go, she cried uncontrollably, and the school had to contact the family to come get her. Subsequently, school administrators proposed that the child attend

only a half day, but the mother was obliged to reject this plan since she was employed full time and could not afford to give up her job.

Educational consequences of relocation were experienced by adults as well as children. A Nicaraguan woman who had completed three years of university study in her home country was only awarded 27 credits toward a baccalaureate degree at a local college. A Salvadoran man who attempted to enroll in a metropolitan New York college was billed at the nonresident rate because he was a refugee and did not have a "green card". Discouraged by the insensitive treatment he received, he abandoned his plans to continue his education.

The majority of the adult respondents viewed learning English as their paramount educational goal. Many interviewees, including a good number who had been in the States for four or more years, reported that they had learned very little English. Failure to acquire English language skills was attributed in most cases to demanding work schedules which afforded little opportunity to enroll in classes. Despite the fact that evening classes were available, respondents reported that they were too tired to concentrate at the end of a strenuous work day. Many of the women who were engaged in domestic work commented that no one was at home where they worked making it impossible to practice English on the job. In a number of cases, adult family members

relied upon their children to translate for them in the range of settings where a knowledge of English was requisite.

Some interviewees evaluated their English proficiency as satisfactory. Among this group, a few had studied English as part of their university program in their homeland while others had attended courses in the U.S. offered by local community colleges, adult education programs, community centers, libraries, and special training institutes. In one case, a Salvadoran immigrant of 20 years tenure in the US had organized evening classes at a small parish house in the heart of a large Central American immigrant community. She reported that some 300 people had taken advantage of the six-week program which was repeated every three months.

Timidity prevented some immigrants from using newly acquired English skills. One respondent noted that her colleagues at work did not encourage her to take part in their conversations, and this reinforced her isolation. A Salvadoran interviewee communicated his frustration at not knowing English, noting that he viewed this as much more of an obstacle to his successful adjustment than the acquisition of documented status. He reported that he was considering volunteering at a hospital or store as a means of learning the language. A Honduran woman who had arrived in 1979 confidently stated that she spoke English well and spoke with disdain of other

recent immigrants who, from her point of view, had not tried hard enough to learn the language.

#### 6) Religion and Religious Concerns

The important role played by religion in the lives of Hispanics has been amply documented in the literature (e.g. Doyle, 1982; Cafferety & McCready, 1985). In this study, themes of the interaction between culture and religion, religious choices, affiliation, participation and beliefs were explored through the interview process. While Catholicism was the religious preference of the majority of interviewees, preferences of a variety of Protestant faiths were also indicated.

The loss of Spanish-speaking Catholics to non-Catholic sects is widely recognized. A recent front-page New York Times article, "Switch by Hispanic Catholics Changes Face of U.S. Religion" (Suro, 1989), explored this phenomenon which has gained momentum during the last decade. Basing his findings on data gathered by the University of Chicago's National Opinion Research Center, a sociologist, the Reverend M. Greeley, "concluded in 1988 that about 23 percent of all Hispanic Americans were Protestants and that approximately 60,000 Hispanic Americans join Protestant denominations each year" (Suro, 1989, p. 22).

Religious conversions from Catholicism to Episcopalian, Evangelical, and Jehova's Witness were mentioned by study participants. Several respondents

reported on their dissatisfaction with the local Catholic church and subsequent affiliation with their neighborhood Episcopal Church. They noted, in several cases somewhat defensively, that the religious beliefs and practices of the two churches did not appear to be very different, and explained that their decisions were motivated more by things they observed and experienced through their participation in religious observances, activities, and programs in their local parish. For example, one respondent related a story of having shown up at mass shortly after his arrival in New York only to be turned away due to the shabbiness of his clothing. Another explained, "No sentimos apoyados en San Paulo "(we don't feel supported at St. Paul's Church); he went on to contrast this reaction to his family's feelings at a local Episcopal church where, he noted, "all the immigrants help each other."

One interviewee, who had converted from Catholicism to Baptist, characterized her new church as more accepting. She further justified her decision noting that the Baptist church had not charged to baptize her baby. Another respondent described with great enthusiasm her family's decision to become Jehova's Witnesses. Having spent the last four years studying the faith, they feel that it has enabled them to realize their mistakes and live more sanely, quitting their bad habits and rejecting the "lives of deceit" they were

living. Their indoctrination into the faith involves going to classes three nights a week and Sunday mornings. The entire household (which included an older couple, their adult daughter and a niece) is involved in this venture and has built its social life around the church community.

Reliance on the church for social service assistance was also a common theme. One Episcopal ministry was lauded for its program of clothing distribution and job assistance. Over a three-year period, members of this ministry sponsored a community center which provided work training, food distribution, advocacy, and cultural and educational programs. Members of the congregation, which consists almost entirely of Hispanic immigrants, were involved, sharing their skills, teaching others, and securing resources for the center. Ultimately the group was not able to sustain the program. However, the Episcopal ministry which served as the impetus for the center has used funds received from settlement of an insurance claim to purchase a piece of property in the community and is working with a board of parishioners in planning for the construction of a new church which will include facilities for worship (with a capacity of 400), as well as space for job training, educational programs, and recreation.

Several Catholic respondents mentioned using their

church as a social service resource, particularly for housing, medical, and immigration assistance. One young Salvadoran refugee, who had volunteered in the legal services component, felt that it hadn't worked out. Explaining his disenchantment, he observed that the church was "too wrapped up in politics" and thus not a good base or conduit for dispensing help. However, his sentiment of disaffection seemed to extend beyond the confines of the church, since he commented that he had "yet to encounter a good, sincere, helpful community endeavor."

Documentation of the role of the church in meeting the needs of new immigrants was also obtained through interviews with two priests - one Catholic and the other Episcopal - both of whose congregations include substantial proportions of recently arrived Hispanic immigrants. The Catholic priest described his parish as including 22 different national origin groups. His parish office is staffed by three bilingual workers who assist in providing a variety of social services to parishioners. Equating the church with a community center, this priest expressed the view that it is the first place people go for financial, legal, and personal problem solving assistance. He described his role as advocate, pursuing social service, immigration, and educational issues brought to his attention by members of his congregation, and seeking respect and

understanding for the disenfranchised. "We're plugging holes," he admitted. He further explained his task as trying to provide social supports and enabling the needy to survive. One unique program he mentioned was a credit union which the church has mounted, under the direction of a separate board, to offer low interest loans to community people.

The Episcopal priest also highlighted a variety of community service activities. Like the Catholic priest, he mentioned involvement in immigration and educational issues. For a six-year period, his ministry offered the services of a trained immigration counselor on a weekly basis. As he and members of his ministry became more familiar with the regulations, they took over this function. Provision of advocacy and translating services for parents in dealing with school issues; housing assistance, particularly with unscrupulous landlords; and dissemination of information about entitlements and special programs were other functions he cited.

One parishioner who had played a particularly active role in church activities over the last five years was also interviewed. A Salvadoran of 20 years tenure in the United States, this interviewee initially affiliated with her local Episcopal church more than five years ago and has worked since then in both a volunteer and paid capacity to assist the church in

providing education, cultural, and social services to its community. Activities undertaken included job and housing referral and assistance, court accompaniment, advocacy within the social service system, summer youth recreation, after school programming, English as a second language classes, and youth groups. When financial needs demanded that she secure regular employment, she reduced her hours but continued staffing the program in the late afternoons and evenings. Emphasizing the level of time and commitment required to provide this kind of comprehensive array of services for the community, she lamented the failure of the church hierarchy to provide the resources necessary for its continuation.

For many of the respondents the major criterion for church attendance was the availability of services in Spanish. In one case, a respondent reported affiliating with an evangelical Protestant church when she first arrived in this country because she was unable to find a Spanish language mass in her community. Several years later, when one became available, she left the Protestant church to return to Catholic worship.

One respondent criticized her local Catholic church for its failure to retain a consistent Spanish speaking priest. This interviewee noted that she continued to attend because there were no other choices available to her locally. Another study participant from the same

community related that she seldom used the local church since she found its members too prone to gossip; she preferred the anonymity of a larger church in the Bronx at which attendance was greater and rituals and devotions were given more emphasis.

In another town, where the resident Hispanic population had mushroomed in recent years, the demand for mass in Spanish was so great that a third mass had to be added. Respondents who indicated that they attended church regularly commented on the social aspect of their participation. Apparently they valued the opportunity to be with other Hispanics. Capitalizing on this predilection, some of the churches offered a coffee hour after services during which parishioners could mingle. Additional activities, like celebrations for saints days and holidays unique to the individual national origin groups; excursions; Bible study groups; and marriage preparation classes were also cited as contributing to feelings of connectedness with the church and its members.

The linguistic and cultural barriers posed by the dearth of Hispanic clergy are formidable. A recent New York Times article (Suro, p. 22) reported that: "Nationwide there are fewer than 2,000 Hispanic priests, about two percent of all Catholic clergy...." In the population studied, these barriers were being addressed in several ways. A number of study respondents were

participating in a bible study group which met regularly at the home of one of the participants. They articulated the goal of the classes as preparing them to teach other Hispanic immigrants the gospel. It was evident that this group, comprised entirely of recently arrived Salvadorans, served the dual purpose of religious education and orientation to U.S. culture and institutions.

Several interviewees referred to an affiliation with a Hispanic pastoral institute of the Episcopal Church. Through the efforts of a priest in their community, the two young men were invited to enroll in a special seminary program, the purpose of which is to train Spanish speaking individuals for religious service. Both respondents spoke enthusiastically about the program and the personal growth they had experienced through their participation.

In a different vein, one interviewee noted that she was not religious, having tried a number of churches and found that they didn't teach love for fellow man. While acknowledging an affinity for church hosted activities like weddings and other celebrations, she expressed the view that "the best church is the family."

#### 7) Health Care

Concerns about health care - its cost, quality, and availability - were voiced by a large number of

respondents. Most pervasive was a preoccupation with health care costs. While the majority of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of available services, many evidenced dismay at the charges. Due to their undocumented status, few interviewees had been granted health insurance benefits by their employers despite the fact that many were full time employees. The absence of coverage impacted most severely on families in which one or more family members had suffered a hospitalization or other serious disability or illness. Despite their dire economic circumstances, only a handful of families was receiving Medicaid benefits. A priest whose ministry was directed to the Central American immigrant community reported some success in securing special "charity funding" for immigrants at local hospitals.

Use of public clinics and hospitals was widespread since the charges tended to be lower than those of private physicians. One respondent complained that even the hospital clinic's charge of \$35-40 was excessive. Another respondent described an emergency hospitalization in which she ran up a bill of over \$9000. Upon discharge, the hospital informed her that she was not eligible for Medicaid, that she would be held responsible for paying her bill over time, and that if she left the country before the bill was fully paid, her adult son would be held liable for the balance.

Medicaid coverage was more often made available for children, since many had been born in the United States and were thus U.S. citizens.

A Salvadoran respondent recounted the dilemma of his mother-in-law who had been staying with him and his wife but would soon be returning to El Salvador to receive kidney dialysis the cost of which she could not pay in the States. A Guatemalan woman complained about the high cost of health care and explained that she had resorted to using the public health clinic which charged only seven dollars a visit. However, she had been experiencing severe agitation and nervousness and had commissioned some friends to bring her "nerve pills" from Guatemala since they were unavailable to her in the States. Several of the male interviewees reported that they were in good health but lived in constant fear of becoming ill since their employers provided no benefits nor would be willing to pay them for days missed from their jobs.

A particularly moving story was related by a Nicaraguan respondent who, despite her employment as a social worker at a mental health agency, was without family health benefits. Her 12-year old son had fallen from a third floor window when he was ten and, as a consequence, suffered periodic convulsions and related complications. While still paying off the bill for his hospitalization, she and her husband were coping with

the continuing effects of the trauma he had experienced. She reflected sadly that she felt constrained by financial considerations and was not able to seek the services of specialists who might be able to assist in the diagnosis and treatment of her son's continuing medical problems. When asked if she felt that they were treated differently because of their ethnicity, she responded, "puede ser que sí" (maybe so). She also noted that she had found the U.S. health care system very unresponsive and concluded, "A child could be dying, and they wouldn't do anything without money."

Concern about the cost of care was also expressed by a Salvadoran couple who were Medicaid eligible. They stated that they used the local public health clinic for their children (since it only treated individuals up to 15 years of age) and a Hispanic doctor in their neighborhood for the other family members. They indicated that they had found some doctors to be better than others and didn't like the fact that they needed to be governed by who would accept Medicaid. Another Salvadoran respondent contrasted the prompt, courteous care he had received from a private health maintenance organization when he broke his ankle with the lack of attention he had encountered when he used a local hospital emergency room for a cut finger.

Most respondents with children spoke favorably of the preventative services available through the

neighborhood public health clinics. Many respondents had taken advantage of these clinics for children's vaccinations and dental care. The availability of some Spanish speaking workers further facilitated their use of these programs. One interviewee mentioned having been called to participate in a meeting when budget cuts precipitated the threat of withdrawal of bilingual services. Citing WIC and the public well-baby clinic as exemplary programs, a young Guatemalan mother stated, "WIC no es del gobierno; es de la gente que ayuda" (WIC isn't government sponsored; it's run by people who help). Another respondent also praised WIC but noted its limitation in providing the provisions she needed. She explained that the pediatrician had prescribed a specific infant formula for her three-month old son, and WIC did not offer this particular formula under its subsidy program.

Medicaid was the one public benefit program known to many of the interviewees and for which many seemed eager to qualify. Several of the women had been awarded temporary Medicaid subsequent to the birth of their babies. However, the areas of coverage and the procedures for certification seemed poorly defined and not well communicated to the families.

In one case, a young mother poured out a saga of extended phone contacts, bills, and threatening letters from the hospital where she had given birth and from the

Department of Social Services (DSS) where she had been referred for Medicaid certification. Since the contacts had all been in English and the woman spoke only Spanish, she was totally confused about what had transpired. She described how on one occasion, she presented herself at the district office of DSS to comply with an appointment which staff there had scheduled. Because she could not communicate in English and had not brought an interpreter, she was sent home. Seemingly at the end of her rope and fearful of the consequences of ignoring the correspondence, she appealed to the investigator during the study interview to assist her in clearing up the situation. Although the investigator did make several calls to the hospital and to a worker at DSS, she was not able to clear up the situation nor did she find personnel with whom she spoke particularly sympathetic to the plight of the immigrant client.

Medicaid coverage for prenatal care and delivery was obtained by one woman through means which she herself described as devious. She reported that she had been assisted by a nurse friend of her sister's who had instructed her to state at the time of her application that she was not living with her husband in order to qualify for aid. She concluded that one could only get things by lying.

Contacts with the health care system were often

initiated in conjunction with pregnancy and childbirth. Whereas other health needs could often be overlooked or postponed, obstetrical care could not. One respondent praised the efforts of a social worker she had met at the hospital while she was receiving prenatal services. The social worker assisted her in obtaining a free delivery as well as WIC benefits for herself and her baby. She also offered to help her pursue Medicaid for the child, but the woman refused due to her concern that it would jeopardize her husband's residency papers. Another respondent also spoke of her reluctance to apply for Medicaid coverage for her young daughter, basing her decision on the advice of the attorney handling her immigration papers.

Financial concerns motivated one mother to switch her care from a neighborhood hospital to a large city hospital in the Bronx when she needed continuing treatment subsequent to childbirth. She acknowledged that the long trip by public transportation was tiring and time consuming but found it worth it because the charges were much lower for comparable care. Another respondent, the mother of a nine-month old child and expecting another, reported sadly that she and her husband were still paying off the bills from her first delivery and couldn't imagine how they were going to take on further debt for the next birth.

Greater success in accessing needed services was

experienced by one interviewee who, after a very difficult pregnancy and delivery, wound up with a three-pound premature baby with multiple problems. Ongoing treatment was arranged at the county medical center, and mother and infant made the hour-long commute three times a week by bus to comply with the therapy schedule. Ultimately, the social worker at the medical center, who was not Spanish speaking, made contact with a special minority outreach team of a local organization for the developmentally disabled, and a Spanish speaking worker was assigned. A wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic services was provided, and transportation was arranged at no cost to the client through the use of public funds. At the time of the interview, the child was attending an early intervention day program at an area children's hospital. The mother was very pleased with the quality of care her daughter was receiving as well as with the regular contact maintained with her by program staff.

Two health care professionals rendering services to Central American families were contacted to gain an additional perspective on the response of the health care community to the needs of Central American immigrant women. These included a nurse-practitioner employed at a neighborhood-based family practice clinic run by a large teaching hospital and the director of social services for a community hospital providing the

only obstetrical care in its area.

The nurse-practitioner explained that her clinic services the Central American immigrant community primarily through its Prenatal Care Assistance Program (PCAP). Regular medical checkups, medicine, hospital care during pregnancy, and health care for two more months after delivery for the mother, and a year for the baby, are provided to participants. Because PCAP was placed under the umbrella of Medicaid as of January 1990, it is now necessary for all patients to complete the paperwork for Medicaid certification. She cited language barriers, difficulty in obtaining employer certification of employment, and fear of the Department of Social Services as deterrents to the immigrants' enrollment in the program. When patients refuse to apply for Medicaid, a not infrequent occurrence she noted, the clinic is faced with the alternative of denying them service or providing services and forfeiting payment.

About 80 prenatal patients were enrolled in the clinic's PCAP program at the time of the interview. Of these, the nurse-practitioner estimated that 40-50 were of Central American extraction. Reflecting on the Central American patients with whom she had contact, she cited inadequate nutrition and emotional problems, such as post traumatic stress syndrome, as frequently in evidence.

The hospital director of social services noted that 60 of the 140 patient enrolled in the hospital's pre-natal clinic (also a participant in the PCAP program) were of Hispanic origin. She commented on the apparent family orientation of the Central American families, noting that husbands and/or other family members frequently accompanied the women to their appointments.

Unlike the family practice clinic, the hospital had the capability of processing Medicaid applications on the premises. The hospital also appeared to take a firmer position regarding payment, stipulating that those patients who did not get certified for Medicaid still must meet their financial obligations. This was facilitated through the availability of a special payment plan which extended the time period for payment; however, no reduction in fee was offered.

A major obstacle to immigrants' use of the hospital clinic was the ten-week waiting period for obtaining an appointment. Because of the lengthy waiting period, and because many women delayed pre-natal care well beyond the first trimester, many applicants had to be turned away since they could not be scheduled in a timely fashion.

Many of the health care needs articulated by respondents related to the change of climate and living conditions they had undergone, the type of employment they had undertaken, and the strains of relocation. A

Guatemalan woman described a sequence of jobs she had held since her arrival, which included a midnight to eight a.m. shift in a plastics company and a tomato packing plant, and a series of domestic cleaning jobs. She reported that she was not working currently due to unabated swelling in her hands and feet. Another woman recounted that she had worked as a seamstress but had to stop due to high blood pressure. She attributed her hypertension not to her job but rather to her anxiety over her parents who had remained behind in a war ravaged area of El Salvador.

Several respondents commented on the caliber of health care in the United States as compared to their countries of origin. The general consensus was that services were more personal and of better quality in the U.S. but that they were more readily available at no cost in Central America. The widespread availability of children's preventive services, like vaccinations and feeding programs, was lauded.

#### 8) Social Welfare Knowledge and Use

Knowledge and use of social welfare services by study respondents was generally minimal. Usage was motivated in most cases by necessity. A pervasive theme throughout the interviews was that of self sufficiency. Articulating this philosophy, a young Nicaraguan respondent reported that he and his wife tended to fend for themselves, felt competent in doing so, and had

enjoyed good luck with this approach. He further stated that they had confidence in their ability "to try and to dare," and that they were not inhibited in going where they needed to go. Echoing the same theme, a Honduran woman reported that she found resources through checking in the Yellow Pages. Another couple reported that when they needed to know something, they "asked friendly people." They clarified this strategy noting that when they went somewhere, they sought out Hispanics who spoke English and asked them for help.

Several of the families interviewed were residing in housing rehabilitated through SWAP (Stop Wasting Abandoned Property), a sweat equity program through which individuals contributed their physical labor and gained credit toward the acquisition of one of the restored housing units. The majority of the families occupying these units were of Central American descent. The participatory nature of the program and the end result of ownership appeared to be attractive to them.

Information dissemination was a problem which seemed to limit the use of available services. Several respondents commented that there were useful programs for which immigrants like themselves might qualify, but people didn't take advantage of them because of lack of information. A family residing near a park mentioned that they had seen recreation workers there in the summer and stopped by to inquire about what was

available. They were subsequently able to enroll their children in the city-sponsored recreation program.

Another respondent used informal channels to learn of available services. He reported that through members of his soccer team, he had learned of resources provided by a local Hispanic community organization and a neighborhood church.

Educational programs and services seemed to have appeal to many of the respondents. The Head Start program was utilized by several of the families interviewed. One respondent mentioned that she had learned about it through a woman at whose home she was doing cleaning. Her employer encouraged her to enroll her son, describing the activities and their potential benefit to the child, and assisting her in completing the requisite application. Several of the parents also described as beneficial the free lunch program through the schools. Several adults mentioned involvement in the continuing education program of their local school district and various of the adult learning programs of the Educational Opportunity Center.

Use of government sponsored services, such as public assistance, medical assistance, food stamps, workers' compensation, and unemployment assistance among study participants was infrequent. The inability of respondents to meet eligibility requirements, lack of knowledge about policies and procedures, inadequate

documentation, language barriers, fear of endangering pending residency applications, and reluctance to ask for help or accept handouts all served to deter interviewees from seeking aid. One respondent, who had sustained a serious injury in transit from work to home, acknowledged that the assistance he had received from the union and from the Crime Victim's Compensation Board had not been adequate to cover his medical expenses. Moreover, because his injury had left him with a permanent disability, he was finding it very difficult to remain employed. In a tone of desperation, he queried the interviewer about his possible eligibility for workers' compensation.

A staff member in the eligibility division of a local Department of Social Services office judged the number of applications from recently arrived Central American immigrants to be quite low. This worker reported serving primarily families who were pursuing legal residency through the amnesty program. While noting that U.S. born children of undocumented parents were eligible for public assistance, food stamps, clothing and rent allowances, she explained that parents were advised of the potential impact on their immigration status. Addressing the issue of endangering immigration status, several respondents reported that they had been advised by their attorneys not to apply for any public benefits while their applications for

residency were in process. This information seemed to negate that of a local priest who assured his parishioners that Department of Social Services personnel did not share any information about its clients with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

One study respondent described how she had wanted to apply for food stamps but, having obtained the forms, discovered that they were not available to "ilegales" (the undocumented) like herself and her children. She also confessed that she badly needed help paying her rent. Her dire circumstances were visible to the investigator. As an undocumented single parent with two young children who were not U.S. born, she was quite obviously struggling desperately to maintain an adequate standard of living.

Confusion over the public benefits to which immigrants were entitled and the consequences of accepting aid was pervasive among the immigrants themselves, among service providers in both governmental and private not-for-profit agencies, and among clergy and representatives of diverse social welfare institutions. Through attendance at an all-day workshop entitled, "Immigrants' Rights to Public Benefits," the investigator learned of the complexity of regulations governing eligibility for benefits, the differential imposition of standards based on the individual's precise immigration category, and inconsistencies in the

use of relevant policies. In advertising its purpose, The Center for Immigrants' Rights, sponsor of the training, stated:

Immigrants are often unjustly denied public benefits for themselves or for their U.S. citizen children. In addition immigrants are often afraid to seek needed assistance, due to fear of jeopardizing their immigration status, or fear of exposing their presence to the INS. This training will offer an overview of immigrants' rights to public benefits and practical advice for community organizations, service agencies, churches, social workers and others assisting immigrants (The Center for Immigrant Rights, Inc., 1990).

One government sponsored program which seemed to have widespread appeal among new immigrant families was the WIC (Women and Infant Care) program. An administrator at one of the local WIC offices attributed the program's popularity to its relatively simple application procedure, its employment of Spanish speaking personnel, and its offer of tangible benefits, such as infant formula, milk, cheese, and eggs. She noted that about 60 percent of the current client population was Hispanic. During regularly scheduled re-certification visits, staff monitor mothers' and children's health and nutrition and provide referrals to dentists, pediatricians, social service resources, and family planning clinics. She cited food stamps and family planning as the two categories of information most often requested by WIC families. However, she noted a confusion about the term "family planning" and

explained that some individuals interpreted it as the parental role in child development. "In order to get across, you need to be as naive as they are," she concluded.

When asked about their use of other social welfare resources, respondents cited a variety they had used. One interviewee was familiar with the Red Cross, having received assistance when there was a fire in her apartment. Several respondents mentioned having consulted a large, established Hispanic community organization in White Plains, the county seat, for assistance with immigration matters, employment, and social service concerns. In one case, the respondent noted his dissatisfaction with the assistance provided, commenting that the staff was inadequately trained in technical matters relating to immigration. Another interviewee also offered negative feedback on the services offered by this organization, indicating that she had sought career planning assistance and had instead received only factual information.

A program operated out of a small community office in a church rectory and staffed by a Salvadoran of 20 years residency in the United States was praised for the wide range of social welfare services it had provided during its five years in existence. Supervised by the clergyman who initiated the endeavor, the paraprofessional worker and several volunteers provided

job referral, housing assistance, court accompaniment, advocacy with social service providers, afterschool programming, recreation, and evening English classes on a shoe-string budget. Ultimately, the worker became disenchanted with the volume of work and the lack of remuneration and appreciation she received and withdrew from the program.

A village office of human resources was cited by one Guatemalan participant as having been valuable for employment, recreation and counseling assistance. She learned of its existence from a Guatemalan friend who worked there and subsequently introduced its services to some acquaintances. Other organizations cited by respondents included the Boy Scouts, Legal Aid, and BOCES. A community center established by the parishioners of an Episcopal church was lauded for its success in enabling immigrants to use their skills to teach others. Funding and organizational constraints eventually led to its curtailment, respondents noted, but plans were in progress to resurrect it at a new site.

Several respondents reported participation in Alcoholics Anonymous groups. A Spanish speaking group, meeting at a neighborhood church rectory, was cited as attracting a large and consistent membership. A young Salvadoran interviewee candidly discussed having turned to alcohol in response to serious immigration problems

as well as concern about family members he had left behind in his war-torn homeland. Pointing with pride to the sobriety pledge stencilled above his living room credenza, he praised AA for enabling him to become sober.

9) Values, Attitudes and Behavior

Through the interview process, in direct and indirect ways, respondents revealed behavior, values, and attitudes, and expressed points of view on a wide range of personal and societal issues. Since the interviews were all conducted in respondents' homes, the investigator had the opportunity to observe the physical milieu and, in many cases, interactions among family members, care of young children, and other aspects of family life. Many of the sessions started out quite formally, but, as the two- to three-hour period progressed, they evolved into social exchanges with the serving of refreshments, showing of photographs and memorabilia, and granting of gifts to the interviewers.

In highlighting differences between societal values in their countries of origin and the U.S., several respondents mentioned human rights, which they reported were not respected in their homelands but seemed to be honored in the U.S. On the level of the family, however, they were quick to identify the greater degree of affection and respect evident in Central American families, observing that U.S. children did not appear to

respect their parents nor pay attention to their mandates.

Respondents were anxious to correct the pervasive misconception they had encountered that all Hispanic subgroups were similar in customs, values, and behavior. A Salvadoran interviewee expressed his belief that the situation in each country colors its people and their philosophy. He portrayed Salvadorans as highly motivated toward academic study in contrast to Puerto Ricans who "preferred to be sleeping." Lamenting the "lack of conscience in the Hispanic community," he criticized reliance on welfare and the viscous cycle it perpetuated.

A Nicaraguan respondent stated her sense that most Americans think of all Hispanics as Puerto Ricans and don't realize that there are differences within the Hispanic population. She further noted that she had encountered little recognition of the Central and South American immigrant community. Another Nicaraguan participant described Central Americans as hard working. Labelling Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Cubans as "la clase mas mala," she described them as: "living off welfare, having too many kids, and allowing the government to take care of them."

Attitudes about the importance of generosity and the value of friendship were revealed in a number of the interviews. One woman related a story of being given

some loaves of bread as a gift from a man she had helped and then giving it to someone else who, she judged "needed it more." Another respondent mentioned that she had responded to an appeal on television to contribute monthly support for an underprivileged child in a Third World country. A Guatemalan woman living on her own with two young children referred to a network of Colombian and Mexican women in her neighborhood who had helped her out, giving her furnishings for her house, food, and clothing for her daughters.

Friendships with family members and other Central and South Americans seemed to be preferred. Many of the families reported that they spent all of their free time together and rarely socialized with other people, except extended family. A number of respondents spoke of social liaisons with other Hispanic families whom they had met through church attendance and participation in church sponsored outings and recreational events. One mother reported that her daughters did not have many friends since they had found the U.S. kids to be different in their "manera de ser" (behavior), hanging out with boys and putting on make-up. The few friends they had made were of Mexican and Brazilian descent, she noted.

A Honduran interviewee reflected that he had encountered some trouble making friends, due, according to his judgment, to his Black skin which caused people

to mistake him for an American Black. He further noted that he did not attempt to correct their misconceptions since he resented the prejudice the behavior revealed. He explained that his friends consisted of his own brothers and a few Puerto Ricans he had met on his job. An outgoing Guatemalan woman reported that she had many friends from a number of different Latin American countries and received many invitations to other people's houses. She emphasized that in seeking friends, she looked for people who were sincere and took the friendships seriously.

Discriminatory attitudes and/or concerns about other racial/ethnic groups were revealed by several of the respondents. A Salvadoran man who was the victim of three assaults in his neighborhood stated that he knew the Black men who attacked him, but he was reluctant to file charges because of his fears of reprisals. A couple who had enrolled their daughter in parochial school explained that they had done so because they were concerned about the mix of children in the public schools.

A number of the respondents described themselves as victims of discrimination. A young Nicaraguan male evidenced anger over the negative attitudes he had encountered and the barriers which prevented him from getting ahead which he attributed to his Hispanic ethnicity. A Salvadoran woman who had been hospitalized

for a chronic condition reported that some of the nurses were not so polite to her. When asked whether she believed this might have been due to the language barrier, she responded negatively.

Characterizing his Central American compatriots, one respondent stated that those of the first generation "carried their identity in their pockets." He described them as very pessimistic, in contrast to Americans who displayed a "spirit of positivism". Emphasizing the importance of giving Hispanics a sense of self distinct from U.S. culture, he decried the Spanish television programs aired on U.S. stations which "teach one route" and do not encourage independent thinking or action.

One parent described his attempts to give his young son a sense of his roots and his national identity. He noted that he was teaching him Spanish as well as some of the typical folk dances and customs of his homeland. A Salvadoran respondent offered his view of some of the qualities of Central American immigrants, portraying them as very interested in improving themselves and hampered in doing so by the constraints of U.S. government policy.

Less complimentary was the opinion of a Guatemalan mother who made the observation that the emphasis of Latin American immigrants was on buying cars and sending money home rather than on learning English and bettering themselves. In this same vein, a Nicaraguan interviewee

commented that in the U.S. there was plenty of work for those who wanted to work. In response to a question concerning how Hispanics were treated, a Honduran woman responded that the treatment was no different than that of other groups and that discrimination was brought on by the way people acted which, at times, elicited negative reactions.

#### 10) Program and Service Suggestions

When queried about programs and services they felt should be offered for new immigrants like themselves, study participants offered varied responses. At one extreme were those respondents who found the question difficult to comprehend and whose comments revealed a lack of familiarity with the concepts of social welfare institutions and the organized provision of help. At the other extreme were those respondents who quickly and emphatically identified a range of services in areas including health, employment, housing, and education.

In the area of employment, one respondent suggested that assistance be provided to assure that undocumented workers were not exploited by factory owners. Alluding to his familiarity with a church-sponsored information, referral, and advocacy program, he stated his belief that the church was not a good vehicle to fulfill this function since it was too mixed up in politics. Another interviewee proposed that job referral assistance be offered to the undocumented to assist them in

circumventing problems due to lack of legal work permits. Implicit in his comment was the notion that such a program would have the authority to relax eligibility standards and documentation requirements. Noting the increasing trend of employers challenging false papers, he indicated that those who secured jobs were paid poorly due to their status. The interviewee offered his belief that "things should not be given away," but that there should be opportunities for those who wanted to work.

A Salvadoran participant suggested that workers be compensated for months not worked due to the seasonal nature of their employment, providing what he termed, "unemployment insurance for the undocumented". "Lo merece uno," (one deserves it), he stated with conviction. Several other interviewees proposed employment assistance of a more comprehensive nature. Job referrals for child care and elder care positions were specifically mentioned.

Needs in the health area, more specifically free or low cost services, were identified by a large number of respondents. Psychiatry and gynecology were noted as areas in which low cost care was especially important yet hard to obtain. Hospital maternity benefits were also mentioned as vital for those who couldn't afford them.

In a more general vein, respondents spoke about

their lack of familiarity with existing programs and services and the desirability of offering orientation programs to acquaint people with resources. One interviewee reported that she had found service providers intolerant of the language gap; she suggested that more bilingual workers be made available. A Honduran man living alone with only a large multi-band radio for companionship reported that he had heard a lot of different services discussed on the radio, but believed that few Spanish speaking people knew of them. Reflecting a similar sentiment, a Guatemalan woman noted that when watching television, she had seen numbers to call for help but was reluctant to use them because of her inadequate English language skills.

A well educated, articulate Salvadoran interviewee offered the recommendation that there be orientation programs "at all levels". Moreover, he suggested that there be increased services in the areas of education, health, and housing. He further specified a need for programs to teach Central American immigrants about their rights and obligations and sources for different types of help. While noting that such services should be available in Spanish, he also underscored the importance of staff being sensitive to "the Hispanics' way of thinking". Echoing this sentiment, a Nicaraguan respondent highlighted the need for teaching people their rights and benefits and giving them the confidence

to speak up and ask for what they needed.

Other respondents suggested such services as low cost day care; English language classes offered on-the-job during work hours; and housing assistance, particularly for those interested in buying homes. While not offering any specific suggestions, when asked her views, one interviewee lamented , "como el ilegal sufrió y aguantó" (how much the undocumented suffered and what they tolerated).

CHAPTER V.  
SUMMARY

This study has sought to explore some of the characteristics of Central American immigrants, their experiences with the social, economic, and educational institutions with which they have had contact; the impact of their relocation on their attitudes, patterns of behavior, and family relationships; and the factors which have influenced their adjustment to life in the United States and their desire to remain on a long-term basis.

The study sample included a total of 41 respondents from 30 Central American immigrant households and 11 respondents from educational, religious, and social institutions rendering services to the Central American immigrant population in the New York metropolitan area. Immigrant respondents included 11 Guatemalans, 10 Salvadorans, 7 Nicaraguans, and 2 Hondurans. "Provider of service" respondents included 2 religious leaders, 3 health care providers, 4 representatives of community agencies, 1 representative of the public social welfare system, and an educator.

All but four of the immigrant respondents had arrived in the United States during the last decade, and seven had arrived since 1988. Nineteen of the households (63%) were comprised of four or more members. Twenty-six of the 30 households (87%) consisted of couples living with children and, in some cases, other

related and unrelated individuals. Half of the principal respondents were under 40 years of age, and half were women. Seventeen couples (57%) had two children or less. About a third of the respondents' children (15) were under 5 years of age; 26% (12) were ages 5-12, 22% (10) were between the ages of 12 and 18, and about 20% (9) were over the age of 18.

Seventeen respondents (57%) identified themselves as practicing Roman Catholics. Twelve respondents (40%) had completed primary education, and 17 respondents (57%) had completed secondary education or above. Almost half of the principal respondents (14) described their current immigration status as undocumented. Respondents were employed in jobs including domestic work, landscaping, factory work, carpentry, retail, and maintenance, among others.

Two- to three-hour semi-structured interviews were conducted by the investigator in Spanish in each of the 30 immigrant households. A comprehensive review of interview records was conducted, and salient issues were identified. Major themes included: motives for emigration and the immigration process; factors relating to immigrants' length of stay and desire to settle in the United States; family relationships and dynamics; religious affiliation and practices; occupational choices and other employment related issues; educational issues; social welfare services; health care; national

origin differences, racism and discrimination; and participants' program and service suggestions.

It appeared that the individual's immigration history - his/her impetus for emigrating, the actual border crossing experience, financing of the trip, and choice and sequencing of destinations - all contributed to the ease and manner with which the immigrant adjusted to her/his new life. Guatemalans and Hondurans more frequently cited economic motivators, whereas Nicaraguans and Salvadorans more often cited political factors.

The majority of respondents had some relative living in the States whose home was their destination. Many of the immigrants' trips were subsidized by family members already residing in the States. Most of the respondents crossed the border by land without legal documentation, and the majority used "coyotes", individuals whom they paid to arrange and guide their passage. Border crossing experiences were harrowing and left an indelible mark on respondents. A lesser number of individuals entered the U.S. with tourist visas and stayed beyond their date of expiration.

Most of the immigrants residing in the United States without legal documentation lived in constant fear of discovery. Raids at workplaces were not uncommon, and the fear of being seized by immigration authorities at any time and being deported was pervasive

and debilitating. This fear had both psychological and physical manifestations. Legalization was a central focus of the majority of the undocumented. Many reported experiences with unscrupulous lawyers who charged excessive fees for routine procedures and misrepresented applicable statutes. Lack of English language facility and the complexity and changing nature of immigration laws and regulations made imperative reliance on expert assistance. The level of difficulty encountered in securing temporary and permanent legal documentation was related to the individual's social class affiliation. The amnesty provisions of the Immigration and Control Act of 1986 provided an avenue for the legalization of some Central American immigrants but were too complex and exacting for others. Many employers were reluctant to assist immigrants with legalization due to their fears of government penalties for having employed them.

Most respondents came with the intention of staying two years or less but tended to alter their initial plans to a longer stay, in many cases, of indefinite duration. The availability of work was an important determinant of decisions to extend length of stay since employment opportunities were scarce in most immigrants' countries of origin. The continuation of civil strife and repression in respondents' homelands and concomitant concerns about personal safety were also

important factors. The majority of respondents mentioned children's education as a key issue affecting their length of stay. A lesser number of respondents were influenced by their desire to help other immigrants.

Most study participants suffered a loss of status as a result of their relocation. Many sent regular remittances to family members left behind. Shared housing among extended family and, in some cases, with unrelated adults, was common, prompted primarily by a need to reduce costs. Many of the interviewees owned homes in their countries of origin and articulated plans to return to them in later years. Women appeared to have a more difficult time adjusting to life in the States, missing their parents and customs of their home countries.

Choice of destination was generally determined by the presence of relatives. It was common for families already in the States to fund the trips of relatives making the journey. Many new arrivals noted changes in the values and behavior of family members who had been residing in the States for some time, and relationships were often strained, particularly when families were living under the same roof. Proximity of relatives eased the adjustment of many immigrants. On the other hand, separation from nuclear family, particularly common among men temporarily residing without their

spouses and children, imposed a serious strain on individuals and impeded their adjustment to life in the States. The family unit was revered, and most leisure time activities were centered around family. Household tasks were frequently shared among family members, including children, with men playing an active role in shopping and cleaning and a lesser role in cooking and washing. Children were the objects of great affection yet, at the same time, were subjected to careful and consistent discipline. U.S. children were regarded by many of the respondents as inadequately disciplined.

The church was relied upon to fulfill not only a spiritual but also a social welfare function. Many respondents reported having shifted their religious affiliation due to social welfare needs that were better provided through a different religious group or due to nonavailability of Spanish language services at their original places of worship. Immigrant volunteers played an active role in church sponsored community services.

The majority of respondents underwent occupational shifts due to relocation. Such shifts were precipitated by absence of work permits, English language deficits, and nontransferability of credentials. Loss of occupational status was accepted by some respondents as a necessary and tolerable consequence of relocation but experienced by others as physically and psychologically debilitating. Immigrants from rural backgrounds tended

to settle in the northern part of the county where large properties provided an abundance of landscaping jobs for which they were better qualified than the jobs available in the urban centers.

Employers tended to capitalize on immigrants' lack of documentation, as evidenced by low pay, often not comparable to that of other workers performing comparable tasks, undesirable work schedules, and lack of benefits. Increased difficulty in securing jobs was encountered as a result of the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 which imposed employer penalties for hiring undocumented workers.

In the area of education, most interviewees rated the educational systems of their home countries as qualitatively comparable or superior to that of the United States. However, the vast majority expressed a desire for their children to take advantage of U.S. schooling because it was universal and free, whereas free schooling in their homelands seldom extended beyond the primary grades. Immigrant children seemed to do well in the schools, developing English language proficiency quickly and accommodating to the differences in customs, teaching methodology, and school climate with relative ease. In a few cases, emotional problems and/or trauma were experienced by children, especially those fearful of separation from parents due to exposure to civil war, violence, or other unsafe conditions.

The rapid influx of Central American immigrant children appeared to pose a substantial challenge for the schools, particularly in terms of availability of bilingual teachers and support staff. Parents' inability to read and communicate in English impeded their involvement in school activities and in contacts with teachers and guidance staff. It also negatively influenced their ability to support and assist children's learning in the home. Fear of disclosure to U.S. immigration authorities affected parents' contacts with the schools, resulting in their sometimes not taking advantage of special services and programs, like school lunches, summer recreation, and student employment or enrichment. With increasing frequency, school systems which included large numbers of immigrant children sought to allay parents' fears and to eliminate requests for forms of documentation not available to nonresidents.

Students seeking access to higher education were deterred by their ineligibility for government loan and grant programs and resident tuition status. Adults seeking to transfer credits from their countries of origin encountered problems due to nonavailability of records and failure of U.S. college administrators to assign the same value to courses taken abroad.

In the realm of social welfare, respondents reported minimal usage of social welfare services,

especially public benefit programs. Lack of information dissemination was identified as a problem impeding immigrants' knowledge of programs and services for which they were eligible and means of accessing them. The notion of organized help-giving and the wide spectrum of social welfare services potentially available to those in need were foreign to most of the immigrants surveyed.

Concern about health care was manifested by a majority of the respondents. Most pervasive was a preoccupation with health care costs, since most interviewees were ineligible for public and private health benefits. Maternal and infant health was an area of considerable importance to many of those surveyed and an area in which some public benefit programs (WIC and PCAP) were available, even to nonresidents. Many of the health problems identified by respondents were attributable either to their change of climate and living conditions, the type of employment they had undertaken, or their separation from family and friends left behind in areas experiencing civil disturbances and/or economic scarcity.

The widespread assumption that all Hispanic subgroups are similar in customs, values, and behavior was challenged by many of the respondents. Interviewees seemed more anxious to distinguish themselves from Caribbean Hispanics (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans and Cubans) than to distinguish themselves from the other

national origin groups within Central and South America. While respondents seemed to associate more often with other immigrants from their own countries of origin, it was unclear whether this was reflective of national origin or social class determinants.

CHAPTER VI.  
DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

Relevance of Conceptual Models

The purpose of this study was to explore the characteristics of Central American immigrants with emphasis on the impetus for their emigration and their experiences in gaining entry and adjusting to life in the United States. In preparation for this research process, the author reviewed a variety of conceptual models of immigrant adjustment. These included:

- (1) De Anda's (1984) refinement of Valentine's bicultural model which emphasizes the process of dual socialization;
- (2) Cox's (1985) process model which details the stages of pre-movement, transition, resettlement, and integration and identifies and considers the variables which affect the immigrant's movement through these stages;
- (3) Stepick's (1983) analytic model in which adaptation is seen as the product of immigrant characteristics, social diversity, and the economic structure of the receiving society;
- (4) Guendelman's (1981) four-staged process model which progresses from arrival to entry and emphasizes emotions characteristic of the immigrant at each stage; and
- (5) Golan and Gruschka's (1971) operational integration-absorption model which describes six potential problem areas - income management, health, housing, education, leisure-time activities, and citizenship, and delineates

the "material-arrangemental" and psychosocial tasks that must be undertaken by the new immigrant and the community in each of these categories.

While each of these models offered some useful insights, the Golan and Gruschka integration-absorption model proved most valuable for the present study in that it was operationally focused and specific, thus facilitating the organization and analysis of data obtained through the interview process. While the present research focused on tasks of the immigrant him/herself and problems encountered in their completion, another important goal of the study was to indicate areas for social welfare policy development. Through the analysis of requisite community tasks and roles, the policy maker/practitioner can derive the blueprints for program planning in the six key problem areas delineated (see Implications and Conclusions sections for such analysis).

#### Immigrant Socialization

The immigrant socialization process has been the object of considerable research. Emphasis has been placed on two themes: 1) the roles played by family, household, kin, ethnic associations, and the labor market; and 2) the degree to which ethnic minorities have been assimilated by or have remained differentiated from the white majority culture. The literature has pursued these themes as manifested in a range of

immigrant groups, but few studies have explored them in reference to exclusively Central American immigrants.

1) Roles in the Socialization Process

Tienda (1980) analyzed the relationship between geographic mobility, kinship ties, and social status among Mexican immigrants. She concluded that familism (the maintenance of kinship ties in the host country) was significant in recruiting immigrants and providing aid and support during their early adjustment but did not affect assimilation into the formal structures of the economy.

Tienda's finding would appear to hold true for the Central American immigrant population in the present study. Reliance on extended family for housing and employment assistance was common but there was no indication that those respondents who did not have family on whom they relied did less well in adapting once they got beyond the initial arrival stage. Family proved to be a dominant theme throughout the interviews, but the emphasis seemed to be more on nuclear than on extended family. Reliance on relatives for assistance and social support was evident in many of the study interviews. Yet immigrants' capacity to adjust to their new lives appeared to be more closely related to bonds within the nuclear family.

Gurak and Kritz's (1984) finding that immigrants who received many kinds of assistance from relatives

tended to be less assimilated (as judged by lesser English language ability, less knowledge of U.S. society, a tendency to have fewer non-Hispanic friends, less intention to remain in the U.S. for extended periods of time, lower occupational status and lower income) did not appear to hold true among the study sample. Rather, prior education, occupation and social class in country of origin seemed to exert a more powerful influence. It should be noted, however, that the few older adults interviewed, who were all residing with extended family, did evidence a lesser degree of assimilation.

Jenkins (1985) focused on the part played by ethnic associations in immigrant socialization, attributing to them the dual role of preserving ethnic identity and promoting acculturation. She also discussed their vital role in social welfare service delivery. Reliance on ethnic associations was not characteristic of the Central American immigrants surveyed in the present study. More common was use of the church to fulfill social welfare, as well as socialization, needs.

This departure from Jenkins' finding may be attributed to the fact that the Central American population tapped in the present study was too recent in its settlement and too tenuous in its status to develop and sustain ethnic organizations. In addition, the existence of Hispanic "umbrella" organizations, which

subsumed the distinct Hispanic national origin groups, may have discouraged the proliferation of ethnic associations. Finally, the primacy of the family unit may have tended to thwart affiliations outside the familial context, and the demands of work and home left little time for non household-based activities.

Over time, as the Central American immigrant community becomes more established, we may well see the birth of ethnic associations akin to those evident among other immigrant groups. Should this movement occur, it could prove advantageous in terms of the development of a political base for this group.

Negative impacts of the immigrant experience, in terms of family and individual well being, are reported in the literature (Cohen, 1979; Grant, 1983) and were corroborated by the study interviews. While Grant's (1983) conclusion that stresses on immigrant families make them more susceptible to instability was not borne out in the present Central American sample, her identification of stressors, particularly economic vulnerability in the U.S. labor market and the disjunction between social status in country of origin and the United States, was very relevant. The latter proved to be a major factor affecting the adjustment of many of the Central American respondents and one meriting further research. Cohen's findings (1979) concerning the close linkage between physical symptoms

and psychological stress were corroborated by interviews from the present study.

## 2) Theories of Immigrant Socialization

Historically, a variety of models has been developed to describe the process through which the nation's majority and minority cultures interrelate. The traditional "melting pot" theory, which posited that immigrant groups would be culturally homogenized, has been rejected in recent years due to evidence of the continued existence of immigrant groups with distinct communal identities.

The cultural pluralism model, discussed by Andrew Gordon (1964), recognized the "preservation of the communal life and significant portions of the culture of the later immigrant groups within the context of American citizenship and political and economic integration into American society" (p. 242).

Distinguishing between cultural and structural assimilation, Gordon suggested that "efforts to force structural assimilation on the immigrant are likely to be both futile and tension producing" (p. 242).

While Gordon's theoretical formulation has merit in relation to the present research, its emphasis on the promotion of cultural assimilation would appear to deny the Central American immigrants' reliance on and need to preserve cultural traditions and mores.

Valentine's bicultural socialization model, as refined

by de Anda (1984), appears more applicable to this study's portrayal of immigrant adjustment in that it recognizes the need of recent Central American immigrants to function in two worlds - that of their own culture and that of the mainstream society.

De Anda linked the viability of the "bicultural experience" with the overlap between the majority and minority cultures under study. Moreover, she suggested that the differential success of distinct ethnic groups, and of individuals within these ethnic groups, may be attributed to the degree of overlap or commonality of norms, values, beliefs, and perceptions. While the Central American immigrants studied seemed to embrace many of the values and customs of their homelands, they also demonstrated a desire and a capacity to conform to many of the values, norms, and goals of the majority society. This congruence would suggest a high degree of biculturalism and an increased ability to meet the behavioral expectations of both cultures.

#### Public Benefit Programs

Immigrants' use of income transfer and other public benefit programs has been an issue of concern to government officials and other policy makers. Blau (1984), Bogen (1987), Massey (1985), North (1983), and Ruggles and Fix (1985) have investigated this issue and report a lower than average rate of usage among recent immigrants. The present Central American study confirms

this finding. Respondents displayed a strong work ethic and a tendency toward self reliance and reliance on family. Since the county social service department did not have service statistics broken down by recipients' national origin nor immigration status, it was not possible to secure statistical corroboration of these observations.

Health care was the one area where there seemed to be strong agreement that the government should provide for those in need and where respondents seemed inclined to avail themselves of any needed benefit programs for which they could qualify. Most interviewees reported that free health care was available in their countries of origin; thus the concept was not foreign to them.

#### Methodological Issues

Several methodological issues merit consideration. In estimating the size, distribution, and composition of the Central American immigrant population in the United States, Ruggles and Fix (1985) relied on key informants, such as religious leaders, social welfare service providers, and representatives of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This approach, while streamlining the collection of data, would appear to be highly impressionistic and imprecise. The low profile maintained by the Central American immigrants surveyed, particularly the undocumented, would seem to render such an approach problematic.

## Differences and Similarities Among Hispanic Subgroups

Aggregation of Central and South American immigrants for research purposes was common in the literature reviewed. In their demographic overview, Jaffe, Cullen and Boswell (1980) acknowledged its limitations. Nonetheless, these authors treated the group as a whole when they concluded that Central and South Americans are more similar in demographic and economic characteristics to the U.S. non-Spanish white population than to any other Spanish subgroup.

### 1) Central Americans and Other Hispanic Subgroups

The present research revealed more similarities than differences among the distinct national origin groups yet significant differences between Central Americans and other Hispanic subgroups. The lack of documented status which characterized the Central Americans in the present study caused them many problems not experienced by representatives of other Hispanic subgroups, most notably Puerto Ricans. This factor, when coupled with the distance separating them from their homelands, was evidenced by their expressing feelings of isolation and entrapment.

Undocumented status also results in Central American immigrants not being eligible for most public benefit programs such as public assistance and medicaid. It means that they cannot vote and are thus largely excluded from the political process. Lack of

familiarity with social institutions, frustration over lack of access to health care and decent housing, and inability to exert political influence seemed to characterize most of the respondents in this study.

Integrity of the family and the preservation of traditional family mores appears to be more valued among Central Americans than other Hispanic subgroups. Similarly, the value placed on education seems to be greater among the Central American immigrant population than among other Hispanic subgroups. However, these differences have not been demonstrated empirically.

In the study sample, only one respondent was a single parent. The prevalence of single parent households would seem to be substantially greater among the other Hispanic subgroups, especially Puerto Ricans, than among Central Americans, but data is not available to support this finding.

## 2) Differences Among Central Americans

Despite the study's finding that there were more similarities than differences among the distinct Central American national origin groups, some differences were noted. Salvadorans, who predominate numerically in the United States, are of mixed social class backgrounds, educational levels, and occupational categories. The lengthy civil war in El Salvador has been a major impetus for emigration. Many young men have left the country to avoid conscription. In addition, families

have fled due to threats to personal safety and political concerns. Many of the Salvadoran respondents interviewed expressed fear about loved ones left behind and mourned the loss or disappearance of family and friends.

During the last decade, Salvadoran immigrants included many professionals and others of middle class backgrounds from urban centers. More recently, however, many poor, uneducated Salvadorans from the rural areas have been arriving in substantial numbers fleeing the perils of war in the countryside and concomitant terrorist activities. Only recently has the U.S. government accorded them temporary protected status and the right to work legally.

Due to its relatively lengthy immigration history and to the size of its immigrant community, the Salvadoran population includes a wider range of ages than do the other Central American groups. Moreover, the Salvadoran community is more organized and has a variety of social clubs and ethnic associations.

The Nicaraguan community is considerably smaller in size. The New York based Nicaraguan community is particularly small since the majority of Nicaraguans reside in Miami. Many Nicaraguan immigrants come from middle class backgrounds and held responsible positions prior to emigration. Like the Salvadorans, they are predominantly European in appearance. Many of the

Nicaraguan immigrants left the country during the Communist regime when their jobs were in jeopardy and their access to goods and services very limited. Largely middle class in their lifestyle, the Nicaraguans interviewed appeared quite at home with U.S. culture and lifestyle. Unlike the Salvadorans, up until recently their employment was facilitated by the U.S. government's policy of granting them work permits, evidence of this country's rejection of the communist regime they left behind.

Guatemalan immigrants appeared to be the most impoverished of the Central American groups studied and the most discriminated against, probably due to their nonwhite, Indian ("indígena") appearance. While representing both urban and rural origins, the Guatemalan immigrants seemed to be from largely humble, laborer backgrounds. Their motivations for leaving were more mixed and included both economic and political factors. Many seemed to be poorly educated and unaccustomed to modern conveniences. Some of the children surveyed had not had access to public education either because of their rural origins or because of the closing of schools due to civil unrest.

The Honduran community in New York is quite small; most Hondurans in the U.S. reside in New Orleans. Since only two Honduran respondents were included in the present study, it is difficult to generalize about their

characteristics. Economic motives seemed to be the stimulant for the emigration of the Hondurans. Because of their black skin color and Negroid features, many Hondurans are mistaken for U.S. born Blacks and are subjected to the same forms of discrimination.

### Implications

#### A Holistic View

Viewed holistically, the immigration experience affects the new entrant in multiple ways. Paramount among these is personal safety. Such concerns generally originate in the individual's country of origin where civil unrest and failing economies pose constant threats to physical and material well-being. Arriving in the States, the Central American immigrants carry with them fears emanating from experiences at home which are fueled by life in the marginal urban neighborhoods where many are forced to settle.

Change and instability become characteristic phenomena to the new immigrant as experienced in housing, employment, and social networks. Fear, vigilance, and confusion are ever present. They manifest themselves in terms of lack of understanding of the complexities of immigration law and perceived threats of disclosure of undocumented status and subsequent deportation. Concerns about personal and family health are constant, and preoccupations with lack of resources to pay for care, however life threatening

the affliction, are commonplace. Heads of households are haunted with fears of loss of employment due to disability or other circumstances; insurance or other compensatory benefits to cover such events is seldom provided by their employers. Knowledge of social welfare institutions is scant, and the concept of organized help giving is inadequately understood.

The majority of Central American immigrants suffer reduction of social and occupational status due to lack of documentation and inability to communicate in English. Social relationships are diminished, and reliance on nuclear family for social support is accentuated. Loss of regular contact with family members left behind weighs heavily on the minds of the new immigrants, especially women who mourn the loss of relationships with their mothers. Family roles and decision making processes are redefined as economic necessity compels women to become employed outside the home, and families struggle to meet their daily needs.

Adults who formerly owned businesses and/or supervised others in their employ become workers, often assuming poorly paid service jobs over which they have little control. The U.S. educational system proves a powerful attraction to most Central American families, and children quickly become caught up in the goals and values of their U.S. counterparts. But many evidence emotional scars from their upheaval and struggle to

adapt to a new social world. Undocumented adolescents often find themselves in educational dead-ends, as they finish high school but cannot go on to higher education due to lack of financial resources and inability to qualify for government grants.

Those developing policy and/or rendering services to the Central American population must recognize the economic, political, and social motives which prompted emigration as well as the impacts of immigration on the individual and the family unit. With this basic understanding in mind, planners and service providers may proceed to consider specific areas of concern in order to identify service delivery issues and formulate change strategies.

#### Legal Status

Integral to understanding the adaptive processes of the Central American immigrant is understanding his/her motives for emigrating and the process by which immigration was achieved. Sensitivity to differences among individuals whose relocation was prompted by one or more of these motives is essential.

Because so large a percentage of Central American immigrants lacks legal documentation and lives with the constant fear of disclosure and the prospect of deportation, providers of service must be attuned to these concerns. They must devise strategies to allay these fears, convey acceptance regardless of legal

status, when such acceptance is feasible, and attend to the long-term psychological effects of these fears.

Policy makers and planners must engage in regular review of program and service eligibility standards to assess the feasibility and desirability of broadening requirements to meet the needs of new immigrants. Leaders in the fields of health care and public education have already demonstrated the benefits of such efforts.

#### Hispanic Subgroups

In recent years, the Hispanic population of the United States has increased significantly. Census figures and other statistical sources report dramatic changes in the nation's racial and ethnic composition. Such reports show the Hispanic population as an aggregate group, seldom if ever broken down into its subgroups. While the aggregation of Hispanic subgroups is valuable in terms of politics and public policy development, it also renders a disservice to the component groups whose backgrounds, characteristics, and needs are quite diverse.

Those engaged in policy formulation, program planning, and service delivery, particularly in geographic areas of high Hispanic population, should undertake to educate themselves and the communities they serve about these differences and should be mindful of

them as they carry out their professional responsibilities.

### Social Class

Just as the professional community must be attuned to Hispanic subgroup differences, so too must it be aware of social class differences and their impact on immigrants' behavior. Recent Central American immigrants are not a homogeneous group. The conditions which motivated their emigration vary, as do the lives they led in their countries of origin.

Many of the individuals who fled conditions of violence and civil war are well educated, held responsible jobs, owned homes, and were leading comfortable lives prior to their departures. The vast majority of these individuals have not been able to establish comparable lifestyles in the United States, but rather have had to accept substandard, crowded housing and menial jobs. Nonetheless, they continue to perceive themselves as different from other Central Americans of more humble origins. These differences should be recognized by providers of service.

### Employment

In terms of occupation, most Central American immigrants are currently employed in blue collar positions. Yet for many, these jobs represent shifts based solely on practicality and basic needs of survival. Immigrants' redeployment in positions of

lesser responsibility and interest and greater physical demands frequently has serious consequences for their physical and mental health.

Government officials, policy analysts, and individuals in the social welfare professions may respond to this situation on several levels. First, business and labor market analysts should assess the feasibility of capitalizing on the underutilized skills and expertise of the new Central American immigrants. As the U.S. population ages and the eligible labor pool diminishes, it will be necessary to draw more heavily from our nation's minority population. The lifting of restrictions preventing immigrants' access to jobs in business and industry should be seriously considered. Second, physical and mental health care providers should be sensitized to the employment issues affecting new immigrants so that they may be responsive to their needs and cognizant of sometimes unarticulated concerns.

#### The Educational System

The educational system has, for some time, been aware of the growing Hispanic student body and its diverse needs. In 1990, Yonkers, the largest city within the geographic area of the present study, reported a school enrollment of 24,000 Hispanic children, roughly equivalent to the entire population of the city of Port Chester, another Westchester city (McWhirter, p. 1). Port Chester reported 1,026 students

with Hispanic surnames, or 38.2 percent of the district's total enrollment during the same period (Hearth, p. 27). These statistics make it incumbent upon the affected districts to make educational programs and services accessible and appropriate to the needs of Hispanic families.

In working with children, educators should be mindful of not only the language, cultural, and, possibly, learning deficits of Hispanic immigrant youngsters, but also their emotional needs. Frequently, because children so quickly master the language and routines of the classroom, their psychological needs are overlooked. Teaching and school support personnel must be familiarized with the unique backgrounds of Central American immigrant children and the potential manifestations of the traumas they have shared with their families and loved ones. Issues of separation and school adjustment must be addressed with sensitivity and respect for the profound and rapid changes which have taken place in the lives of these youngsters. Organizations with special expertise, such as the National Coalition of Advocates for Students Immigrant Student Project, which has published several books (NCAS, 1988) and established an ongoing newsletter, can be helpful in suggesting strategies to address such issues.

Critical Steps for Educators

Other critical steps school systems and educators must take include: ensuring the availability of correspondence with parents in Spanish as well as English; undertaking active campaigns and creative approaches to retain bilingual teachers and professional support staff; affirming and reinforcing the value of Spanish language retention and use within the home; facilitating partnerships between parents and children to promote parents' involvement in, rather than alienation from, the educational process; providing after-school and summer programs for "turn-key" children who are confined to small apartments in marginal neighborhoods with no intellectual or social stimulation when school is not in session; and, finally, adjusting documentation/eligibility requirements for school entrance and special programs to alleviate parents' fear of disclosure of undocumented status.

#### Adult Education/Higher Education

For adults, the educational system can be responsive in a number of ways. Localities with burgeoning Hispanic populations should make provision for greater availability of English language classes throughout the year (including summers) at accessible locations and at convenient times of the day. The involvement of representatives of the immigrant community in the planning of courses might well strengthen program design and execution.

In the realm of higher education, educational administrators must improve the processes by which course work and related credentials of immigrant applicants are evaluated. Special arrangements must be made for applicants from war ravaged countries whose records may be unobtainable so that they may be spared the expense and inconvenience of repeating previously completed work.

In addition, tuition standards and financial aid requirements which exclude the undocumented student must be reevaluated. Since the right to public education has already been affirmed through action of the U.S. Supreme Court, should this not signal a need to review access to higher education? Is it in the best interest of our country to graduate immigrant children from U.S. high schools and then bar them from university studies? If, in fact, a goal of our educational and social welfare institutions is to strengthen staff diversity and expand the pool of eligible Spanish speaking applicants, then we must be attentive to barriers which discourage access to higher education and professional credentialing.

#### Social Welfare

Social welfare institutions must also be responsive to the needs of Central American immigrants. In order to guarantee that the rights of prospective immigrant clients are upheld, administrators of public

social welfare programs should seek to provide accurate and up-to-date information regarding eligibility requirements, periodically reviewing federal and state governments' interpretations and modifications of policies and regulations affecting Central American immigrants, availing themselves of training and technical updates on these matters, and ensuring that personnel at the local office level are in receipt of appropriate, usable information.

#### Community Organization

Hispanic "umbrella" organizations seem to have had limited success in meeting the needs of newly arrived Central American immigrants. Churches and church sponsored community centers seem to have done better. Established social welfare programs seeking to extend or strengthen services to new Hispanic immigrants should use churches with active Hispanic followings as a vehicle to disseminate information about their offerings and solicit assistance in gaining the confidence of prospective immigrant clients. Refugee organizations, such as CARECEN, Central American Refugee Center in Hempstead, New York, which specializes in immigration and other areas of legal advocacy, and CRECEN, which sponsors the Oscar Romero Wholistic Health Care Center, a Long Island based health promotion and advocacy program serving Central Americans, have demonstrated the viability of community based organizations structured to

cultivate refugee leadership and staff participation and focused on meeting diverse refugee needs. Other communities would do well to consider this service delivery model.

### Health Care

Access to health care, an issue of national concern and one which cuts across all racial and ethnic groups, was perceived by the Central Americans in the present study as one of the most difficult problems they faced. While recommendations regarding resolution of the national health care crisis are beyond the scope of this research, several suggestions may be offered in relation to its impact on recent Central American immigrants. First, it is not cost effective to exclude this group from benefits available to needy U.S. residents. If maternal and infant health care services, as well as general preventive services, are not accessible to those in need, regardless of national origin or legal status, their medical problems will be exacerbated, and the consequences will be felt in hospital emergency rooms and in centers for treatment of acute medical problems.

Advocates for new immigrants should promote information dissemination to ensure that Central American immigrants are aware of those government supported health programs that are sanctioned to provide services to eligible individuals, irregardless of legal residency status. For example, the PCAP program,

through which prenatal care, delivery, and postpartum care are provided, was known to only a small proportion of those surveyed in the present study. Moreover, it is incumbent on those committed to serving the immigrant community to lobby for inclusion of the undocumented in newly authorized government health programs, such as the recently approved legislation in New York State which will provide a range of health services to indigent children. It should also be the goal of such advocates to put pressure on hospitals and neighborhood clinics to offer free care to those with pressing needs and/or to establish reduced and extended payment plans which make care more accessible to Hispanic immigrant families.

In providing health services to recent Central American immigrants, providers should adopt a holistic approach, recognizing the integral connection between physical and mental health and the potential health-related consequences of war, violence, and repression. The impact of relocation, often involving separation from family members, the cumulative effects of inadequate health care, and the stresses inherent in "illegal alien" status must also be considered. Climatic, dietary, and occupational changes may also precipitate health problems, and health providers should be attuned to symptomatology in these areas.

## Conclusion

This study has detailed the demographic characteristics of a sample of recent Central American immigrants residing in the New York area. It has described how immigration to the United States has affected their social and cultural worlds. Through the use of qualitative data gathered from ethnographic interviews conducted in immigrant households and meetings with service providers, it has chronicled immigrants' experiences with social, economic, and educational institutions. New and changed attitudes, patterns of behavior, and dynamics of family functioning have been described and analyzed in terms of their role in assisting or impeding immigrant adjustment.

### Settlement, Adjustment, and Assimilation in Context

In the introduction to a report on their study of Hispanic immigrants in New York, Gurak and Rogler introduce the concepts of settlement, assimilation, and adjustment. They define settlement as "the process by which one's lifestyle and attitudes change so that the probability of long-term residence increases significantly"; assimilation as "major changes in the lifestyles and daily interactions of immigrants"; and adjustment as "learning how to utilize institutions necessary to the maintenance of an accepted way of living" (1980b, p. 6).

### Adjustment

In the present study, the concept of adjustment was explored as evidenced by respondents' use of educational, occupational, health related, religious, and social welfare institutions. The majority of respondents demonstrated knowledge of diverse institutions and a capacity to access those which they most needed, particularly in the areas of education, employment, and the practice of religion. Health related and social welfare institutions were less adequately understood and utilized, due, in part, to financial and eligibility restrictions which inhibited immigrants' access, and, due, to a lesser extent, to lack of information concerning their utilization.

### Assimilation

Assimilation proved more difficult to assess due to the exploratory nature of the study and its small sample size. Commonly used indicators of assimilation, such as outgroup marriage, which is reportedly high among Central and South American immigrants, could not be measured through the present research. In addition, since the respondents were all first generation immigrants, exploration of the concept was not possible.

In the present study, social class variations were in evidence among the immigrant population and seemed to affect diverse aspects of individual and family adjustment. It may be postulated that among new

immigrants, social class exerts a strong influence on outgroup marriage, with higher social class correlating with a higher rate of outgroup marriage. Future research focusing on second generation Central American immigrants would have merit in this regard.

### Settlement

The settlement process was amply documented through exploration of respondents': attitudes and behavior within the household, maintenance and use of kinship ties, pursuit of matters related to their immigration status, employment choices and experiences, learning of the English language, acquisition of housing and related furnishings, and accessing of health and educational resources. On many levels, lifestyle and attitudes appeared relatively unaltered. Many of the adult respondents spoke little English; the family unit was the focal point for socialization; and attitudes toward family integrity, children's comportment, work, and use of leisure time seemed much like those with which immigrants arrived. On the other hand, immigrants admitted to becoming accustomed to the material possessions which were so much easier to acquire in their new place of residence, and also affirmed a commitment to their children's completion of schooling in the United States. In these respects, the settlement process seemed to have taken hold. Coupled with continuing reports of unrest and failing economies

in their homelands, respondents seemed, for the most part, committed to further adjustment, some with the articulated goal of settlement, yet the majority with a steadfast resolution to return home when conditions changed. When, and if, this will occur remains to be seen.

### Future Directions

As they tell their stories, Central American immigrants articulate common human needs. The social welfare profession has from its inception committed itself to assisting in the attainment of these basic needs. As poverty and discrimination become more endemic in the United States, it becomes easier to overlook the plight of particular oppressed groups. The Central American immigrant community has increased dramatically in numbers in recent years but, to date, has not received the public attention and help which it requires. Merged with all of the other groups which comprise the U.S. Hispanic population, Central Americans have lost their individual identity, and the professional helping community has, to a large extent, overlooked their unique social history and resultant needs.

A number of service delivery models exist which have proven effective in serving this community, and others are suggested by defined needs. In the area of housing, self-help programs which capitalize on

manual skills and human labor and lead to subsequent ownership should be studied and replicated. The SWAP program in Yonkers, NY, exemplifies this model. Large rental units, suitable for multiple families, should be offered to meet the needs of extended families who choose to live communally. Rental housing stock available to recent immigrants has consisted primarily of small units, leading to crowding, unsafe conditions, and dissatisfaction on the part of landlords, public officials, and tenants.

The community center concept, while certainly not a new one, merits attention as a means of assisting new immigrants. Some neighborhood churches are already addressing some of the needs to which such centers can respond. The Episcopal church group included in the present study has taken this approach. Social welfare professionals should play a part in providing encouragement and expertise to clergy with large Central American congregations. They should assist religious leaders who are willing to use church space and resources for programs such as child care, English language classes, basic education, vocational training, recreation, and information and referral assistance.

Community organizations dedicated to serving Central American immigrants can provide vitally needed services, particularly in the specialized and critical area of immigration counseling. CARECEN, the Long

Island based organization included in the present study, has a large and growing constituency. Its administrators, while predominantly of Anglo origin, have demonstrated a commitment to identifying and training indigenous leadership. This model bears replication in other geographic areas with large Central American communities.

Special programs which attempt to reduce the obstacles impeding immigrants' use of available social services are desirable. The "minority outreach team" concept implemented by Westchester Association for Retarded Citizens exemplifies this approach. Spanish language fluency and an understanding of the immigrant experience are essential prerequisites for extending outreach services to recently arrived Central Americans.

Advocacy is critical if the needs of the Central American community are to be met. Goals of advocacy efforts should be to reduce discrimination, bridge the language gap, prevent exploitation, increase educational and employment opportunities, make health care services more available, and promote public education concerning the characteristics, strengths and needs of the Central American immigrant community. Limited English language facility and fear of deportation mitigate against recent immigrants' serving as their own advocates.

Postscript

In the present study, at the end of each interview, respondents were asked if they had any questions or reactions. Most respondents responded negatively. However, one interviewee commented that "people's interest is so often superficial" and inquired as to how the study would be used. The researcher hopes that the findings and recommendations contained within this report will contribute to public recognition of the plight of Central American refugees and a commitment on the part of the social welfare profession to work toward the amelioration of their quality of life.

A Salvadoran interviewee, who assisted the investigator by reviewing the Spanish translation of the study questionnaire, wrote in his letter accompanying the revision: "I wish to tell you that having permitted me to contribute a little grain of sand to your work is an enormous satisfaction since I understand that through your study, you are contributing in a very positive manner to the problem of the relations of the Hispanic community in its interaction with Anglo society which, naturally, is very important to all of us" (respondent's unpublished letter). May his words of encouragement prove true!

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH VERSION)

Hello. My name is Judy Brown and my companion is \_\_\_\_\_ . I believe that we spoke by phone the other day. Is that right? As I mentioned previously, I am a student at the City University of New York. As part of my studies, I am trying to learn more about Central American immigrant families living in Westchester. I think that knowing about immigrant families can be very beneficial and important for this country in that it can give us a better knowledge of the experiences and reactions that you have had in the process of adapting to our country. This can help us in the sense of giving us a better understanding of your needs so that we may be more helpful to you.

The information that we obtain from you is very important for the reasons I already mentioned. Yet I am very concerned about protecting your privacy. For this reason, the names, addresses, places of work and other personal information you share with me will be changed in my report. In this way, those who review my study will not be able to identify any family in specific. If you have any doubt or do not understand something, please tell me, and if there is any question that you don't feel comfortable answering, please tell me that too. How does that seem to you? Do you have any questions? Can we begin?

Number\_\_\_\_\_

I would like to begin asking you some questions about yourself.

1. What is your country of origin (place of birth)?
2. Where were you living before you came to the United States (state, region, or city)?
3. Can you describe it to me?
4. When did you come to the United States?

I understand that the following questions may make you feel a little uncomfortable. Please remember that this information is strictly confidential. My main interest is in knowing how many people have the same problems, not in knowing who these people are.

5. When you emigrated to the United States, how did you come and with whom?
6. What type of documentation did you use?
7. What is your current situation in terms of immigration status?
8. Is this a problem for you?
9. What motivated you to leave your country of origin and come to the United States?
10. How did you arrive at the decision to come to the United States?

11. When you arrived were relatives or friends expecting you?
12. (If yes) Have these friends or relatives helped you to establish yourself here in the States?
13. What kind of help did they give you?
14. During your first six months here, with whom were you living?
15. Since you arrived, have other members of your family come to the States?
16. Have you helped relatives or any other person come to the United States?
17. Do you have any relatives who don't live with you but live nearby?
18. Do you have any relatives who live in the States outside of New York State?
19. Have you visited them?
20. How old are you?
21. What is your religion? Are you an active member of any church? If so, in what activities do you participate?
22. What was the highest grade in school that you completed?
23. Are you married?
24. Are you working outside of your home?
25. What do you do?
26. Is this the same kind of work you did in your country of origin?

27. Do you feel that your salary is fair?
28. How are you doing in learning English?
29. Is there any member of your immediate family who doesn't live with you?
30. Where does (s)he live?
31. Who are the people who live in your house (name, sex, age, relationship)? When did they arrive in the U.S.? What do they do? Do they speak English?

I'd like to ask you about your adjustment to life in the States.

32. How would you compare your life right now with your life before coming to the States in terms of:

Work:

Money:

Housing:

Style of living:

Relations among family members:

Family's health:

The influence of society on your children:

Personal and family safety:

33. What aspect of your life here do you like most?
34. What aspect of life here has caused you the most problems?
35. Taking into consideration your present family situation, in terms of opportunities for work,

housing, and life in general, do you think that you are living better in the U.S. than in your home country?

36. When you first came to the States, how long were you planning to stay?
37. Have you changed your plans?
38. (If plans have changed) Why? What are the most important factors?
39. Are you thinking of staying in this country?

Now I would like to ask you about you family life. I am interested in knowing a little about how you make decisions in your family.

40. How do you make decisions about:

Children's education:

Expenditures:

How to use free time:

Housing:

Health:

41. Regarding the way you and your spouse divide responsibilities in the house, in what sense is it the same or different than the way you did it before you came to the U.S.?
42. Regarding your friendships, with whom do you spend your free time (relatives, friends you made here, people from your own country, Hispanics of other national origins)?

For the last part of the interview, I would like to ask you some questions about the experiences you have had with schools, hospitals and community services.

43. Do you have children matriculated in the local schools?
44. Are they in public or private (Catholic) schools?
45. Do the programs of the schools meet your children's needs in terms of appropriate level, teaching of English, adjustment to North American culture, bilingual personnel?
46. On any occasion, have you used the services of a hospital or clinic? Which ones and for what purpose?
47. How would you evaluate the service you received and the way you were treated?
48. Do you think they treated you differently because you were Hispanic or did not speak English?
49. In the community, there are agencies that offer programs of recreation, infant and child nutrition, help with immigration problems, English classes, psychiatric problems, and other things. Have you had contact with any of these programs?
50. How did you know about these services?
51. When you need information about something - medical, transportation, where to go to buy something you need, housing, or something else, where do you obtain this information?

52. Do you think that there are any special services or programs that should be offered to families like your own?

53. Do you have any question to ask me or any comment about any of the things we've talked about during the interview?

Thank you very much for your help and cooperation. If possible, I would like to review with you the results of my study when I finish all the interviews. Would you like me to send you a summary report? Good, I'll send it to you.

Items to be noted by the interviewer:

Date:

Time of day:      Duration:

Place where interview conducted:

Language in which interview conducted:

(If interview conducted at respondent's home) Housing:

Private home:      Apartment in a house:

Condition of the dwelling:

Description of the furnishings:

Description of the neighborhood:

General attitude of the respondent toward the interview:

Understanding of the questions (note any particular problems):

Interviewer(s):

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE (SPANISH VERSION)

Hóla, mi nombre es Judy Brown y mi companera es \_\_\_\_\_ . Creo que hablamos por teléfono el otro día. Es correcto? Como le mencioné anteriormente, yo soy estudiante de la Universidad de la ciudad de Nueva York. Como parte de mis estudios, estoy tratando de aprender mas sobre las familias inmigrantes de Centro América que viven en la localidad de Westchester. Creo que el aprender sobre las familias inmigrantes puede ser muy beneficiosal e importante para nuestro país ya que esto puede darnos un mejor conocimiento de las experiencias y reacciones que ustedes han tenido en el proceso de adaptación a nuestro país. Esto puede beneficiarnos en el sentido de tener un mejor entendimiento de sus necesidades para poder asistirlos mejor.

La información que nosotros obtendremos de ustedes es bien importante por las razones mencionados anteriormente. Siempre estaré muy pendiente en proteger su privacidad; por esta razón los nombres, direcciones, lugares de trabajo, y otras identificaciones personales que me de serán alteradas en mi reporte. De esta manera los que revisan mi estudio no podran identificar ninguna familia especificamente. Si usted tiene alguna duda o no entiende algo, por favor dígame, y si hay alguna pregunta que usted no se sienta comodo contestar, por favor me lo dice. Que le parece? Tiene alguna pregunta? Podemos comenzar?

Numero \_\_\_\_\_

Me gustaría comenzar haciendole algunas preguntas acerca de usted.

1. Cual es su país de origen? (Lugar de nacimiento)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. (Si no nació en los Estados Unidos) Como se llama el sitio donde vivia antes de venir a los Estados Unidos?

(Estado, departamento o ciudad).

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Yo no estoy familiarizado con ese lugar. Podría usted describirlo?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Cuando llegó usted a los Estados Unidos?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Yo entiendo que las siguientes preguntas quizá le incomoden un poco. Pero, por favor acuerdese que esta información es estrictamente confidencial. Mi mayor interes es saber cuantas personas tienen los mismos problemas, no en saber quienes son estas personas.

5. Cuando usted emigró a los Estados Unidos, cómo y con quién vino?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Que tipo de documentación utilizó usted?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Cuál es su situación actual en cuanto a Migración?

---

---

---

8. Representa algún problema para usted?

---

---

---

9. Que le motivó a usted a dejar su país y venir a los Estados Unidos?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

10. Como llegó usted a la decisión de venir a los Estados Unidos?

---

---

---

11. Cuando usted vino, lo estaban esperando familiares o amigos?

---

---

12. (Si afirmativa) Estos familiares le han ayudado a establecerse aquí?

---

13. Cuál tipo de ayuda le ofrecieron?

---

---

---

14. Durante los primeros seis meses aquí, con quién vivió usted?

---

---

---

15. Después que usted vino, han venido otros miembros de su familia a los Estados Unidos?

---

---

---

16. Ayudó usted a sus familiares u a alguna otra persona a venir a los Estados Unidos?

---

---

---

---

17. Tiene usted algún familiar que no vive con usted pero vive cerca?

---

---

---

18. Tiene usted parientes que viven en los Estados Unidos fuera del estado de Nueva York?

---

19. Los ha visitado?

---

21. Que edad tiene?

---

22. Cuál es su religión? Es usted miembro activo de alguna iglesia? Si lo es: En cuáles actividades participa?

---

---

23. Cual fué el ultimo grado escolar que hizo?

---

24. Está casado? \_\_\_\_\_

25. Está trabajando fuera de su casa? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Que es lo que hace?

---

27. Es la misma clase de trabajo que usted hacía en su país?

---

28. Cree usted que su salario es justo?

---

29. Como va usted con el aprendizaje del inglés?

---

---

30. Hay algún miembro de su familia inmediata que no vive con usted?

---

---

31. Dónde vive?

---

32. Quiénes son las personas que viven en su casa ?  
(nombre, sexo, edad, relación) Cuando llegaron a los  
Estados Unidos? Que hacen? Apendizaje del inglés?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Me gustaría preguntarle mas sobre su ajustamiento a los  
Estados Unidos.

33. Cómo compararía usted su vida actual y su vida  
antes de venir a Los Estados Unidos en términos de:

trabajo: \_\_\_\_\_

---

dinero: \_\_\_\_\_

---

escuela para los hijos: \_\_\_\_\_

---

vivienda: \_\_\_\_\_

---

el modo de vivir: \_\_\_\_\_

---

relaciones entre los familiares: \_\_\_\_\_

---

la salud de su familia: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

la influencia de la sociedad en los hijos:

---

---

---

seguridad personal y de la familia: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

34. Cuál aspecto de su vida le gusta mas aquí?

---

---

35. Cuál aspecto de su vida le causa mas problemas aqui?

---

---

36. Tomando en consideración su situación familiar actual, en términos de oportunidades de trabajo, condiciones de vivienda y todo, se considera que usted vive mejor en los Estados Unidos que en su país?

---

---

---

---

---

37. Que tiempo planeaba quedarse en los Estados Unidos cuando usted vino a los Estados Unidos?

---

38. Ha cambiado su plan?

---

39. (Si su intención ha cambiado) Por qué ha cambiado? Cuáles son los factores mas importantes?

---

---

---

---

40. Piensa quedarse en este país?

---

---

---

---

Ahora me gustaría preguntarle sobre la vida de su familia. Estoy interesada en saber un poco sobre como se hacen las decisiones en su familia.

41. Como se hacen las decisiones sobre:

la educación de los niños: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

gastos: \_\_\_\_\_

---

como se utilizan el tiempo libre: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

vivienda: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

la salud: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

42. En cuanto a la manera en que usted y su compañero (esposa) se dividen las responsabilidades de la casa, en que sentido es igual o diferente a como lo hacían cuando vivían en su país?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

43. En cuanto a sus amistades, con quién pasan ustedes su tiempo libre (familiares, amigos conocidos aquí, paisanos, hispanos de otras nacionalidades)?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Para la ultima parte de la entrevista, me gustaría hacerle algunas preguntas relacionadas con las experiencias que han tenido con escuelas, hospitales y servicios de la comunidad.

44. Tiene usted hijos matriculados en las escuelas locales?

\_\_\_\_\_

45. Están en escuelas públicas o privadas (católicas)?

\_\_\_\_\_

46. Los programas de las escuelas, reúnen las necesidades de sus hijos (nivel apropiado, enseñanza del inglés, ajustamiento a la cultura norteamericana, personal bilingüe)?

\_\_\_\_\_

47. En alguna ocasión, ha utilizado los servicios de algún hospital o clínica? \_\_\_\_\_ Cuáles y para qué?

---

---

---

48. Como podría evaluar los servicios que recibió y la manera en que se le trató?

---

---

49. Cree usted que le trataban en una manera diferente por ser hispano o no saber el idioma?

---

---

50. En la comunidad hay agencias que ofrecen programas de recreo, alimentación de niños, ayuda en problemas de inmigración, clases de inglés, problemas psiquiátricos y otras cosas. Ha tenido usted contacto con alguno de estos programas?

---

---

---

---

---

51. Como supo usted de estos servicios?

---

---

52. Cuando usted necesita información referente a algo médico, de transporte, donde ir a hacer compras, la vivienda o cualquier otra cosa, como obtiene esa información?

---

---

53. Cree usted que hay algunos servicios o programas que deberian ser ofrecidos para ayudar a las familias como la suya?

---



---

54. Tiene usted alguna pregunta que hacerme o algún comentario sobre alguno de los aspectos? \_\_\_\_\_

---

Muchas gracias por su ayuda y cooperación. Si es posible, me gustaría revisar con usted los resultados cuando termine con todas las entrevistas. Si usted quiere, le mandare un resumen del reporte.

Items to be noted by interviewer:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time of day: \_\_\_\_\_

Duration: \_\_\_\_\_

Place interview conducted: \_\_\_\_\_

Interview conducted in: English \_\_\_\_\_

Spanish \_\_\_\_\_

Housing (if interview at respondent's home)

Private house \_\_\_ Apartment in house \_\_\_\_\_

Apartment building \_\_\_\_\_

Condition of respondent's dwelling \_\_\_\_\_

Description of furnishings \_\_\_\_\_

Description of neighborhood \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent's overall attitude toward the interview:

---

Respondent's comprehension of questions; note particular problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer(s) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B  
PLAN OF STUDY

**Central American Immigrants in Westchester  
Plan of Study**

Since the late 1970's, large numbers of Central Americans have been coming to the United States fleeing conditions of war, political unrest, and economic hardship. It is estimated that several hundred thousand have entered the United States without documentation or have entered legally but stayed beyond the period specified at the time of their legal entry. Overall, there are thought to be about one million Central American migrants currently living in the U.S., the majority of whom are undocumented.

Central Americans have settled primarily in urban centers with large Hispanic populations. Forty percent reside in Los Angeles and the remainder are located primarily in San Francisco, Texas, Washington, D.C. and New York City and its environs.

Using Westchester County as its focus, this small exploratory research study will respond to the need to learn more about the characteristics of Central American immigrants. Westchester County has the highest proportion of Hispanics in New York State outside of New York City as well as one of the highest proportions of non-Puerto Rican Hispanics. This study is considered important because of this population's rapid and continued growth within the County, as well as its potential and actual impact on social and economic institutions.

Human service workers are increasingly coming into contact with Hispanic clients in school, hospital, social agency, employment, and other settings. Their ability to adequately assess needs, discern differences between sub-groups within the overall Hispanic population, display sensitivity to cultural differences, and provide appropriate services is linked to their familiarity with this population.

The researcher is a student in the Doctoral Program in Social Welfare of the City University of New York. Formerly the director of My Sisters' Place, a shelter from domestic violence in Yonkers, she currently teaches social work at the College of New Rochelle and coordinates field placements for social work students. Having lived and studied in Central and South America, she is fluent in Spanish. Two bilingual students are assisting in the interview process.

Thirty interviews will be conducted with first generation Central American immigrants in Westchester. Only individuals residing with family members will be included since the interview includes discussion of family roles and interactions. An attempt will be made to achieve diversity of social class, length of time in U.S., age, marital status, household composition, work history, country of origin, urban versus rural roots, and documented versus undocumented status. Only individuals who emigrated to the U.S. since 1980 will be included. Central America will be defined as including: Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama.

In addition to the immigrant interviews, the researcher will conduct up to ten interviews with representatives of groups working with Central American immigrants, such as church leaders, school personnel, and staff of community service agencies.

The immigrant interviews will be conducted at locations selected by the interviewee (ie. respondent's home or office setting). Twenty dollar stipends will be awarded to interviewees to encourage participation and to compensate them for their time and effort. It is anticipated that each interview will take about one and a half hours. Interview questions will include demographic information about the respondent and her/his family, lifestyle prior to emigrating, decision to emigrate and process of immigration, kinship assistance, employment history, family roles and relationships, issues in adjusting to life in the United States, satisfaction with quality of life, interest in returning to country of origin, contacts with schools, hospital, and other community agencies, and problems or concerns.

Great care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the respondents and to protect them against any negative consequences resulting from participation. In writing up the study report, respondents' names will not be used and details of their lives, such as city of residence, ages of children, places of employment, and other details will be changed to prevent readers from identifying the families interviewed. In this way, those who read the study will get a sense of the kinds of families who live in our county, their backgrounds and needs without getting information about any specific family. It is recognized that fear of disclosure of their undocumented status may affect individuals' willingness to participate and/or to answer certain questions within the interview. To the extent possible, efforts will be made to provide reassurance and to promote maximum participation.

The interviews will be carried out during the period June through September 1990. A summary report of the findings will be prepared for dissemination to participants and other interested individuals.

Judith Brown  
June 1990

APPENDIX C  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWS  
(ENGLISH VERSION)

My name is Judy Brown and mi companion's name is Migdalia Soto. I am a student at the City University of New York as well as a social worker. As part of my studies, I am trying to learn more about Central American immigrant families living in Westchester County. I believe that learning about these families is very important and can be very beneficial. Such learning can give us more knowledge and a better understanding of the experiences and reactions you have had in the process of leaving your homelands and adjusting to life in the United States. Moreover, it can give us a better idea of what you need (in areas such as employment, education, immigration, housing, and health services) so that we may be more helpful to you.

In order to collect this information, we are planning to interview individuals from Central America. The interview lasts more or less an hour and a half and can be arranged in your home, in a community office, or at whatever other site that's convenient for you. Participants will receive twenty dollars for their help. The interview will be conducted in Spanish; you don't have to understand or speak English to participate.

The information that we obtain from you is very important to us for the reasons I already mentioned. But we are very anxious to protect your privacy and not cause you or your family any danger or inconvenience. Therefore, all names, addresses, places of work, ages of your children, and other personal information that you give us will be changed in my report. In this way, those who read my study will not be able to identify any specific family. If you have any doubts or don't understand something, you will have the chance to tell me. Also, you don't have to answer any question that makes you uncomfortable.

If you're interested in participating or know someone who could participate, please call Mrs. Brown at \_\_\_\_\_ or speak with the person who gave you this information sheet.

APPENDIX C  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWS  
(SPANISH VERSION)

Información Sobre Las Entrevistas

Mi nombre es Judy Brown y mi compañera de trabajo es Migdalia Soto. Yo soy estudiante de la universidad de Nueva York y además una trabajadora social. Como parte de mis estudios, estoy tratando de aprender más sobre las familias inmigrantes de Centro América que viven en la localidad de Westchester. Creo que el aprender sobre las familias inmigrantes puede ser muy beneficioso e importante. Esto puede darnos un mejor conocimiento y entendimiento de las experiencias y reacciones que ustedes han tenido en el proceso de dejar su país de nacimiento y acostumbrarse a la vida en los Estados Unidos. Además nos dará una mejor idea de lo que les hace falta (en los áreas de empleo, educación, inmigración, alojamiento, y servicios de salud) para que podamos ayudarlos más.

Para recoger esta información pensamos entrevistar a personas de origen centroamericano. La entrevista dura más o menos una hora y media y la haremos en su casa, en una oficina en la comunidad o en cualquier otro sitio que le convenga. Los participantes recibirán veinte dólares por su ayuda. La entrevista la haremos en español; no hay que entender o hablar inglés para participar.

La información que nosotros obtendríamos de usted es muy importante por las razones mencionadas anteriormente. Pero siempre estamos muy pendientes de proteger su privacidad y no causar ningún peligro o molestia a usted y su familia. Por esta razón, los nombres, direcciones, lugares de trabajo, edades de los hijos y otras identificaciones personales que nos da serán alteradas en mi reporte. De esta manera los que revisen mi estudio no podrán identificar ninguna familia en particular. Si usted tiene alguna duda o no entiende algo, tendrá la oportunidad de decirlo. Además, no tendrá que contestar a ninguna pregunta que lo haga sentir incomodo.

Si usted tiene interés en participar o conoce a alguien que pueda participar, por favor llame a la Sra. Brown en el número \_\_\_\_\_ o hable con la persona que le dió este papel de información.

## APPENDIX D

## LIST OF PROVIDERS OF SERVICE INTERVIEWED

1. Catholic priest
2. Episcopal priest
3. Salvadoran volunteer staffing church-sponsored community office
4. Coordinator of local Women and Infant Care (WIC) program
5. Eligibility supervisor for district office of county department of social services
6. Immigration specialist for county Hispanic organization
7. Executive director of another county Hispanic organization
8. Nurse-practitioner at neighborhood family practice clinic
9. Director of social services at a local hospital
10. Coordinator of bilingual services for a local school system
11. Development director for a large Central American organization in a near-by county

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguayo, S. & Fagen, P.W. (1988). Central Americans in Mexico and the United States. Georgetown: Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Affairs.
- Aguirre, A. Jr. (1982). The political economy context of language in social service delivery for Hispanics. In W.A. Van Horne (Ed.). Ethnicity and public policy. Madison: University of Wisconsin System.
- Alvarez, D. (1981). Socioeconomic patterns and diversity among Hispanics. Research Bulletin, 4(2-3). New York: Hispanic Research Center.
- American Council for Nationalities Service (1986). Central American aliens' eligibility for public assistance programs studied. Refugee Reports, 12(3). Washington, D.C: Author.
- Angel, R.J. & Tienda, M. (1982). Determinants of extended household structure: Cultural patterns or economic need? American Journal of Sociology, 87(6), 1360-1383.
- Archdiocese of New York (1982). Hispanics in New York: Religious, cultural and social experiences (Vol. 2). New York: Author.
- Bach, R.L. (1983). Emigration from the Spanish-Speaking Caribbean. In M.M. Kritz. U.S. immigration and refugee policy (pp. 133-153). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books D.C. Heath.
- Bach, R.L. (1985). Western hemispheric immigration to the United States: A review of selected research trends (March). MD: Center for Immigration Policy and Refugee Assistance, Georgetown University.
- Bachelis, F. (1990). The Central Americans. New York: Chelsea House.
- Blau, F.D. (1984). The use of transfer payments by immigrants. Industrial and Labor Relations Review, 37(2), 222-239.
- Blau, P. & Duncan, O. (1978). In Featherman, D.L. and Hauser, R.B. Opportunity and change. New York: Academic.
- Bogen, E. (1987). Immigration in New York. New York: Praeger.

- Brown, L., & Oliver, Eds. (1985). Sociocultural and service issues in working with Hispanic American clients. Albany: State University of New Ycrk.
- Bryce-Laporte, R.S. (1982). The new immigration: Its origin, visibility and implications for public policy. In W.A. Van Horne (Ed.). Ethnicity and public policy. Madison: University of Wisconsin System.
- Bryce-Laporte, R.S. (1977). Visibility of the new immigrants. Society, 14(6), 18-22.
- Cafferty, P., Chiswick, B., Greeley, A.M., Sullivan, T.A. (1983). The Dilemma of American immigration: Beyond the golden door. New Jersey: Transaction.
- Cafferty, P. & McCready, W. (1985). Hispanics In the United States: A new social agenda. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Cafferty, P. & Chestang, L. (1976). The diverse society: Implications for social policy. Washington: NASW.
- CARECEN. (1990, December 20). Victory for Salvadoran and Guatemalan refugees in the U.S. American Baptist Churches V. Thornburgh. (Press Statement). Hempstead, NY: Author.
- Center for Immigrants Rights, Inc. (1990, June). Immigrants rights to public benefits. (Flier). NYC: Author.
- Central American Legal Defense Program. (1990, Winter). Law change protects Salvadorans. Refugee Advocate, 1(3) Hempstead, NY: Author.
- Chaney, E.M. (1980). Colombians in NYC: Theoretical and policy issues. In R.S. Bryce-Laporte. Sourcebook on the new immigration. New Jersey: Transaction.
- Church World Service. (1986, Sept. 11-14). Central american refugees in the United States. New York: International Council of Voluntary Agencies.
- Cohen, L.M. (1979). Culture, disease and stress among latino immigrants. Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America.
- Cohen, L.M. & Fernandez, C.L. (1974). Ethnic identity and psychocultural adaptation of spanish speaking families. Child Welfare, 53, 413-21.

- Cornelius, W.A. (1982). Interviewing undocumented immigrants: Methodological reflections based on fieldwork in Mexico and the U.S. International Migration Review, 16(2), 378-411.
- Cowan, P. & Cowan, R. (1975, June 22). For Hispanics it's still the promised land. The New York Times Magazine.
- Cox, D. (1985). Welfare services for migrants: Can they be better planned? International Migration Review, 23, 73-95.
- Cronbach, L.J. (1980). Toward reform of program evaluation. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.
- De Anda, D. (1984). Bicultural socialization: Factors affecting the minority experience. Social Work, 29, 101-108.
- Delgado, M. & Humm-Delgado, D. (1982). Gaining entrance to assess service needs. Social Casework, 67(1), 80.
- Delgado, M. & Humm-Delgado D. (1982). Natural support systems: Source of strength in Hispanic communities. Social Work, 27.
- DiMarzio, N. (1985). Profiling undocumented aliens in the New York metropolitan area: Social welfare and labor market implications. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Rutgers University, New Jersey.
- Dinerman, I.R. (1978). Patterns of adaptation among households of U.S.-bound migrants from Michoacan, Mexico. International Migration Review, 12(4), 485-501.
- Doyle, R. (1982). Hispanics in New York: Religious, cultural and social experiences (Vol. 1). New York: The Office of Pastoral Research, Archdiocese of New York.
- Featherman, D.L. & Hauser, R.B. (1978). Opportunity and change. New York: Academic.
- Ferris, E.G. (1987). The Central American refugees. New York: Praeger.
- Fitzpatrick, J. & Parker, L. (1981). Hispanic-Americans in the Eastern United States. In M. Gordon (ed.) (Special issue). Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 454, 86-97.
- Foner, Nancy, ed. (1987). New immigrants in New York. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Ford Foundation (1984). Hispanics: Challenges and opportunities. (Publication No. 436). New York: Ford Foundation.
- Fuchs, L.H. (1983). Immigration, pluralism, and public policy: The Challenge of the Pluribus to the Unum. In M.M. Kritz. U.S. Immigration and Refugee Policy (pp. 289-317). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books D.C. Heath.
- Gann, L.H. & Duignan, P.J. (1986). The Hispanics in the United States: A History. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Gelfand, D.E. & Bialik-Gilad, R. (1989). Immigration reform and social work. Social Work, 34, 23-27.
- Gilinsky, R.M. (1988). Hispanic advisors outline concerns. The New York Times, April 24, 12-13.
- Gann, L.H. & Duignan, P.J. (1986). The Hispanics In the United States. A History (pp.120 & 315). Colorado: Westview Press.
- Golan, N. & Gruschka, R. (1971). Integrating the new immigrant: A model for social work practice in transitional states. Social Work, 16, 82-87.
- Goodis, T.A.(1986). Adaptation processes of recent immigrants to the United States: A review of demographic and social aspects. (Policy Discussion Papers). Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.
- Gordon, Andrew M. (1964). Assimilation in American life. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Governor's Advisory Committee for Hispanic Affairs (1985). New York State Hispanics: A challenging minority. Albany, NY: Author.
- Grant, Geraldine (1983). Immigrant family stability: Some preliminary thoughts. Journal of Children in Contemporary Society, 15(3), 27-37.
- Guendelman, S.R. (1981). South American refugees: Stresses involved in relocating in the San Francisco Bay area. Migration Today, 9(2), 19-25.
- Gurak, D.T. (1982). Dominicans and Colombians in New York. Migration Today, 10(3-4).
- Gurak, D.T.(1981). Family structural diversity of Hispanic ethnic groups. Research Bulletin, 4(2-3). New York: Hispanic Research Center.

Gurak, D.T. & Kritz. (1985). Hispanics in the Northeast. Migration Today, 13(2), 6-12.

Gurak, D.T. & Kritz, M.M. (1984). Kinship networks and the settlement process: Dominican and Colombian immigrants in New York City. Research Bulletin, 7(3-4). New York: Hispanic Research Center. Fordham University.

Gurak, D.T. & Rogler, L.H. (1980). Hispanic diversity in New York City. Research Bulletin, 3(3). New York: Hispanic Research Center. Fordham University.

Gurak, D.T. & Rogler, L.H. (1980). Hispanic migrants in New York: Work, settlement and adjustment. Research Bulletin, 3(3). Hispanic Research Center. Fordham University.

Gurak, D.T. & Rogler, L.H. (1980). New York's new immigrants: Who and where they are. NYU Education Quarterly, 11(4), Summer.

Hearth, A. H. (1991, March 17). A more diverse county. The New York Times, Westchester Weekly, p. 2.

Hearth, A. H. (1991, April 14). Village is a beacon to Hispanic immigrants. The New York Times, Westchester Weekly, pp. 1 & 27.

Hernandez, J. (1985). Improving the data: A research strategy for new immigrants, pp. 101-123. In L.Maldonado & J. Moore (eds.). Urban ethnicity in the U.S. New immigrants and old minorities. Urban Affairs Annual Review, 29. Beverly Hills: Sage Publishing.

Jaffe, A.J., Cullen, R.M. & Boswell, T.D. (1980). The changing demography of Spanish America. Chap. 9 & Appendix A. New York: Academic.

Jenkins, S., Sauber, M. & Friedlander, E. (1985). Ethnic associations and services to new immigrants in New York City. New York: Community Council of Greater NY.

Jenkins, S.(Ed.). (1988). Ethnic associations and the welfare state services to immigrants in five countries. New York: Columbia University Press.

Jenkins, S. (1981). The ethnic dilemma in social services. New York: The Free Press.

Kessner, Thomas and Caroli, B. (1981). Today's immigrants, their stories, a new look at the newest Americans. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Kritz, M. (ed.). (1983). U.S. immigration and refugee policy. MA: Lexington Books D.C. Heath.
- Laosa, L.M. (1980). Maternal teaching strategies in Chicano and Anglo American families in Chicago: The influence of culture and education on maternal behavior. Child Development, 51, 759-65.
- Laosa, L.M. (1981). Maternal behavior: Sociocultural diversity in modes of family interaction. In Henderson, R., (Ed.), Parent-child interaction: Theory and prospects. New York: Academic.
- Laosa, L.M. (1982). School, occupation, culture, and family: The impact of parental schooling on the parent-child relationship. Journal of Educational Psychology, 74, 791-827.
- Lofland, J. (1984). Analyzing Social Settings. CA: Wadsworth.
- Magill, R.S. (1985). Ethnicity and social welfare in American cities: A historical view. In L. Maldonado & J. Moore (Eds.). Urban ethnicity in the United States. New immigrants and old minorities, pp. 185-209.
- Maldonado, L. & Moore, J. (eds.). (1985). Urban ethnicity in the United States. New immigrants and old minorities. Urban Affairs Annual Review, 29, Beverly Hills: Sage Publishing.
- Mann, E.S. & Salvo, J.J. (1986). Characteristics of new Hispanic immigrants to New York City: A comparison of Puerto Rican and non-Puerto Rican hispanics. Research Bulletin, 8 (1-2). New York: Hispanic Research Center, Fordham University.
- Massey, D. (1981). Dimensions of the new immigration to the United States and the prospects for assimilation. Annual Review of Sociology, 7, 57-85.
- Massey, D. (1979). Residential segregation of spanish-americans in US urban areas. Demography, 16, 553-654.
- Massey, D. (1985). The settlement process among Mexican migrants to the U.S.: New methods and findings. In D.B. Levine et al. (Eds.). Immigration statistics: A story of neglect (pp. 255-292). Washington D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Massey, D. & Schnabel, K. (1983). Recent trends in Hispanic immigration to the United States. International Migration Review, 17(2), 212-244.

- McCready, W.C. (1976). The persistence of ethnic variation in American families. In Greeley, A.M. & McCready, W., (Eds.), Ethnicity in the U.S.: A preliminary reconnaissance. New York: Wiley-Inter-Science.
- McWhirter, C. (1990, May 14). Leaders: Census slighted Hispanics. The Standard-Star, p. 1.
- Moore, J. & Pachon H. (1985). Hispanics in the United States. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Moran, C. (undated). Dear friend letter. Hempstead, NY: Central American Refugee Committee.
- National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1988). New voices: Immigrant students in U.S. Public Schools. Boston, MA: NCAS.
- National Lawyers Guild (1990, December 19). Press Release. San Francisco, CA: National Lawyers Guild.
- NYS Assembly task force on new Americans (March 1990). Summary Report. Thomas F. Catapano, Chairman.
- North, D.S. (1983). Impact of legal, illegal and refugee migrations on U.S. social service programs. In M. Kritz (Ed.). U.S. immigration and refugee policy, (pp. 269-289). Lexington, MA: Lexington Books D.C. Heath.
- North, D.S. (1975). Illegal aliens: final report outlining a rationale for and a preliminary design of a study of the magnitude, distribution, flow, characteristics and impacts of illegal aliens in the U.S. Washington, D.C.: Linton & Co.
- North, D. & Houstoun, M. (1976). The characteristics and role of illegal aliens in the U.S. labor market: An exploratory study. Washington, D.C.: Linton and Co.
- Orlov, A. & Ueda, R. Central and South Americans. In Harvard encyclopedia of American ethnic groups (pp. 210-217) . Cambridge: Harvard University Press .
- Papademetriou, D. (1983). New immigrants to Brooklyn and Queens. New York: Center for Migration Studies.
- Papademetriou, D. & DiMarzio, N. (1986). Undocumented aliens in the New York metropolitan area. New York: Center for Migration Studies.
- Patton, M. Q. (1980). Qualitative Evaluation Methods. Beverly Hill, CA: Sage.

- Patton, M. Q. (1987). How to use qualitative methods in evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Pessar, P. (1984). The linkage between the household and the workplace of Dominican women in the U.S. International Migration Review, 18(4), 1188-1211.
- Portes, A. (1979). Illegal immigration and the international system. Lessons from recent legal Mexican immigrants to the U.S. Social Problems, 26(4), 425-438.
- Portes, A. & Bach, R.L. (1985). Latin Journey. Cuban and Mexican immigrants in the US. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Portes, A., McLead, S.A., Jr., & Parker, R.N. (1978). Immigrant aspirations. Sociology of Education, 51, 241-60.
- Portes, A., Parker, R.N., & Cobas, J.A. (1980). Assimilation or consciousness: Perceptions of US society among recent Latin American immigrants to the United States. Social Forces, 1(5-9), 200-224.
- Ramirez, M. & Castaneda A. (1974). Cultural democracy: Biocognitive development and education. New York: Academic.
- Rodriguez, N. P. (1987). Undocumented Central Americans in Houston: Diverse populations. International Migration Review, 21(1), 4-26.
- Roe, M. D. (1987). Central American Refugees in the U.S.: Psychosocial Adaptation. Refugee Issues, 3(3). Oxford, England: Refugees Studies Programme.
- Rooney, S. & Kossoudji, S. (1979). Patterns of U.S. migration from a Mexican sending community: A comparison of legal and illegal migrants. International Migration Review, 13(4), 599-623.
- Rubin, A. & Babbie, E. (1989), Research Methods for Social Work. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.
- Ruggles, P. & Fix, M. (1985). Impacts and potential impacts of Central American migrants on HHS and related programs of assistance. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Sassen-Koob, S.(1987). Formal and informal associations: Dominicans and Colombians in New York. In C.R. Sutton & E.M. Chaney (Eds.). Caribbean life in NYC: Sociocultural dimensions (pp. 278-296). New York: Center for Migration Studies.

Schlosberg, J. (1988, February). Bronx Hispanics. American Demographics, p. 52.

Simon, J.L. (1984). Immigrants, taxes and welfare in the United States. Population and Development Review, 10(1), 55-70.

Stepick, A. (1983). New Perspectives on Immigrant Adaptation. In M. Frank (Ed.). Newcomers to the United States: Children and families. New York: Haworth Press.

Suarez-Orozco, M.M. (1989). Central American refugees and U.S. high schools: A psychosocial study of motivation and achievement. California: Stanford University Press.

Suro, (1989, May 14)., Switch by Hispanic Catholics changes face of U.S. religion. The New York Times. p. 22.

Tienda, M. (1980). Familism and structural assimilation of Mexican immigrants in the United States. International Migration Review, 14(3), 383-404.

Tienda, M. (1980). Familism and structural assimilation of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. International Migration Review, 14(3), 383-408.

U.S. Government Printing Office (1981). Current population reports. Persons of Spanish origin in the United States, 416, 354, 361. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Vega & Miranda. (1985). Stress and Hispanic mental health: Relating research to service delivery. MD: National Institute of Mental Health.

Waterston, A. (1984). Perspectives on Westchester: A case study of the Hispanic community in New Rochelle. Unpublished manuscript.

Westchester Community Service Council, Westchester County Youth Bureau, CUNY Graduate Center. (1984). Perspectives on Westchester: A coordinated study of youth and family service needs. White Plains, NY: Authors.

Westchester County Hispanic Advisory Board. (1986).  
Preliminary position paper regarding issues and concerns  
of the Hispanic community in Westchester County.  
White Plains, NY: Authors.

Westchester County Hispanic Advisory Board. (1988).  
Westchester Hispanics: An agenda for county action.  
White Plains, NY: Authors.