

**Mexican *Tiendas* in the *Nuevo* South: Building Relationships of Trust and Reciprocity with the Local Immigrant Community**

**Ricardo Contreras  
David Griffith  
East Carolina University**

Ethnographic research conducted in Pitt County, North Carolina, has shown that Latino businesses rely heavily on community linkages and relationships of trust as a means of establishing viable enterprises. These associations are represented as reciprocity linkages with other Latino businesses and also involve a system of strategies aimed at creating a stable clientele among these same Latino community members. As part of a social capital building process, these connections are essential in allowing small Latino businesses to establish themselves despite their limited or non-existent access to credit and marketing techniques commonly employed by mainstream businesses. This paper will describe the nature of these relationships, the type of reciprocity involved and how they facilitate business development.