



REPORT 6

LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN THE WINDY CITY:

New Trends in Civic Engagement

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



Series on **LATINO IMMIGRANT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**



LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN THE WINDY CITY:
New Trends in Civic Engagement

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Cover images: At top, members of the honor guard of the Club Ciudad Hidalgo (Michoacán) hometown association participate in a ceremony commemorating the birth of Mexican President Benito Juárez at the Plaza de las Américas in Chicago, IL, on March 21, 2009. At bottom, dancers affiliated with Ballet Folclórico de Víctor Soria are photographed at the same ceremony. (Photos by Claudio Ugalde)

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PREFACE

This report is part of a series on Latin American immigrant civic and political participation that explores experiences in nine different cities around the United States: Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Fresno, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Los Angeles, CA; Omaha, NE; Tucson, AZ; San Jose, CA; and Washington, D.C. This series is part of an initiative sponsored by the Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute, and was funded by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The project is led by Xóchitl Bada of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Jonathan Fox of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Andrew Selee, director of the Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute. The project was first coordinated by Kate Brick, followed by Robert Donnelly.

The reports on each city describe the opportunities and barriers that Latino immigrants face in participating as civic and political actors in cities around the United States, with an emphasis on recent trends in Latino immigrant integration following the 2006 immigrant civic mobilizations.

The research questions are informed by a comparative approach that highlights both similarities and differences across diverse cities and sectors. The project also includes a series of

background reports on important cross-cutting issues, such as the role of the Spanish-language media, the responsibility of faith-based organizations, and the involvement of youth. Project research products are accessible online at: www.wilsoncenter.org/migrantparticipation.

For the Chicago report, a roundtable community dialogue took place in October 2007 at Casa Michoacán in Pilsen. The dialogue was organized by our initial local partner organization, Enlaces América. Amy Shannon and Oscar Chacón collaborated with us in the selection of topics and participants. In preparation for the dialogue, we commissioned four background research papers, which were presented and discussed at the forum. These research reports were then extensively revised by the authors, who incorporated in them feedback from the conference proceedings.

Although Enlaces América ended operations in December 2007, Mr. Chacón and Ms. Shannon continued their collaboration with this project. Amy Shannon assembled the preliminary drafts for this report, and Oscar Chacón, now executive director of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), accepted our invitation to make NALACC our new local partner and also wrote the prologue.

PROLOGUE

Chicago Community Dialogue: A Step toward Stronger Transnational Collaboration

By **Oscar A. Chacón**, Executive Director,
National Alliance of Latin American and
Caribbean Communities (NALACC)

Chicago is one of the most diverse and international cities of this nation, thanks to the contributions of generations of immigrants who have made it their home for much more than a century.

Mexicans have enriched the city's history and tradition of immigration. While the settlement of Mexicans here goes back many decades, so does the presence of hometown associations, which continue to attract migrants from Michoacán, Zacatecas, Jalisco, Guerrero, Guanajuato, and other states. Hometown associations have played an essential role in the development of Chicago's Mexican community, keeping alive migrants' memories of their communities of origin and helping to fund important social and infrastructure projects in them.

Yet hometown associations have also adapted to changing times. No longer just focused on country-of-origin concerns, many have gained a more sophisticated understanding of the motivations driving out-migration from Mexico. And consequently, many have

consolidated over time into federations, representing the interests of blocs of migrants and embracing agendas that advance civic engagement and participative democracy both in the United States and in Mexico. At the same time, the unique setting, history, and context of Chicago, with its rich legacy of political activism and community-based organizing, have facilitated the achievement of these goals.

Advances in communications and transportation technologies have also enhanced the opportunities for civic engagement and political participation of Latin American immigrants in Chicago. The greater affordability and supply of international jet travel has created new opportunities for travel between the United States and Latin America. Similarly, advances in telecommunications and the Internet have enabled immigrants to stay in touch continuously by logging onto the websites of their hometown newspapers and through the expanded use of cellular and landline telephony. Such advances have allowed immigrants to keep unbroken contact with their communities of origin and have likewise enabled them to renew and update these connections continuously, thus deepening the transnational quality of contemporary Latin American immigration.

Technological advances, the work of hometown associations, and Chicago's unique legacy of political activism and community-based organizing have combined to place the city's Mexican and other Latin American communities of origin at the forefront of evolving patterns and practices of transnational civic engagement and political participation.

To advance our understanding of this new transnationalism, the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), Enlaces América, and the Woodrow Wilson Center Mexico Institute organized the workshop, "Community Dialogue on Transnational Activism in Chicago: Strategies of Integration and Engagement," in October 2007. The dialogue was held at Casa Michoacán, the headquarters of the Federation of Michoacán Hometown Associations in Illinois (Federación de Clubes Michoacanos en Illinois) in Chicago's predominantly Mexican Pilsen neighborhood.

The gathering represented a welcome opportunity to explore the ways in which Chicago's immigrant-led community-based organizations (CBOs) have enhanced their transnational profile and presence. Additionally the event underscored the benefits inherent in greater collaboration between practitioners (organizers, activists, advocates) and researchers, whose joint efforts hold the potential to advance our understanding of transnational civic participation.

THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS AND ITS EFFECT ON TRANSNATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Efforts to enact social justice by shaping policy in both the country of origin and the country of residence represent actions of transnational

civic engagement and political participation. Since the 2007 gathering in Pilsen, however, such efforts have met with difficulty because of the onset of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The current global recession is more than a temporary slowdown of world financial markets. Rather, it is a vote of no confidence in the so-called "Washington Consensus," whose side effects in the forms of insufficient government regulation and heightened speculation have threatened many Latin American economies. This is especially the case for Mexico and for some Central American and Caribbean countries, which have made the tenets of the "Washington Consensus" the foundation of their economic policies for years.

The ongoing economic crisis bolsters arguments made by migrant-led organizations in favor of the adoption of new social and economic policies in their countries of origin. With the U.S. economy shedding hundreds of thousands of jobs per month in 2009—and with no sustained rebound in sight—it makes no sense for these countries to promote the mass exodus of their workers to the United States. And a de facto policy that promotes mass out-migration in the hope that succeeding cohorts of migrants will send home ever-increasing sums of remittances is unsustainable. In fact as the recession has worsened in the United States and jobs in many fields have grown increasingly scarce, remittance transfers have decreased significantly. On the demand side, reduced U.S. consumer spending has forced a reevaluation throughout Latin America of many economic policies, especially of those focused on increasing export capacity for placement in the U.S. market.

The current economic crisis and the prospect of a prolonged contraction of U.S. consumer spending accentuate the need for country-of-origin development policies that will encourage more citizens to want to stay.

Successful implementation of such policies, however, will require a reorientation of political values in countries of origin—one that would recognize the deep need for sustained development and that would place the needs of average citizens at the center of government strategies and priorities. Related public policy efforts would entail bold new action broadly—in the economy, society, politics, and culture.

Organized migrant communities represent new transnational civil society actors. Their emerging presence suggests the possibility that policy changes may be promoted, as well as effected, in more than one country at the same time. Additionally, these communities' intellectual capital and social capital can help to articulate public policy frameworks and help to orient these so as to ensure a just quality of life, not only for people in the countries of origin but also for residents of the United States.

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA AND IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Actions of transnational civic engagement and political participation are shaped by their environment and context. At the Chicago Community Dialogue, an issue that emerged repeatedly was the adverse environment that immigrants and those who fight for immigrants' rights face. Since the gathering in October 2007, this outlook has improved a bit but not much.

The election of President Barack Obama in November 2008 marked an important milestone for racial and ethnic minorities the world over. And Latino voters contributed significantly to this accomplishment, as 67 percent cast ballots in favor of Obama—a percentage among racial and ethnic groups that was sec-

ond only to African-Americans. Despite the fact that Obama spoke little of immigration reform while on the campaign trail, the high levels of support he obtained from voters of Mexican and other Latin American descent showed that these voters believed in his overall message of hope and change.

Latino voters helped Obama become president and also helped to increase Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. Yet as of fall 2009, Democratic control of the executive and legislative branches has not automatically translated into a friendly political environment for immigrants. Even worse, the Obama administration has maintained the enforcement priorities of a thoroughly broken and inhumane immigration system, while the obsessive pursuit of such policies has continued to inflict pain on hundreds of thousands of Mexican and other Latin American immigrant families.¹ In Congress and within both political parties, the misperception that immigrants represent a social, economic, and cultural menace continues to overshadow important policy debates on immigration reform, immigrant integration, and relations between migrant communities and local governments. As recent events have shown, when prejudice and distortion control the discourse, policy debates on immigration and immigrants suffer.

In fact the national narrative depicting immigrant communities as national security threats has hardly diminished since the 1990s, and actually seems to have been invigorated due to the recent recession-sparked economic scapegoating of immigrant communities. As part of a strategy to deflect blame, manipulative political forces have exploited the fears of those who have most borne the brunt of pirate capitalism over the past two decades. And while this blaming of immigrants has been standard practice throughout U.S. history, the

persistence of such fears shows us that we have a long way to go to get the truth out about immigrants.

The scapegoating of immigrants reverberates beyond immigrant communities. Blaming economic woes on migrants allows for a systematic disinvestment in those healthcare, education, and social services infrastructures that benefit all citizens, without the proponents of such cuts incurring political penalty or consequence. At the same time, our living in a highly segregated society has meant that non-immigrant communities have not equally felt the economic and social costs of the targeting of immigrant groups.

Thus now more than ever, it is of crucial importance that immigrant communities reach out to African-American communities, communities of faith, and local business leaders, as well as engage with the rank-and-file members of labor unions and also with elected officials from all levels of government. Only through these efforts can we fight back against prejudice and promote greater interaction between immigrant and native-born communities. Only through this engagement can we identify the common interests that can drive collaboration.

Eliminating generic fears about immigration and immigrants is easier said than done. But one way to set about transcending these fears is by increasing the opportunities for one-on-one interaction between immigrants and native-born citizens. We also need to do more to enhance the problem-solving capacities of migrant-led organizations and to identify those immigrant leaders able to act independently on behalf of their communities. The Chicago Community Dialogue emphasized all of these as strategies to empower Mexican and other Latin American immigrant communities and as ways to strengthen partnerships with key non-immigrant allies.

THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN RESEARCHERS AND PRACTITIONERS

At the gathering in Pilsen, I mentioned that analysis and research are essential to determining successful courses of action going forward. Fortunately, our community dialogue established a foundation for long-term research collaborations among migrant leaders, other community actors and practitioners, and researchers from diverse institutions. I believe the synergies resulting from such collaborations will push the creation of a transformational transnational agenda—one that will help to improve the lives of both U.S. migrants and of their relatives back home.

Contributors to this edited volume, Judy Boruchoff, Susan Gzesh, and Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro of the University of Chicago, and Amalia Pallares of the University of Illinois at Chicago are among those researchers who have successfully analyzed the contemporary immigrant experience, capturing in historical perspective the dynamics, advances, and challenges of transnational civic engagement and political participation. The rapporteur's report by Amy Shannon, formerly of Enlaces América, a project of Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights, is a faithful and easy-to-read summary of the rich discussions that took place at the Chicago Community Dialogue. I encourage you to take the time to read each of the works that emerged from that enlightening conversation and that now make up this edited volume.

For the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, of which I serve as executive director, the Chicago Community Dialogue furnished an important space for us to advance our agenda of empowerment and advocacy. We are convinced that organized

migrant communities represent a powerful asset for the advancement of this agenda. Yet we are also convinced that there is much more that organized migrant communities can do, not taking away from their successful efforts to mitigate poverty in countries of origin. In particular, we believe that organized migrant communities can become stronger actors in the advocacy and policymaking processes both in the United States and in countries of origin. Furthermore we believe that these efforts and consequent policy changes can have deeper and longer-lasting impacts than either government-coordinated or migrant-led direct aid projects.

The Chicago Community Dialogue also reaffirmed the value and importance of cooperation and collaboration among all those diverse sectors that seek to better understand the significance of organized transnational migrant communities and that recognize the potential of these communities to bring about healthier U.S.-Latin American relations. We

look forward to continued engagement with our partners on these and other projects, which we hope will bring us closer to the ideal future we dream of for residents of both the United States and of our countries of origin.

NOTES

- 1 On October 6, 2009, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced changes in the enforcement of immigration laws. This is certainly a hopeful development; however, we have yet to see whether the proposed changes will translate into a more humane handling of undocumented workers. Shortly before the announcement of the DHS changes, 1,800 workers were fired by a Los Angeles-based apparel manufacturer, after the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, a branch of DHS, audited the company's files, including workers' identification documents.

LATINO IMMIGRANT LEADERSHIP IN CHICAGO: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Questions

By **Susan Gzesh**¹, Senior Lecturer and Director, Human Rights Program, University of Chicago

Abstract: This essay presents a brief history of the development of civic participation of Mexican-American immigrants in greater Chicago over the past three decades. Given the predominance of Mexican nationals (over 80 percent) among Latino immigrants, the paper will focus largely on that community. At the October 2007 gathering, this essay served to open a panel discussion for community leaders Ricardo Estrada (Erie Neighborhood House), Jesús García (Little Village Community Development Corporation), Maricela García (Latinos United), and Daisy Funes (Centro Romero).

I. HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

Immigrants have shaped the political and civic life of Chicago since the early 19th century with the arrival of the first nonindigenous settler, a Haitian trader named Jean Baptiste Point DuSable. Chicago was settled through the mid-19th century by European immigrants who drove the city's growth as workers and entrepreneurs. In 1886, a workers' rights movement led by German immigrants ended in the

Haymarket riot, resulting in the trial and execution of the movement's leaders and the creation of May 1 as an international workers' holiday in memory of their struggle; this history was acknowledged by the organizers of the 2006 immigrants' rights march who selected a route that passed the Haymarket memorial. In 1906, Upton Sinclair's muckraking novel, *The Jungle*, brought the working conditions of immigrants in the Chicago stockyards to national attention.

Mexican immigration to Chicago began in the early 20th century as Mexican railroad workers found settled jobs in the growing steel and packing industries, establishing the historic parish of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in 1923. Jane Addams and her Hull House cohort did pioneering social work in immigrant neighborhoods to establish centers for the education and civic involvement of immigrant families. (Hull House had a ceramics workshop run by Mexican immigrant artisans.) Immigrant workers (Eastern European and Mexican) formed the base of union-organizing efforts in Chicago-area meatpacking, steel, garment making, agricultural equipment, and other industries during World War I and through the 1920s and 1930s.² Following the deportations of the Great Depression period, the Mexican population of Chicago rebounded due to the World War II *bracero* program and has continued to grow since.

Since the founding of the city in 1837, Chicago has been a microcosm of national immigration patterns, with the arrival of Eastern Europeans, Irish, Greeks, Italians, and, after 1965, Cubans, Chinese, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Koreans, Arabs, Indians, and Pakistanis. Chicago today, a city of sharply defined ethnic neighborhoods (also the nation's most segregated city), claims to be the second-largest Polish city, the second-largest Lithuanian city, the center of Irish culture in the Midwest, the fifth-largest Mexican city, the home of the nation's largest Palestinian community, and the regional cultural and shopping destination for Indians and Pakistanis.

While the "racialization" of the U.S. immigration debate has been very pronounced in many regions, there has been a relative lack of an anti-Mexican discourse in the immigration discussion in Chicago since the 1970s. This may be due to two factors. In one of the largest Catholic archdioceses in the United States, Mexicans are seen as simply another group of immigrant Catholics establishing ethnic parishes, following in the footsteps of the Italians, Irish, Poles, Bohemians, Croatians, and so on. Furthermore, the two most powerful white ethnic groups in local politics, Poles and Irish, have had recent experience with their own undocumented compatriots. Elected officials familiar with the plight of a newly arrived cousin sleeping on the couch and painting houses for cash are more likely to sympathize with the undocumented Latino immigrants.

Why the immigration policy discussion in the past four years has become charged with racism in certain parts of the metropolitan area is a subject for future research. One hypothesis is that the most visible anti-immigrant local initiatives (in Waukegan and Carpentersville, IL) are products of the generalized economic insecurity in white working-class communities where demagogic politicians direct community

anger against newer residents who happen to be Mexican immigrants.

II. RECENT DECADES: MEXICAN SETTLEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

Chicago has been one of the principal areas of settlement during the massive increase in Mexican immigration to the United States in the past three decades. In addition to their growth in numbers, Mexicans have also come to dominate the Latin American immigrant community in greater proportion than before. The initial leadership of Latino community service centers and advocacy organizations was, with a few notable exceptions, Puerto Rican.

Civic organizations, including the League of United Latin American Citizens, began to organize to represent the interests of Latino immigrants (predominantly Mexican-American) in the post-World War II period. Over the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, as the Mexican-American and Mexican immigrant population increased, more groups were founded that focused on the interests of the community, and national organizations began to establish themselves in Chicago. For example, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund first opened a Chicago office in 1982. It is interesting to note that Mexican community leaders in Chicago consistently refer to themselves as "Mexican," rather than as "Chicano" or "Mexican-American," terms commonly used in other metropolitan areas to distinguish among people based on their citizenship, immigration status, or cultural identity.

1970s

Over the past three decades, Chicago has been the center of some of the most interesting and

creative organizing among Mexican immigrants in the United States. In the mid-1970s the Centro de Acción Social Autónoma (CASA), an organization founded by exiled Mexican radical students, sent cadres from Los Angeles to begin organizing the undocumented in the Pilsen barrio. CASA members worked with local Mexican-American/Chicano leaders, including students who had become politically active at the University of Illinois at Chicago to protest raids by the then U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Settlement houses in traditional Mexican neighborhoods were transformed from purely service providers to centers of community activism. One emblematic struggle involved the takeover of a Presbyterian settlement house by Juan Velásquez and other Pilsen activists who successfully established a new and more advocacy-oriented Casa Aztlán. In addition, Catholic priests in various parishes in Pilsen began to offer their support for community activists. St. Pius Church, with its Dominican pastor, Charles Dahm, was an important center for community organizing meetings.

1980s

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, leaders from CASA and related organizations developed an electoral strategy, allied with progressive African-American leadership, to challenge the powerful Cook County Democratic machine. Young Mexican-American and Puerto Rican activists won several important local offices. This same movement generated critical support for the 1983 election of Harold Washington as Chicago's first African-American mayor over the vigorous opposition of the "regular" Democratic machine.³ Mayor Washington created the city's first Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs and

appointed Latino community leaders (Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Cuban) to positions within his administration. At the same time, the "regular" Democrats began cultivating a Latino leadership group of their own, establishing community-based organizations with significant access to traditional Chicago political patronage (i.e., jobs and contracts with the city.)

Also during the 1980s, the changes in the political map of Mexico began to manifest themselves in Chicago. Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas received an enthusiastic reception in Chicago in 1988 among Mexican immigrants who supported his historical presidential campaign against the longtime ruling party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Mexican leadership of all political parties began to realize that support from Mexicans in the United States should be a critical part of their strategies. Within the next decade, all three major political parties in Mexico had established bases in Chicago.

The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) resulted in legal immigration status for approximately 124,000 Mexican immigrants in Chicago (80 percent of those legalized in Chicago under IRCA). IRCA mandated federal funding of community-based organizations to assist applicants, and thus created a number of local nonprofit service and advocacy organizations that still operate today. Many community-based organizations and citywide policy and advocacy projects were directed by Puerto Ricans and Mexican-Americans from the oldest immigrant communities. The Latino Institute functioned during this period as an important independent source of policy analysis and research for Latino leadership.

Following Mayor Washington's fatal heart attack seven months after his April 1987 reelection, political power in city hall gradually reverted to the traditional Democratic machine.

The independent Mexican-American political organization went through a decline in power, while the fortunes of Mexican-American political figures affiliated with the machine-fostered Hispanic Democratic Organization (HDO) began to rise, with HDO-supported candidates defeating independents.⁴

In Chicago, a unique venue for immigrant civic participation was opened through the creation (by state legislation) of Local School Councils (LSCs), elected bodies with control over local school budgets and the hiring and firing of principals. Because the law allowed direct participation of all parents and community residents, regardless of their citizenship status, in the activities and elections of LSCs, they became the locus of a lively, contentious, and active local politics with high levels of participation by immigrant parents. In some communities, LSC elections were an arena for the conflict between supporters of “independent” and “regular” Latino Democratic organizations.

Also in the 1980s, the Central American presence in Chicago increased with the arrival of Guatemalan and Salvadoran refugees who established their own advocacy and service organizations, of which Centro Romero is the most notable survivor. The Central Americans also developed important links with the religious community; Chicago was one of the major organization centers for the Sanctuary movement.

1990s

In the 1990s, a sharp increase in new migration direct from Mexico began to change the demographics and geography of “Mexican Chicago,” and produced new forms of organization within the community. Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families had

begun moving out of the city and into suburbs such as Cicero and Berwyn in the 1980s. New Mexican migrants were no longer arriving in the traditional gateway city neighborhoods, but were settling in large numbers in inner-ring suburbs and the county seats of the collar counties (i.e., Waukegan, Elgin, Joliet, and Aurora). In new areas of settlement, conflicts began to arise between longtime residents (mostly white and older) and the younger Latino immigrant families whose children were making new demands on public school systems and who were increasingly visible in public spaces such as parks and commercial districts.

A number of these conflicts began to play out in the electoral arena with a particular focus on education, as long-term residents resisted increasing local taxes to pay for the schooling of immigrant children. Some suburban governments began to enforce (in a racially discriminatory way) local housing codes regarding occupancy and other matters in immigrant communities. During this entire period, the celebration of Mexican traditional holidays and religious festivals also became an expression of Mexican national pride and a point of contention in an increasing number of Chicago-area communities. However, in these new areas of settlement Latinos were not yet able to secure many elected positions.

By the end of the 1980s, the Catholic archdiocese and other religious bodies had understood the need of Mexican and other Latin American immigrants for a community voice. In 1989, the archdiocese joined several Protestant churches to found the Interfaith Leadership Project (ILP) of Berwyn, Cicero, and Stickney to empower suburban immigrants in their local communities (ILP still works in the western suburbs almost 20 years later). In 1990, five Catholic parishes in the gateway city neighborhood of Pilsen combined resources to found the Resurrection Project, which has

grown to be a major force for the preservation and creation of affordable housing.

The number of Spanish-language media outlets, including television and radio stations and newspapers, began to multiply and provided extensive coverage of local community issues and politics. Additionally, more Mexican-born 1.5-generation immigrants were beginning to occupy leadership positions in the Latino community and its institutions.

Also in the 1990s, politically conscious individuals in Chicago's Mexican community began to be involved in transnational politics. Following in Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' footsteps, Mexican governors and other political figures began to visit Chicago on a regular basis. Mexican political parties established affiliates in Chicago. The initial organizing for the "voto en el exterior" campaigns began in Chicago.

President Carlos Salinas and members of his cabinet visited Chicago both to talk to corporate leadership and to lobby the Mexican community to support U.S. ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement. They urged their compatriots to heed the example of Jewish-Americans lobbying for Israel. The state of Illinois opened a trade office in Mexico City, many Chicago companies were selling and investing in Mexico, and the Chicago Community Trust sponsored educational programs about Mexico for Chicago civic leaders. By the mid-1990s, the activities of Mexican immigrant hometown associations (HTAs) were becoming visible in the media as those organizations continued to grow. The Chicago Community Trust made its first grant to promote HTA activities. HTA initiatives, particularly collective remittance projects, were encouraged and supported by the Mexican government through the Mexican consulate.

With the change in leadership of the AFL-CIO toward a more "immigrant friendly" poli-

tics and the rise of immigrant membership and leadership in key national unions, the labor movement in the Chicago area also expanded its immigrant membership and organizing efforts, particularly in the service sector.

2000s

By 2000, the predominance of Mexican immigrants as the largest group within Chicago's Latino community was well-established, with new Mexican immigration still a constant factor. HTAs were receiving more media attention, as "model" immigrant groups engaged in self-help international philanthropy. HTA visibility increased with the establishment, for example, of Casa Michoacán in the heart of the gateway urban Mexican community of Pilsen, as a venue for HTA and other Latino political and cultural activities. (Close to downtown Chicago, Pilsen is the most visible Mexican community for many non-Latino Chicagoans.) The leadership of many community-based organizations was in the hands of 1.5-generation leadership (as executive directors, staff, and board members) who understood the transnational nature of the issues confronting their communities and who were engaged in (now) immigrant-led local and regional initiatives on education, health, housing, policing, employment, and other issues. These organizations consolidated a role for themselves as centers of political education and mobilization, in addition to their traditional role as service providers.

There were more Latino elected officials in city, county, and state legislative bodies, with greater lobbying possibilities and advocacy opportunities. However the structure of local government in many towns (at-large representation) still blocked growing Latino communities from political representation on local governing bodies. The suburban and collar-county

Latino communities also lagged behind in the development of institutional bases, such as community-based organizations and advocacy centers. However, spontaneous community leadership (some from the small-business sector) was developing in response to local anti-immigrant initiatives.

Blocked from direct electoral participation, many local immigrant-led groups concentrated on direct-action politics such as mass demonstrations at local government meetings. In those communities, many of which are in Republican-dominated congressional districts, the potential for alliances with other immigrant groups (Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern) could lead to significant political change. Although immigrants' rights organizations (in particular the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) and its member groups) have developed a higher profile in these outlying areas, there has yet to be a realization of an alliance with the HTAs and their leadership. Conventional union organizing has been supplemented by workers' centers targeted at unorganized workers, particularly immigrant workers in marginal industries, the service sector, and the informal sector, e.g., day laborers and domestic workers.

In late 2005 the U.S. House of Representatives passed the so-called "Sensenbrenner Bill," which among other provisions would have criminalized undocumented status. The possibility of criminalization of status and the danger of massive arrests, threatening "mixed status" families in particular, motivated Mexican-led organizations (community-based groups and HTAs) to plan a response.⁵ Meetings were called at Casa Michoacán, in the center of the metropolitan area. A march was set for March 10, 2006, in downtown Chicago, a call soon taken up by the Spanish-language media, with an important role played by radio DJs. The large turnout, which

surprised even the organizers, and the presence of community and religious leaders, union representatives, and local officials including Governor Rod Blagojevich and Mayor Richard Daley (both of whom gave pro-immigrant, anti-Sensenbrenner bill speeches) encouraged the Chicago organizers to plan an even larger march and "go national."

Impressed by the skill of the march organizers and the spontaneous participation of dozens of individuals and informal groups (parishes, workplaces, high school students, families, etc.), the Chicago and Illinois labor federations pledged critical financial and logistical support for the upcoming march, overcoming their initial hesitation to march on May Day. Union funds paid for Chicago immigrant leaders to travel to California to coordinate with local organizers there.

The 2006 Chicago May Day demonstration, with close to a million participants, was the largest demonstration in the history of the city. Led by Mexican and Latino community-based organizations, churches, and political figures, other immigrant groups joined the protest. (Even U.S.-citizen professionals brought their small children to march in support of their Latina caretakers.) The March and May demonstrations received broad, supportive coverage in both Spanish- and English-language media, which lauded the serious and peaceful nature of the events. The few local "Minutemen" received disproportionate attention from media that sought spokespeople for the anti-immigrant view. The invisible Mexican immigrant workforce had become visible to all of Chicago. Later, the sanctuary case of Elvira Arellano would garner international media attention, focusing on a church on Chicago's north side.

Elected officials were learning to pay attention to a constituency that mobilized under the slogan, "Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos" or "Today we march, tomorrow we vote."

Governor Blagojevich, in conjunction with the ICIRR, established a state task force to institutionalize “immigrant-friendly” state policies and practices. Within the Illinois congressional delegation, with a few notable exceptions, almost all Democrats support pro-immigrant initiatives, including the failed 2006 reform legislation. Chicago and Cook County officials have also supported “noncooperation” and “sanctuary” initiatives in protest against increased enforcement by immigration authorities.

Until recently, there were only occasional anti-immigrant expressions in the Chicago area. Media outlets and academic and civic organizations seeking a debate on immigrants’ rights had only a few isolated eccentrics to call on to represent the restrictionist view, or else had to “import” restrictionists from other states. The anti-immigrant Federation for American Immigration Reform was unable to attract much support in the Chicago area. In the mid-1990s, a plan to demolish two Mexican neighborhoods in Addison, IL (to make way for a nonexistent economic development project), was successfully defeated by Latino residents; the Village of Addison was assessed more than \$1 million in damages and fees. A Republican candidate who campaigned in the senatorial primary in 2002 on an anti-immigrant platform was such an embarrassment to the Republican leadership that when the primary winner withdrew from the general election, the anti-immigrant second-place finisher was not tapped to replace him.

The pro-immigrant atmosphere has, however, been colored by a disturbing new trend that reflects a national political phenomenon. Beginning in 2006 in Carpentersville, IL, more local communities in the outlying parts of the metropolitan area have seen the introduction of anti-immigrant local ordinances on a range of issues. Given the economic insecurity of members of the general public who face job loss, a

drop in the value of real estate, and the potential collapse of some financial institutions, traditional American xenophobia is finding fertile ground even in northern Illinois.

When current White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel was a Congressman from the North Side of Chicago, local immigrants’ rights activists considered him the most conservative Democrat in the Illinois congressional delegation, noting his vote in favor of the Sensenbrenner bill. Illinois’ then-Senator Barack Obama was considered less explicitly pro-immigrant than his fellow Senator Richard Durbin, but still generally supportive of immigration reform. Local Latino leaders invested time and resources in Obama’s presidential campaign, organizing in Illinois and taking volunteers to neighboring states to canvass; they continue to lobby the White House on both comprehensive immigration reform and other legislative and policy issues. In December 2009 Chicago-area advocates won an important victory when federal authorities agreed to stay the deportation of an undocumented Mexican student at the University of Illinois-Chicago, receiving significant support from Democrats in the Illinois congressional delegation.

Historically Republicans in Illinois have been somewhat more moderate than the most xenophobic elements of the national party. The most openly anti-immigrant Republican, Jim Oberweis, failed in his 2008 bid for the seat of retiring Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, perhaps due to the changing demographics of the 14th Congressional District. However since late 2009, North Shore Congressman Mark Kirk has become more openly anti-immigrant in his bid for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by President Obama.

Illinois is keeping pace with the national trend of increased cooperation between local police and federal immigration authorities

begun under the Bush administration and continued under President Obama. Neither the Illinois State Police nor any Illinois municipal governments has signed a formal memorandum of agreement with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), known as “287(g) agreements,” which would allow local police to make arrests for immigration status violations. However, advocates have noted an increase in racial profiling of Latinos by police in certain jurisdictions under more informal arrangements allowing for federal immigration “detainers.”

On a national level, local law enforcement agencies have taken one of two paths. Police officials either insist that good law enforcement requires the trust of immigrant communities and refrain from making immigration status arrests, or they regard immigrant communities as the source of crime and seek increased coordination with federal authorities.

Both philosophies are at play in Illinois. For example, in Waukegan, IL, a new city administration sensitive to demands by Mexican immigrant leaders suspended local roadblocks and sweeps. However, under the Secure Communities program, the Obama administration is encouraging more local police agencies to use federal immigration-status databases for persons arrested for crimes—a process that does not require local elected officials to sign a formal agreement with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Whether this approach will only result in more “pretextual” arrests of Latino immigrants will depend on political relationships at the local level.

Under the Bush administration, workplace immigration raids were denounced for their unnecessary force and cruel treatment of immigrant workers and their families, creating fear and insecurity among Latino immigrants nationwide. The Obama administration has announced a “softer” approach to workplace enforcement, abandoning raids in favor of

employer audits. Across the country hundreds of Latino immigrants have been fired for lack of immigration status after such audits; DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano has signaled her intention to continue the new policy. While Chicago-area advocates report no mass firings as of December 2009, there is little reason to expect that Illinois would be exempted from the national trend.

How local Mexican-American and Latino leadership respond to the new wave of anti-immigrant enforcement efforts at the local and national level will be a major test of how goodwill can be transformed into political action. Alliances across immigrant groups, increased dialogue with African-American leaders, and strategic partnerships with unions, religious organizations, and other key constituencies—both within and beyond the electoral arena—will be critical in maintaining the image and reality of the Chicago area as an exemplary “pro-immigrant” space in the national picture.

II. QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The above narrative raises a number of questions, both with respect to the analysis of past events and plans for the future. Among those that might generate discussion are the following:

1. What is immigrant civic participation? How do we understand immigrant political participation within the framework of citizenship, as broadly defined? What forms of “citizenship” are Mexican immigrants using outside the electoral arena, from participation in local school councils to direct action demonstrations?
2. What is the history of immigrant civic participation in Chicago? How have

the demographics of the region, as well as leadership by government and civil society figures, helped create the “space” for immigrant civic participation?

3. What has been the attitude of local and state officials, as well as the corporate sector, toward immigrant civic participation? What other civil society groups and institutions have worked in collaboration with immigrant-led groups in the Chicago area? Which sectors are most supportive? Which sectors are least supportive?

4. Why have anti-immigrant groups and local government initiatives developed relatively recently in the Chicago area, as compared with other parts of the United States? How have those local initiatives, in conjunction with increased enforcement by Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Chicago, both stimulated and limited immigrant civic participation?

5. What is the likely future scenario for Latino (and Mexican immigrant/Mexican-American) political empowerment in Chicago?

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NOTES

- 1 Senior lecturer and director of the Human Rights Program, University of Chicago. This essay was delivered as introductory remarks to a panel of Latino immigrant leadership at the Chicago Community Dialogue on Transnational Activism, held in Chicago on October 26-27, 2007, sponsored by Enlaces América, the Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the MacArthur Foundation. As such, it is not intended to be taken as a research paper. The narrative is based on the author's own experiences as an attorney cooperating with Latino immigrant groups in Chicago starting in 1980. A short reading list of published material on the general topic appears at the end. The author wishes to thank Artemio Arreola, Oscar Chacón, Maricela García, Carmen Prieto, and Amy Shannon for their insightful comments. The author takes full responsibility for all opinions expressed herein as her own.
- 2 Manuel Gamio conducted pioneering research on the lives of Mexican immigrants in this period; see Gamio (1930, 1931).
- 3 One of Harold Washington's leading Mexican-American allies, labor activist Rudy Lozano, was shot down in his own kitchen shortly after Washington's 1983 election, in which Lozano himself lost an aldermanic race by fewer than 20 votes. Although the young gunman was arrested and convicted, the mystery of who was behind the assassination has never been solved.
- 4 In 2006, federal investigations into City Hall corruption would result in indictments of key HDO figures, with the political balance of power among Mexican-American Democrats again in play.
- 5 One community leader attributed the unity and speed of the response in Chicago (as contrasted with California) to the relative geographic concentration of the Mexican population in and around Chicago.

FAMILY MATTERS: Strategizing Immigrant Activism in Chicago¹

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Abstract: This paper looks at the ways in which the family has been politicized by immigration activists in Chicago in response to changes in immigration and national security laws in the past decade, which have led to increased deportations and family separation. The paper focuses on four different strategies that have been used to address the issue of family separation: social movement activism (marches, rallies), advocacy, court strategies, and sanctuary. The recent history of each of these strategies is reviewed, describing their characteristics and analyzing their strengths and limitations. The paper concludes with a brief reflection on the transnational dimension of some of this activism and offers some recommendations.

Although immigrant mobilization became more visible in Chicago after the first megamarch held in March 2006, efforts to create immigration policy that would enable the legalization of many undocumented immigrants and curtail the further restriction of their rights had been underway for several years. The intensification of immigrant activism in the past two years, however, can be directly traced to a combination of the menace of further restric-

tions, anti-immigrant measures (in the form of HR 4437, a.k.a. the Sensenbrenner bill, as well as multiple local ordinances), and to expectations created by congressional efforts to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

Contemporary immigrant activism is characterized by a variety of policy focuses, goals, actors, and strategies. Although some form of legalization is a common goal, most pro-immigrant organizations spend most of their energy on distinct policy areas. These include youth access to education (the DREAM Act), workers' rights (fighting against raids and resisting the "no-match" letter campaign of the Department of Homeland Security),² state- and local-level immigrants' rights (access to driver's licenses, resisting local ordinances that would displace immigrants and make them more vulnerable to deportation), and a broader immigrants' rights agenda with a binational or transnational focus (the first Latin American Community Migrant Summit in Morelia, Michoacán).

Furthermore, the actors range widely, from broad aggregates of people in a massive march, to networks of immigrant activists coordinating smaller protests, and to social service, policy, grassroots, hometown or other immigrant-led organizations. Actors also include

people who may be outside a pro-immigrant organization, but who participate in churches, schools and colleges, community centers, and in neighborhood groups. Some of these actors are focused exclusively on immigration reform; some also devote resources to other goals. The strategies vary widely as well, ranging from the more conventional, such as lobbying, letter-writing campaigns, holding news conferences, and participating in hearings. Strategies can also be more contentious, e.g. marches, vigils, consumer boycotts, sit-ins, and hunger strikes. Some organizations restrict themselves primarily to conventional strategies, some focus primarily on contentious ones, and others do a combination of both. The massive marches in 2006 and 2007 were tactical events that have been embraced by all.

This paper focuses on the strategies that have been used to address the issue of family separation. The belief that the family, as well as its preservation, unity, and continuity, is being threatened by current immigration policy has become a common referent for immigrants and their descendants, as well as for a broader community of support in Chicago.

The politicization of family unity among immigrants gained relevance in the mid-1990s, with the passage of California Proposition 187 in 1994 and the enactment of the federal Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, both of 1996. It continued and became exacerbated after 9/11, when national security became a new framework of justification for further immigration enforcement and border control.³

Changes in immigration and national security laws have led to more family separations as a consequence of increased deportations (a 200-percent increase from 50,924 in 1995 to

208,521 in 2005), stricter border enforcement, deportations of legal immigrants with criminal records, and the creation of expedited removals. These changes have also severely restricted the individual legal options once available to undocumented immigrants, including the decline in immigration judges' discretion, the termination of suspensions of deportation and their replacement with cancellations of removal, and the elimination of Section 245(i) for immigrants who had not petitioned for it by January 1998.⁴ All these changes have also led to the increased visibility of separations, both among immigrant communities and the general population. One immediate consequence of these state-led processes is that "family" became politicized in new ways and acquired political meaning for undocumented immigrants and their families, legal immigrants, and the wider Latino communities in which they reside.

The paper provides an overview of four different strategies used to prevent the separation of mixed-status families in Chicago: marches, lobbying, legal claims, and sanctuary. For each of these strategies, the paper looks at the actors involved, the messages they convey, the goals they seek, and the impact they have on shaping public opinion and public policy. It concludes with some observations on the opportunities and limits encountered by activists pursuing these strategies and some suggestions for future discussion.

MARCHES AND MARCHERS: SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE MAY 2006 AND MAY 2007 ACTIONS

Note: *Detailed charts and graphs of the survey results are appended to this chapter.*

The University of Illinois at Chicago Immigrant Mobilization Project surveys of the May 2006

and May 2007 marches used a multistage block sampling technique to give respondents an equal chance of being selected for the study. Respondents were interviewed in Spanish or English, as they chose. Interviewers were assigned “block numbers” within Union Park and Grant Park. Within those blocks, they were instructed to approach every tenth person as a potential respondent for the survey. The 2006 survey (Flores-González et al. 2006) yielded a sample of 410 surveys (among 300,000 marchers); the 2007 survey yielded 279 surveys (among 100,000 to 150,000 marchers).

Our findings reveal that both marches had a large number of citizens (Latino and non-Latino), and among them, a large number of Latino citizens with high voting rates. Among the large percentage of immigrants, the majority were citizens or documented residents. This refutes popular views of these marches as consisting exclusively of undocumented immigrants. A comparison of the 2006 and 2007 surveys reveals consistency in these numbers, as 69 percent of respondents claimed to be citizens in 2007, a slight decline from 74 percent in 2006. Additionally, respondents in 2007 were slightly more likely to be Latinos and less likely to be white than those in 2006 (figure 1). The number of marchers born in Mexico also increased; they were 59 percent of 2007 marchers, and 45 percent of 2006 marchers (figure 3). Marchers in 2007 were as likely to be Catholic, were slightly younger, and had lower levels of educational attainment than the 2006 marchers (figures 4-6).

Interestingly, for both marches the percentage of marchers who were both Latinos and U.S. citizens was higher than the percentage of U.S. citizens in the general Latino population (figure 7). Other interesting findings are a continued reliance on radio for learning about the event, but a decline in the reliance on televi-

sion (figure 8). One notable difference lies in the reason for marching. In 2006, as shown in figure 9, most survey respondents stated that the most important reason they were marching was to protect the rights of immigrants in general (54 percent), followed by supporting legalization for immigrants (27 percent), and showing unity and solidarity with immigrants (18 percent). In 2007, most respondents gave importance to supporting legalization for immigrants (53 percent), followed by stopping deportations of undocumented immigrants (16 percent) and protecting the rights of immigrants in general (14 percent). The 2006 responses indicate a less policy-specific approach to the issue and a more general desire to protect immigrants’ rights (in response perhaps to the menace of the Sensenbrenner bill), whereas the 2007 response indicates a more targeted focus on legalization, and reflects the increasing visibility of and concern about deportation, which was entirely absent in 2006.

Finally, while there is practically no difference between electoral participation in both years, there are important differences in civic participation, as 2007 marchers showed significantly lower levels of civic participation (figures 10 and 11). However, comparing Latino citizens who marched in 2007 and Latino citizens nationwide (figure 12), the former were as likely to write a letter or call an elected official as the general population of registered Latinos and were more likely to attend a public meeting.

In fact, general levels of marcher civic participation in these two categories, which includes noncitizens (figure 11), show little difference with the levels of registered Latinos. However, they are less likely to contribute money to a political candidate. Nevertheless, the high level of response in writing an elected official and attending a public meeting suggests that in terms

of the Chicago Latino population, there is not necessarily a strict dichotomy between the use of certain conventional strategies such as calling or writing a politician and the unconventional strategies of mass mobilization. If one marches (regardless of citizenship status), one is as likely to participate civically as the general Latino population, and both strategies are seen as complementary and necessary.

An exclusive look at the 2007 march also provides some new insights. The 2007 survey asked participants how many previous marches they had attended (figure 13). Almost half were occasional marchers, followed by frequent marchers (27 percent), and a significant 23 percent who were first-time marchers. This indicates that Chicago is not necessarily “marched out,” in the sense that most participants had attended two or fewer marches, and that there was still an important number of people who were marching for the first time. This is in contrast with Los Angeles, where mass activism since the mid-1990s has led some activists to a certain degree of “march exhaustion.”⁵ Additionally, Chicago marchers felt that it was safe to march. When asked if the 2006 marches had changed conditions at their workplace, most claimed it had no effect (78 percent) and 14 percent said they made conditions better; only 1 percent said the marches made conditions worse (figure 14).

To explore the relationship between march participation and the family separation issue, we looked at the percentage of mixed-status families who attended the 2007 march.⁶ We hypothesized that mixed-status families might be more engaged because they were most likely to be directly affected by any changes in immigration policies and practices, and therefore had most at stake. Indeed, the surveys showed that almost half of the respondents were members of mixed-status families (figure 15), and,

among the reasons they gave for marching, they were slightly more likely to support legalization than families in which all the members were legal (figure 16). Mixed-status family members were also less likely to be first-time marchers (figure 17). Finally, they were more likely than members of families in which all have legal status to know about Elvira Arellano and to agree with her decision to seek sanctuary in a church (figures 18-19). On the other hand, mixed-status family members who were eligible to vote were less likely to do so than members of families who were permanent residents or citizens (figure 20). They were also much less likely to engage in civic participation, except for writing or calling an elected official (figure 21).

Both marches were characterized by a visible presence of family, as well as multiple signs and posters asking that families be kept together. The 2007 march, however, seems to have placed an additional emphasis on the family issue with a combination of more formal printed messaging and the use of Elvira Arellano’s image. Another important difference was the signage on stopping deportation, likely prompted by the April 24 raid on the Little Village Mall (which many activists claim had mobilized more people to participate in the march than they had previously expected). The raid involved 84 Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers and led to the arrest of 12 people.⁷ Many community dwellers staged a spontaneous protest during the raid, outraged by the treatment of the heavily armed officers, who initially rounded up more than 100 people, stopped anyone from exiting the mall, and frightened shoppers, many of whom were children.

In terms of effectiveness, the 2006 march in Chicago, together with the dozens of marches throughout the nation, stopped the Sensenbrenner bill. The 2007 march helped

to maintain the general visibility of the issue of immigration reform in anticipation of a congressional bill, and also helped to keep the struggle alive within the Latino community in Chicago. However, the 2007 Chicago megamarch (150,000 participants) was not reproduced anywhere else in the country, where the number of marchers was much smaller in comparison to the previous year. Why was Chicago able to maintain a level of march mobilization similar to 2006, whereas other cities were not?

One possible explanation is that Chicago resisted attempts to demobilize at the national level and did not experience attempts to demobilize at the local level, as happened in other cities. At the national level, the Democratic Party, unions, corporations such as Univision, and national Latino organizations indicated in different ways that lobbying could be a more effective or meaningful route of political action.

Chicago, a city with an extraordinary amount of somewhat autonomous labor, immigrant, and community activism, was less receptive to such messages. On the local level, media representatives, politicians, and a wide range of activists agreed on the importance of marching, in contrast to other cities, where there was not widespread agreement on this issue. For example, in Chicago, the radio personality Pistolero actively promoted the 2007 march just as he had promoted the previous year's march, and repeatedly aired an ad encouraging people to mobilize. In Los Angeles, by contrast, radio personality Piolín started a letter-writing campaign, describing it as a better political option than marching. Moreover, despite the fact that Chicago is also characterized by political and ideological differences among different immigrant activists, those differences were temporarily suspended (or rather negotiated) in order to hold one march instead of the two that had originally been

planned. This type of negotiation has not been possible in a city like Los Angeles, where there is a longer history of massive immigrant mobilization and where differences seem to be even more deeply entrenched, and at times insurmountable.

However, our comparison of both marches may indicate some need for caution, not just celebration. Although both were massive, the 2006 march had greater participation of other groups, unions, and members of the middle class. National and state politicians spoke, including then-Senator Barack Obama, Senator Dick Durbin, State Senator Bobby Rush and Governor Rod Blagojevich. In 2007, Mayor Daley was the main dignitary who spoke, followed by immigrant rights activists. The moment of solidarity with immigrants so evident in 2006 was replaced by the almost exclusive presence of Latinos and, more specifically, Mexicans. To the extent that immigration reform requires a broad network of support, the declining presence of others could be a cause for concern.

In 2008, as anticipated, the number of marchers also declined; estimates range from the *Chicago Tribune's* 15,000 to activists' calculations of 22,000 to 25,000. As in 2007, however, Chicago's march was the largest in the country. While dozens of organizations, unions, and youth groups participated, the pause in immigration reform during a presidential election year made it impossible to sustain the momentum from the previous years.

With no imminent legislation to threaten or advance immigrants' rights in sight, many people doubted the utility of the march. Others, in a context of increasing raids, deportations, and local ostracism, feared that the marches would generate more backlashes in an already difficult time. High school students in the northern suburb of Waukegan, for example, who had

planned to attend the march, changed their minds after the Waukegan school board officially discouraged participation.⁸

This march was characterized by a concerted effort by members of the Centro Sin Fronteras and other organizations to create a coalition with African-Americans in order to forge a black-brown unity and a “new majority” based on common issues, including the protection of families, no violence, fair wages, and fair trade. Starting in February, weekly planning meetings were held at Operation Push, and African-American activists from Push, Cease Fire, and Muslim religious organizations participated. Other activists, grouped under the March 10 Movement, worried that the legalization issue would be diluted in such a coalition and held separate organizing meetings. Some unions, community and policy organizations, and hometown associations sent representatives to both meetings.

These differences, however, did not impede the realization of a common march and program, which included representatives from both sectors. However, although a few important African-American religious leaders and activists spoke on stage, the African-American presence among marchers did not appear significantly higher than in previous years. If this coalition is to come to fruition, it appears that a longer-term grassroots strategy must be pursued. Additionally, other important developments in the 2008 marches include an ever more significant presence of youth, not only as marchers but as organizers (each coalition had a very active youth branch), the presence of antiwar groups, and the participation of gays and lesbians.

Both coalitions have attempted to use the 2008 march as a springboard for more continued organizing. The black-brown unity

group aims to maintain the coalition and hold regular public events on shared issues. The March 10 Movement preceded the march with a Midwest regional conference aimed at creating ties among activists in the region. Moreover, two weeks after May 1, they helped organize a march from a church on the southwest side to DePaul University, where a group of Minutemen had been invited to speak by a conservative student organization.

ADVOCACY

Chicago-based organizations have been pressuring state and national public officials for immigration reform for several years. The Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), a policy advocacy organization, has conducted several efforts at the state and national level, recently launching its “Illinois Is Home” campaign. This campaign entails advocacy work with congressional representatives throughout the state, focusing on comprehensive immigration reform and the DREAM Act. The campaign also involves state assembly representatives, focusing on providing driver’s license access to undocumented immigrants, among other issues.

ICIRR has also campaigned for immigration reform in Washington, and participated in the September 6, 2007, congressional hearing on HR 1645, the STRIVE Act, with Tony Wasilewski, a Polish legal immigrant whose wife had recently been deported. In addition to its policy advocacy and research work, ICIRR promotes citizenship and civic participation, as well as immigrant integration. Most recently, it promoted citizenship through its New Americans Democracy Project, which launched a massive campaign that aimed to register 50,000 naturalized immigrants and get

at least 20,000 new Americans to vote in the 2008 elections.

Grassroots groups have organized in several ways. Hometown associations, for example, have worked as part of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) to advocate for a broad agenda of immigrant rights that complements their binational activism. Another model is the one used by Centro Sin Fronteras, which has, until recently, worked alone, primarily through its *La Familia Latina Unida* (LFLU) campaign. More recently, Sin Fronteras has worked closely with the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA) and has created a loose network of organizations from California, New York, Florida (Miami) and Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) to collaborate on lobbying efforts in Washington.

NALACC and LFLU provide two different examples of how to frame the family issue. NALACC's *Familias Unidas* campaign is designed to simultaneously oppose family separation and promote the civic participation of grassroots members. Its website invites immigrants to organize a "Familias Unidas" campaign in their communities, suggesting that they plan meetings, petition drives, marches, and vigils; engage in lobbying; and send postcards, among other easily downloadable materials.

The family-issue campaign has not been used only by immigrant organizations, *per se*. In Chicago, a network of Catholics oversaw a massive letter-writing campaign in which they collected thousands of postcards with the names and personal details of undocumented immigrants and then directed individual parishioners to send the postcards to their congressional representatives, as a way to plead the case of families. In this instance, the Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform worked

directly with undocumented immigrants who offered their identifying information, as well as with nonimmigrant parishioners, to support the immigrant cause on moral grounds. In one day, June 11, the campaign collected 30,000 postcards. The *Familias Unidas* campaign simultaneously mobilizes families within their communities and frames the family issue around the simple slogan, "Keep Our Families Together," with printed materials carrying a shadowed image of separated family members on a background of a broken heart. The concept of family unity is aimed primarily at building connections among immigrants, community members, and parishioners by presenting the human aspect of this issue.

La Familia Latina Unida, by contrast, is a relatively small group of 35 families that have faced or are facing an imminent deportation. They have pursued a dual strategy: applying for a private bill that would resolve their cases, while also participating in an extensive campaign to make visible the family separation issue and to obtain a comprehensive legislative reform inclusive of people with a prior deportation.⁹ Instead of using postcards with shadow abstract figures of families, they have embodied these families, literally opening up their own life histories, presenting their own cases as concrete examples of separated or potentially separated families.

Their campaign has included speaking in their communities and churches, protests, vigils, and hunger strikes. Throughout the past three years they have taken several bus trips to Washington to promote their cause. While they have campaigned for their cause as families, the children have participated in their own marches, and recent events have highlighted the role of children in activities that combine advocacy work with civil disobedience. In their most recent trip to Washington

in July 2008, Sin Fronteras children joined children from other cities on the steps of the Supreme Court. When asked to step down by authorities, they stayed and began singing “Born in the U.S.A.”¹⁰ When Nancy Pelosi agreed to see only a couple of people, Sin Fronteras activists insisted that she invite in all the children, and 100 of them sat in her office while she was lobbied. In Chicago, dozens of children went to then-Representative Rahm Emanuel’s (D-IL) office in August 2008, ordered pizza, and stayed in the building for an hour. Unlike NALACC, LFLU does not promote the creation of many campaigns, but relies on particular events and media coverage of those events to highlight the family separation issue.

Neither of these strategies nor any others has led to the passing of any national bill. While several congressional initiatives have tried to reverse some of the 1996 legal reforms that led to more family separation, none of them has passed.¹¹ The recent efforts for comprehensive legalization in the Senate failed, and the STRIVE Act has not moved beyond one hearing. The bill that specifically addresses family, the Child Citizen Protection Act, initiated by Representative José Serrano (D-NY), was filed in February 2007, but has not been discussed in committee.

At the city and county level, activists have been able to get ordinances protecting immigrants’ rights, but they remain largely symbolic. Most of the lobbying campaigns mentioned above have a binational dimension, as many local activists communicate directly with members of the Mexican Congress and the Mexican president on a broad range of issues, requesting that they support the immigrant movement through strategic interventions in specific cases, diplomatic negotiations with the United States, or through the cre-

ation of economic development policies that would make further migration less necessary.

Since December 2007, Sin Fronteras has played a leadership role in creating a national coalition with several grassroots organizations throughout the country in an effort to work directly with Representative Luis Gutiérrez (D-IL) and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in a two-step process: 1) blocking all immigration legislation initiatives until comprehensive reform is addressed or a temporary work visa is granted to most undocumented immigrants, and 2) creating a bill that would grant undocumented immigrants a five-year work visa, effectively stopping most deportations and family separation, until a comprehensive legalization bill is passed. The legislative strategy proved effective in March 2008, when caucus members blocked voting on legislation that would have extended the permission granted by Congress in 2005 (in the Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act) that allowed employers to rehire foreign seasonal workers with H-2B visas, exceeding the annual 66,000 visa quota. This meant that in 2008, the U.S. government issued only 33,000 visas for winter workers and the same for summer workers. By contrast, in 2007, 125,000 foreign workers entered the United States with H-2B visas.

Although the second step, the creation of a temporary visa bill, is still in the works, it is a point of contention among immigrant organizations. Advocates of temporary measures, such as a moratorium on all deportations combined with a work visa, believe that it is necessary to support piecemeal legislation while helping to build a political climate more conducive to comprehensive reform, whereas opponents argue that these timid measures are a form of “selling-out,” jeopardizing the possibilities for a more meaningful reform that would permanently legalize the undocumented.

This disagreement is grounded in different notions of what is feasible in the current political context, with a number of failed immigration bill initiatives and a presidential race in which candidates sidestepped the immigration question in an effort to garner broad electoral support. In Chicago, the disagreement is also specifically shaped by activists' position on Congressman Luis Gutierrez's legislative efforts. Although Sin Fronteras is a close ally of Gutierrez and has supported all of his bill proposals, others have held out, stating that Gutierrez has compromised too readily on issues of security, a guest worker program, and a comprehensive reform that will lead to citizenship.

At this point, most activists' hopes lie in the possibility of meaningful immigration reform in the first term of President Obama. They also share the belief that it is the responsibility of grassroots organizations, and not only of NGOs and lobby groups, to ensure that a meaningful and fair reform is passed. They agree that the power of the grassroots lies primarily in the marches and other forms of direct action and pressure, but they also seek a larger role in the advocacy effort in order to achieve their goals.

Most recently and partially in response to the raid in Postville, IA, and the beating death of undocumented immigrant Luis Ramírez in Pennsylvania, Sin Fronteras helped found the coalition, "Ya Basta" (Enough Already) and assembled 65 Chicago grassroots, immigrant advocacy, and social service organizations to launch a campaign for a moratorium on raids, deportations, and separation of families. On October 8, 2008, Ya Basta's campaign to get the Chicago city council to support the moratorium led to a unanimous resolution in its favor by the council. They have now taken the campaign to other county, state, and federal of-

ficials to persuade them to support the moratorium.

In November 2008, Ya Basta joined Congressman Luis Gutierrez in the creation and coordination of a national "Familias Unidas" campaign. Familias Unidas is an ecumenical project that holds events in churches of different denominations in major cities, collecting petitions from thousands of citizens who have agreed to sponsor an undocumented immigrant. These petitions were delivered to President Barack Obama on the 100th day of his administration, in support of a demand to end raids, keep families together, and enact comprehensive immigration reform. The campaign also aimed to utilize such events to pressure more political representatives to join its cause and develop new networks of support in religious communities.

COURT STRATEGIES

The legal restrictions created by the 1996 immigration reform have limited judges' discretion by narrowing the conditions under which a deportation decision can be reversed. While the pre-1996 suspension of deportation process allowed for a judge to suspend deportation if hardship could be demonstrated, this was replaced by cancellation of removal, in which a judge has to determine that removal of an immigrant would constitute extreme hardship on the family members, above and beyond the hardship that comes from family separation.

These new standards have made it extremely difficult for families facing deportation to win their cases in court. Cases that have been successful have usually been argued on the basis of exceptional circumstances, medical conditions, or educational needs that could not be met in the country of origin. Some cases are won based

on the leniency of a particular judge. In other instances, cases involving youth, rather than young children, are more likely to persuade a judge, as their lives are seen as more liable to be disrupted if they leave the United States.

The policy context also plays a role in shaping all deportation cases. For example, in the recent cases of IFCO workers who were arrested in Chicago in 2006, two different judges had granted the workers extensions of many additional months, in anticipation of immigration reform.¹² However, when one group of workers returned to the judge in September, he requested that they engage in voluntary departure, specifically citing the failed Senate bill and Rep. Rahm Emanuel's prediction that no comprehensive immigration reform would be possible for another six years as indicators that the law would not change in the foreseeable future.

In terms of citizen children's rights, no court has ever agreed that citizen children have a constitutional right to remain with their parents, as federal immigration law tends to trump state-level family law. Nor has any court agreed that deporting a parent is a *de facto* deportation of the child, as the child is purportedly free to stay in the country or to return at a later stage. Courts have repeatedly established that undocumented immigrants cannot use the citizenship of their child to prevent their own deportation. Although immigration law has historically favored family reunification, it is based on the parents' right to use their status as a means to legalize their child, not vice versa (for a more thorough discussion, see Thronson [2007]). Children's rights are derivative of their parents, and to complicate things further, they are not recognized as having legal agency in their own right, but as being under tutelage of their parents. While there is an obvious con-

tradiction between the reality of family separations determined by immigration law and the primacy of family unity pursued in family law, there has been no systematic effort to qualify or modify the former by applying the latter or even in engaging in a meaningful dialogue between the two (*ibid.*).

In light of this, it is very difficult for legal strategies, either individual or collective, to succeed. Saul Arellano's claim that deporting his mother Elvira Arellano would violate his rights was thrown out in 2006. On a collective level, children from LFLU have joined a total of 600 children in other cities in a class-action suit filed by the Florida-based organization Family Fraternity (formerly Nicaraguan Fraternity). The case argues that the children's right to have their parents with them outweighs the government's prerogative to deport those who violated U.S. immigration law. The case, filed directly with the U.S. Supreme Court, argues that the deportation of undocumented parents is often *de facto* deportation of their children and asks the court to establish the citizen children's legal standing to request a stay of those deportations. Legal analysts, however, claim that this case has little legal merit and will probably be set aside by the court. It should perhaps, be understood as an effort to obtain some level of continued visibility and publicity.

In sum, unless the laws were to change, either through comprehensive reform or some version of the Child Citizen Protection Act, there are few options available to those who attempt to make a family separation argument in court. Legal victories are more likely at a different and much earlier stage of the process: cases that aim to stop detention, seizures, no-match letters, searches, and other procedures that can be claimed to violate the civil rights and privacy of citizens and legal residents.

SANCTUARY

Elvira Arellano, president of LFLU, had been actively engaged for several years in organizing families who were facing or had recently experienced the deportation of at least one parent. As LFLU's conventional tactics generated few positive outcomes and her own deportation was imminent, Arellano, in consultation with her pastor and Centro Sin Fronteras, decided to seek sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist Church on August 15, 2006. She remained there for a year, after which she decided to travel to other sanctuary churches and mobilize people to join her in Washington on September 12, 2007, to ask Congress to reconsider immigration reform. On August 18, 2007, she was arrested by agents from Immigration Customs and Enforcement (ICE) outside a church in Los Angeles and on August 19 she was deported to Mexico.

Arellano's case gained national and international attention, undoubtedly giving a human face to the deportation issue, and underscoring the contradiction embedded in the citizen child-undocumented parent relationship in the context of contemporary immigration law, and the second-class status that current policy assigns not only to undocumented immigrants whose right to parent is curtailed, but of citizen children who experience the constant threat of separation from family and country. In a news conference held the day she sought asylum, Arellano stated: "I am doing this because my son is not a piece of garbage." Arellano's case moved people in powerful ways, leading activists throughout the country to organize marches, protests, and other events in her name, inspiring songs, poems, and the motto, "We are all Elvira Arellano," which has been used in protests and rallies since her deportation.

Together, Arellano and her son were a powerful symbol. Their simultaneous fear and determination embodied the importance of human dignity and of the parent-child relationship, which were both seen as threatened. Separately, they were the focus of critique from different circles. Arellano, as a rare undocumented person to engage in a public act of resistance, was caught in a double bind of representation, from without and within. Many journalists and observers questioned her right to represent the cause, to have a voice, and to engage in this kind of activism. Within immigrant communities, others claimed she did not represent the undocumented, either because her activism was considered too radical, or because her experience did not reflect those of the 12 million undocumented people in this country. Many feared that excessive media focus on her had hurt their case. When Saul Arellano lobbied alone in Mexico, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C., critics argued that the child was being used. Both sets of critiques, from without and within, point to the problems of relying on a single individual as symbol, and then expecting that individual to carry the weight of the movement's successes and failures. Furthermore, critiques from within point to the poverty of representation of immigrants, that is to the dire lack of alternative images of immigrants in the mainstream press, and to the exclusion of Latinos as authority figures, all factors that contributed to an excessive inflation of Arellano's roles as spokesperson.

The effectiveness of sanctuary as strategy, however, needs to be evaluated in a broader national context. Arellano's seeking of sanctuary was not immediately followed by dozens of similar efforts, and for most of that year, she remained the sole immigrant housed by a church. However by May 2007, churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship in more than 20

cities had joined together in a coalition to create the New Sanctuary Movement (NSM). Congregations in Los Angeles, San Diego, New York, Seattle, Boston, and many other cities joined Adalberto United Methodist in Chicago to become safe havens for undocumented immigrants seeking sanctuary. Currently, there are 20 immigrants being supported through this movement. In addition to providing sanctuary, the NSM has more recently focused on campaigning against the raids and deportations that lead to family separation. In this effort, they have staged vigils, marches, and implemented court watch programs.

Although relatively small at this point, the sanctuary movement is important because it provides an alternative rationale, based on the religious tradition of providing safe haven for those fleeing persecution and on the argument that current immigration law is immoral because it separates families and should not therefore supersede God's law. Sanctuary protection is viewed as the moral thing to do, and can thus appeal to parishioners and believers of many faiths who are not necessarily immigrants or Latinos. Although they have received hundreds of applicants, the NSM only gives sanctuary to those who fit a certain profile: immigrants must have close relatives who are in the United States legally, they must have a pending case, and they must be willing to speak publicly.

Additionally, sanctuary involves a substantial number of resources, a set monthly amount to cover the family's expenses, legal assistance, and medical and other forms of assistance. While these requirements and resource constraints may not lead to massive numbers of people in sanctuary, it is likely that the numbers will increase in the foreseeable future. Sanctuary is effective at providing a different lens on the issue, mobilizing faith-based communities, and making family separation visible.

For those in sanctuary, it does indeed provide a safe haven; although the government may have the legal authority to go into churches and detain immigrants, so far it has not done so.

In January 2008, Flor Crisóstomo, another Sin Fronteras activist and single mother facing a deportation order, also sought sanctuary at Adalberto United Methodist. In contrast to Arellano, Crisóstomo has no citizen children in the United States. Her three children live with her mother in Guerrero, Mexico. Crisóstomo argues that motherhood for her is primarily grounded in her ability to financially support her children, even if it means remaining separated from them. She has emphasized the relationship between the creation of a flexible global workforce and her personal situation, arguing that her displacement and migration are an effect of NAFTA. She has also underscored her Zapotec indigenous roots, speaking at the United Nations Indigenous Forum and touring with Native American activists (prior to her sanctuary). While acknowledging that her own case will most likely lead to deportation and possibly detention, she considers this an act of resistance designed to raise consciousness among her pueblo and has used sanctuary as a platform to engage the public and call attention to the issue.

After the initial days of sanctuary, however, it became clear that the press was showing less interest in Crisóstomo's story than in Arellano's. This may attest to a different political moment, distinct from the months of euphoria following the marches, when Arellano sought sanctuary and the outcome of her act seemed uncertain. It may be viewed by the media as lower on the human interest scale, given Crisóstomo's lack of citizen children, or considered repetitive, given Arellano's one-year stay in the same church. Between sporadic peaks in coverage, Crisóstomo continues her public awareness

campaign, which includes sharing her message with the press and public officials, engaging in public education activities with youth, and posting updates to her blog. In October 2009 Flor Crisóstomo left sanctuary to an undisclosed location, stating that after almost two years, sanctuary had lost its effectiveness as a strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

Members of mixed-status families have marched, lobbied, tried legal options, and a few have even sought sanctuary. The effectiveness of these strategies should not be measured by policy outcomes alone, but also by their ability to shape the public opinion of immigrant and nonimmigrant communities, as well as by their ability to mobilize people. Media coverage of family separations and the crises they involve has increased, as they provide the drama and human interest that the media are attracted to. In the past year, the Spanish-language press and media have become increasingly sensitized to this issue, to the point that some of the Chicago family separations have been prominently featured on Univision programs by popular celebrities such as Don Francisco and Cristina. These stories resonate with Latino audiences, since they reinforce their own experiences in their cities and communities, and personally touch immigrants who have experienced some form of family separation. Moreover, the massive participation of non-mixed-status families in the marches and the support of a broader community of Latino legal immigrants and citizens clearly indicate that one does not have to be directly affected to support the cause and that a broader Latino community is not only sensitized to but also willing to mobilize around this issue.

However, in terms of the mainstream English-language media, it is not clear that these stories of family separation are changing hearts and minds or motivating people to engage in any type of political action. The stories, when covered, are usually framed as tragic stories about which little can be done. They usually do not include any of the political contexts of these stories, even in cases when the family members depicted are activists. The focus is on the individual or a family's plight in lieu of the policy or political context that allows this to happen. Although Spanish-language audiences are more likely to associate these stories with immigration reform, that is not necessarily the case with a more mainstream public. The stories simply become sad tales of individuals who are victims of circumstance.

Strategies that focus on family are divided among those that have a more general focus on the family as a unit and as a political subject against those that emphasize the rights and, increasingly, the agency of the children. Although a focus on family can garner public sympathy and may seem in some instances to be the most effective political route, it does have its limits. It does not necessarily always represent the rights, needs, and desires of all of the family members, and it obviously excludes individuals and families without minor children. If not planned carefully, it can also expose activists to the criticism that children are being exploited and made to feel unduly responsible for the plight of their parents.

Additionally, the focus on the citizen children runs into the same obstacles as other children's rights issues, as children are not recognized as full citizens in most polities but rather as protocitizens, with limited rights and responsibilities, and as dependents or extensions of their parents. Moreover, while citizen children of undocumented immigrants may have

the same formal rights as other birthright citizens, in the public view their citizenship status is viewed as trumped by their parent's illegal status. For example, when Hillary Clinton recently proposed giving a \$5,000 bond to all newborns if she were elected, Republican candidate Rudolph Giuliani critiqued her proposal by asking if she would give that bond to children of illegal immigrants. The implication is that citizen children of undocumented immigrants are not as entitled to public funds as children of citizens or legal residents. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that highlighting the citizen children issue is a double-edged sword: it can also invite anti-immigrant groups to address the "problem" by lobbying to revoke birthright citizenship.

How then can this campaign for family unity become effective? It is important to divide the problem into at least two separate categories: addressing the needs of mixed-status families who are already here and who fear separation, and providing a long-term vision to address the family issue for future immigrants. Families that are already here must continue to operate on a number of fronts, emphasizing the humanitarian angle, working closely with religious supporters, and highlighting children's rights, but with extreme caution.

Marches, protests, vigils, media campaigns, and sanctuary keep the problem visible, although far more thought needs to be given to how to adequately convey the message to non-immigrants and non-Latinos. Absent the imminent possibility of comprehensive reform, it appears that the legislative route, particularly a bill such as the Child Citizen Protection Act, should be moved ahead and targeted for mass lobbying and mass support. Only a bill that returns discretion to judges will make court strategies more viable. Collective efforts should also focus on returning some of the provisions

changed by the 1996 law, allowing families with citizen relatives to petition for change in legal status while remaining in the United States.

For the long term, it is important to see the family separation issue in its entirety by adopting a more transnational perspective. Deportation of parents in the United States is only one half of the issue. The other half is the number of families who are in fact separated when parents have to leave their children in countries of origin to work in the United States. While the latter may be less visible and may be more desirable for some policymakers (as it externalizes the reproductive cost of labor), it is the other side of a problem whose long-term solution is to create forms of legal and safe passage that would facilitate movement back and forth for work purposes along with a realistic number of visa allocations for those who want to bring their family. One of the problems that made it difficult to support the failed Senate bill 1348 (Comprehensive Immigration Reform Act of 2007) was that it wanted the former (more work visas) to cancel out the latter (family visas). Any comprehensive reform that does not put family first or that displaces family for some other objective will make the problem far more severe and in effect (without including other violations of rights in guest workers' programs) create second-class residents out of any guest workers who are not allowed to bring their family.

Examining immigrant movement strategies in Chicago more broadly, we see a variety of strategies far more extensive than the four reviewed above. There is a broad range of approaches, from more conventional lobbying of politicians at all levels to less conventional ones, including hunger strikes, sanctuary, protests, other forms of civil disobedience, and consumer boycotts (in Waukegan). This has

been an escalating process, with three years of more conventional tactics and an accelerated use of the more contentious ones in the past year and a half.

These various strategies are a reflection of different approaches to the immigration reform issue. All organizations and activists interviewed understand the importance of naturalization and registration campaigns to effectively translate “today we march” into “tomorrow we vote.” However, while some organizations and groups prefer a more moderate, long-term, and what they view as realistic agenda, working closely with legislators and with the legislative schedule, others want more independence and may carry out immediate and more dramatic actions in light of the increases in raids, deportations, and no-match letters. Elvira Arellano’s decision to leave her sanctuary and travel the country to mobilize people and risk an eventual public arrest in front of Congress is an example of the latter view.

Although the first approach seems at times too moderate and too long in light of recent developments, the latter relies heavily on media attention and repeated symbolic actions, potentially leaving less time for systematic organization of the bases. Many grassroots and hometown associations lie somewhere in the middle, understanding political constraints, but also believing in the power of popular mobilization. These divisions need to be addressed and negotiated, not overlooked or disregarded if any coordination of political actions is to be seriously attempted. Coordination must include but move beyond marches, combining a number of strategies in a timely manner. For example, marches should be accompanied by mass calling campaigns, such as the ones that stopped Senate bill 1348, and both of these should be timed to coincide with important legislative moments. While the spring 2006

marches were designed to stop Sensenbrenner, the 2007 march was organized to coincide with a historic date and not at a particularly important political moment.

Actions should also be proactive and not merely reactive, and they should have concrete goals that are different from legislative reform but can help build up to that. One important objective is the pressuring of politicians and other political leaders to pronounce themselves publicly in support of immigration reform and not only in the Spanish-language press. All social movements need powerful and visible allies and the immigrant movement needs to create more nonimmigrants and non-Latinos who are willing to speak in favor of immigrants. In addition to offering the carrot of immigrant support, supporters need to provide the stick by organizing the immigrant and Latino vote to replace incumbents who oppose immigration reform with advocates for reform. The newly created Immigration PAC, a federal political action committee founded by Chicagoan José Cruz, aims to pursue this goal. It claims that immigration reform will not be possible unless the congressional representatives who oppose it are replaced by pro-reform candidates. It has already campaigned against several congressional representatives with strong enforcement positions on immigration, and is currently focused on a handful of close elections in Illinois, Virginia, and New Mexico.¹³

Another concrete goal should be continued and consistent efforts to partner and mobilize with other groups—African-Americans, Muslims, Puerto Ricans, European-Americans—and with a broad range of religious communities in actions that may include but are not necessarily confined to marches. Given the decline in non-Latino participation in marches and the limited access to the English-language media, it is up to the pro-im-

migrant communities to inform, educate, and maintain ties with other communities. A recent Pew Hispanic Center survey (2004) shows that most Latinos are supportive of legalization. What is imperative at this point is to find ways to inform and persuade non-Latinos that immigration reform should also be their concern.

Finally, it is important to rethink the message. Many of the strategies discussed above involve the representation of undocumented immigrants by others: children representing parents, citizen spouses claiming extreme hardship if the undocumented spouse is deported, citizen and legal resident workers defending their rights in the no-match affair, and so on. As long as one citizen's rights, privacy, or work security can be violated by efforts to question, seize, or deport undocumented immigrants, one can use that as a basis for making a claim. What disappears in this process is both the presentation and re-presentation of the undocumented person as someone whose human rights and dignity should not be erased or set aside. The focus should be on the undocumented, and not only on those representing them. The multiple acts of illegality (to use the anti-immigrant trope), immorality, and inhumanity perpetrated against them should be a central part of any framing of the issue or discussion of future reform.

TRANSNATIONAL ACTS AND NEW FORMS OF SUBSTANTIVE CITIZENSHIP (a Post-Conference Reflection)

In October 2007, this paper was presented with a few others in a two-day conference at Casa Michoacán in Chicago, where several activists and community leaders made very rich presentations, outlining some of the challenges

that lie ahead. A central theme discussed was the importance of understanding and promoting more participation, of transforming the experience of the marches into more sustained engagement, while simultaneously acknowledging that the megamarches were an effect of multiple participatory acts and experiences. The papers by Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro and Judith Boruchoff suggest several central aspects of migrant participation: its *transnationality* and its inclusion of forms of *substantive citizenship* that can be exercised by those who lack formal citizenship. Vonderlack-Navarro asks how can hometown associations (HTAs) be more effective in their binational work. Boruchoff asks how do we take into account all these different forms of substantive citizenship without viewing them as sufficient replacements for formal citizenship. Both of these papers are preoccupied with new forms of participation, as well as with the presence of new political actors within an HTA framework.

These same questions are also central in other settings and within other types of organizations, such as Centro Sin Fronteras. Its transnational acts are distinct from those exercised by HTAs, which are rooted first in development projects and then expand to binational activism for social, civil, and economic rights. Nevertheless, they also should be considered as novel and important, not only because of their binationality, but because they involve practices of substantive citizenship exercised by those who lack formal citizenship. Like its domestic activism, Sin Frontera's binational activism is centrally focused on defending the rights of undocumented immigrants. Since her deportation, Elvira Arellano has worked as a representative of Sin Fronteras in a number of capacities: inaugurating a shelter in her name in Tijuana (funded primarily by Hermandad

Mexicana Transnacional), traveling as an invited speaker to Cuba and Central America, playing a key role in the organization of the First Mexican Migrant Parliament in Mexico in November 2007, leading marches for immigrant rights in Mexico City and Tijuana, supporting the establishment of the municipality of Ecatepec as a sanctuary for Central American immigrants passing through Mexico, and working to create a center for the families of immigrants in her hometown of Maravatio in the state of Michoacán.

Perhaps two aspects of her activism are most interesting. First, she has also become an advocate for the rights of Central Americans in Mexico, pressuring the government to decriminalize Central American immigration, hence, underscoring the ways in which the undocumented immigrant struggle is simultaneously a domestic, transnational, and global issue. Although this point was also made at the 2007 Morelia summit organized by NALACC, Arellano has embodied this struggle in unique and visible ways, traveling frequently to the border as well as sending her son to the 2008 Chicago march to continue her visibility in the United States, while pursuing her Central American rights agenda in Mexico City and elsewhere in Latin America.

Second, she is organizing family members of undocumented immigrants in Mexico, as well as defending the rights of deportees. This includes not only issues concerning access to basic resources, such as health, education, and employment, but the right to represent the undocumented in Mexico. This is new terrain, and one that is not fully supported by many immigrant organizations.

This became evident at the Migrant Parliament when differences arose concerning who could represent immigrants. While

opposition to Arellano's presence and brief speech was clearly related to partisan divisions (Arellano being a member of the Democratic Revolution Party/Partido de la Revolución Democrática [PRD] and those who opposed her being associated with the National Action Party/Partido Acción Nacional [PAN]) and not only to disagreement with her sanctuary strategy, the ambiguities about immigrant representativity were more telling.

Claiming that the parliament had been infiltrated by nonimmigrants, many argued that only immigrants with passports should vote. This clearly excluded the undocumented in the United States (who obviously were not present at the Mexican event), but also appeared to rule out deportees, family members of undocumented immigrants (several had attended to speak for the rights of their loved ones in the United States), and second-generation children of immigrants whose parents had been deported to Mexico or were facing deportation (Sin Fronteras had taken a few of these youths in its delegation). When Chicago voted for its delegates to the parliament, Arellano was not allowed to vote. Sin Fronteras and a handful of organizations argued that the constituency of the *parlamento* should be expanded to include all the above-mentioned categories.

The newness of these developments makes it difficult to predict what the outcomes will be. However, it is possible to state that the diversity and complexity of the immigrant movement in the United States has its parallel in Mexico. While Bada (2008) has explained how Mexican partisan politics has shaped immigrant engagement in Chicago and the United States, it is also possible to argue that the politics of immigrant activism in the United States is also permeating Mexico and Latin America.

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NOTES

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- 2 "No-match" refers to letters sent to employers indicating discrepancies between the name or Social Security number provided by them and records at the Social Security Administration (SSA). The Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) final no-match rule (August 2007) stated that for employers who follow the "safe harbor" procedures, DHS will not use the no-match letter sent to an employer as constructive knowledge that such employer hired undocumented workers. However, in a federal lawsuit filed by the AFL-CIO against DHS (*AFL-CIO et al. v. Chertoff*) the U.S. District Court of Northern California granted a preliminary injunction, finding that the DHS rule could result in the termination of lawfully employed workers, resulting in irreparable harm to such workers. The DHS rule is blocked until the court makes a final decision on whether the rule is legal. Since April 2008 the SSA has not sent any no-match letters to employers and has stated that it will not send any more until the lawsuit is settled. For more details, see http://nilc.org/immsemplymnt/SSA_Related_Info/no-match_PI_2008-10-23.PDF.
- 3 This new security rationale became formally enforced when the Office of Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) was dismantled and its responsibilities fell under the authority of the new U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
- 4 Expedited removal, enacted in the 1996 law, allows border agents to process and immediately deport individuals who are caught trying to cross the border without granting them a hearing before a judge. This increased the power of U.S. Border Patrol officers and restricted the power of judges, who are limited by statute in their final determination when there is a prior deportation. The suspension of deportation hearings allowed immigrants to go before a judge and argue that their deportation would lead to extreme hardship. However limited, it was a possibility that was eliminated after 1996, leaving almost no legal room for undocumented immigrants to appeal or for immigration judges to make exceptions (Coutin Bibler 2003). Additionally, Section

245(i) allowed certain categories of immigrants seeking permanent residency to remain in the United States while doing so instead of having to return to their country of origin and apply through a U.S. consulate. When applied, this prevented family separation. This was also suspended by the 1996 bill for anyone who had not petitioned for it by January 1998, but restored by the LIFE Act, which extended the deadline for filing for Section 245(i) to April 30, 2001. Since that extension, and despite intense immigrant activism to extend it again, Section 245(i) has not been available for anyone who did not file by April 2001. Finally, another legal change that has led to increasing family separations is the deportation of individuals who have a prior conviction. This law does not apply exclusively to people convicted after 1996; even in instances when individuals have already served time, they are liable to be deported.

- 5 From interviews with several California activists taken in September 2007, November 2007, and January 2008.
- 6 Mixed-status families are nuclear families that consist of at least one undocumented member and at least one other member who is a legal resident or citizen.
- 7 ICE stated they were targeting a ring of identification counterfeiters that had been under investigation for two years.
- 8 Conversation with Nilda Flores-González and Alejandro Domínguez, May 2008. Minutemen from the Waukegan, IL, area had presented this issue to the school board.
- 9 A private bill is a bill that is introduced on behalf of a specific individual or group of individuals and that, if enacted into law, would only affect those individuals included in the bill.
- 10 The modified chorus they sang was, “I was born in the U.S.A. Don’t take my mommy and daddy away.”
- 11 For a list of these measures, see Human Rights Watch (2007).
- 12 Since 2005, IFCO, a company that produced wooden pallets, was being investigated by ICE for hiring undocumented workers. On April 20, 2006, ICE apprehended 1,187 IFCO employees in 26 states, in what is considered to be the first massive raid held after the March 10 march. In Chicago, 60 IFCO workers were detained.
- 13 For more on Immigration PAC, view its website: http://www.immigrationpac.org/?page_id=184.

TABLES

The following are results from the University of Illinois at Chicago Immigrant Mobilization Project. Data were collected from surveys taken after the May 2006 and May 2007 marches in Chicago. The surveys used a multistage block sampling technique, and respondents were given the choice of being interviewed either in English or Spanish. The 2006 survey yielded a sample of 410; the 2007 survey, 279.

FIGURE 1: *Citizenship of Marchers, 2006 vs. 2007*

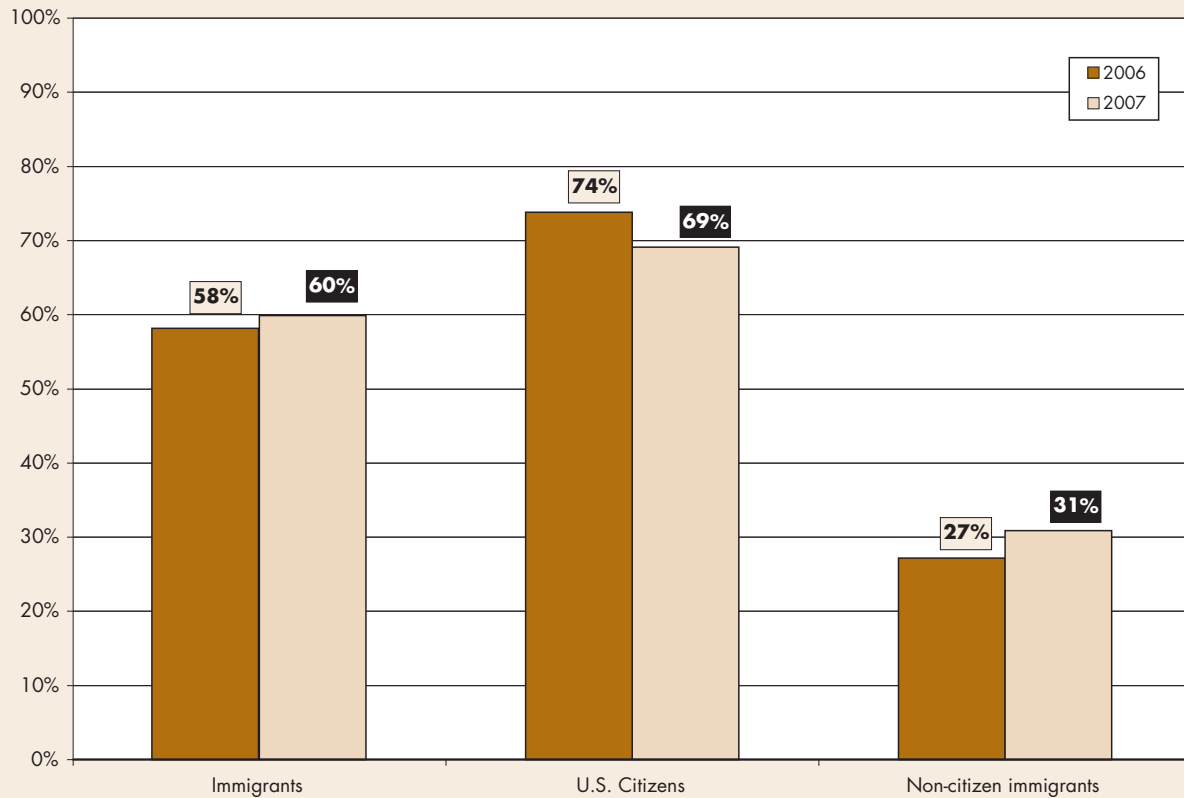


FIGURE 2: *Ethnicity of March Participants, 2006 vs. 2007*

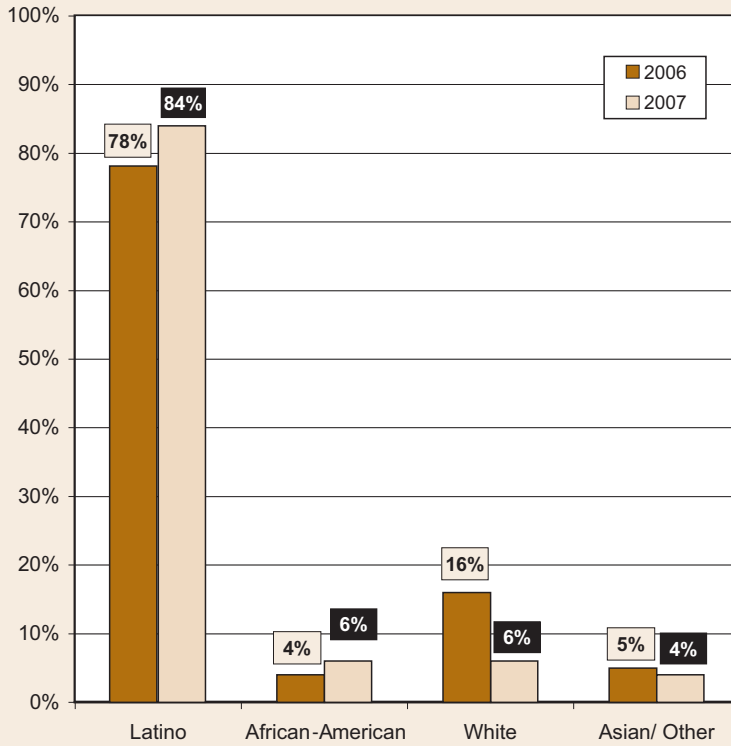


FIGURE 3: *Nationality of Marchers, 2006 vs. 2007*

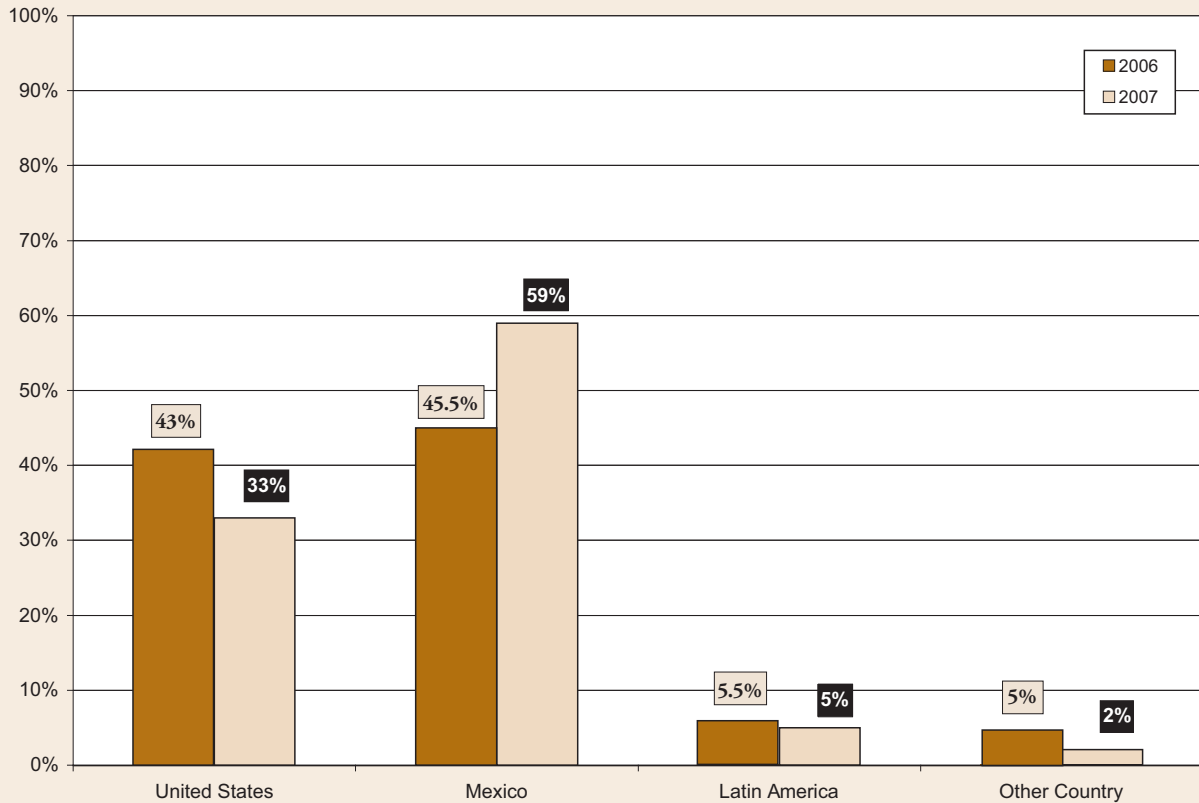


FIGURE 4: Religious Preferences

	2006	2007
CATHOLIC	68%	71%
CHRISTIAN PROTESTANT CHURCH	10%	10%
JEWISH	2%	0%
MUSLIM	1%	2%
OTHER RELIGION	5%	4%
NO PREFERENCE	15%	13%

FIGURE 5: Age of Marchers, 2006 vs. 2007

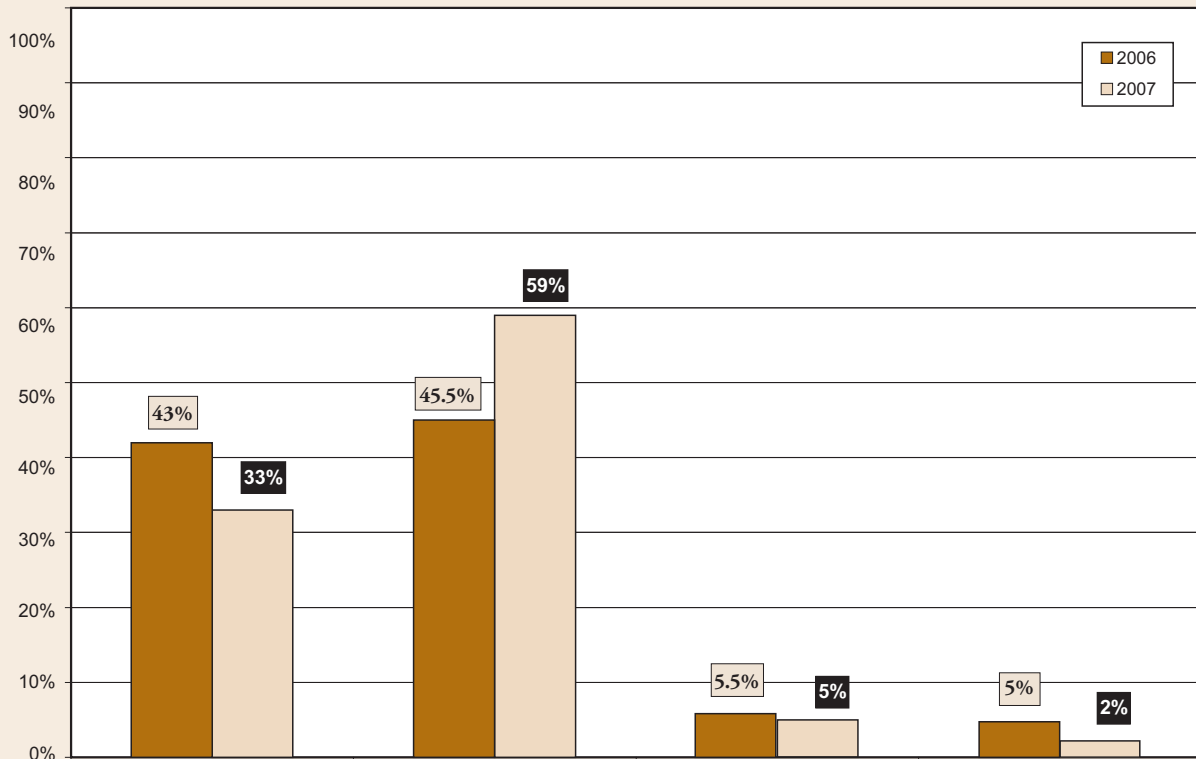


FIGURE 6: *Education Levels of March Participants, 2006 vs. 2007*

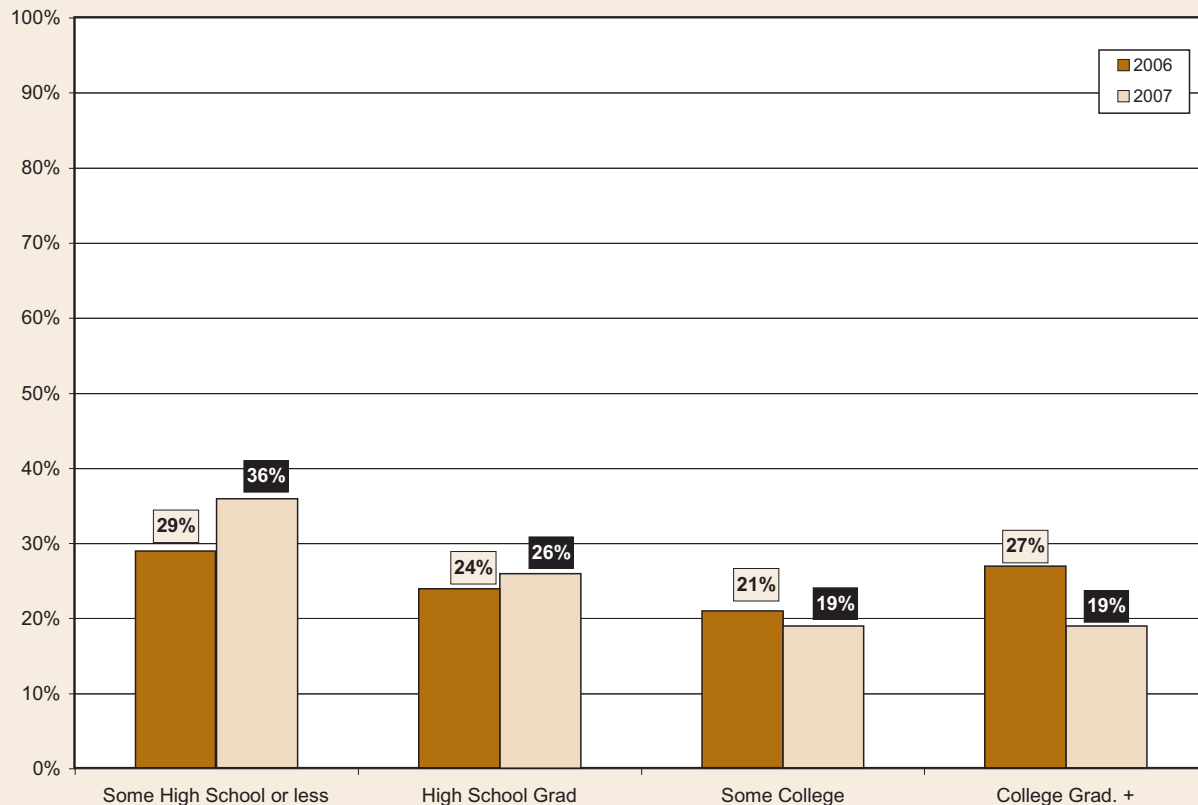


FIGURE 7: *Percentage of Marchers Who Were Both Latinos and U.S. Citizens vs. Percentage of U.S. Citizens in the General Latino Population*

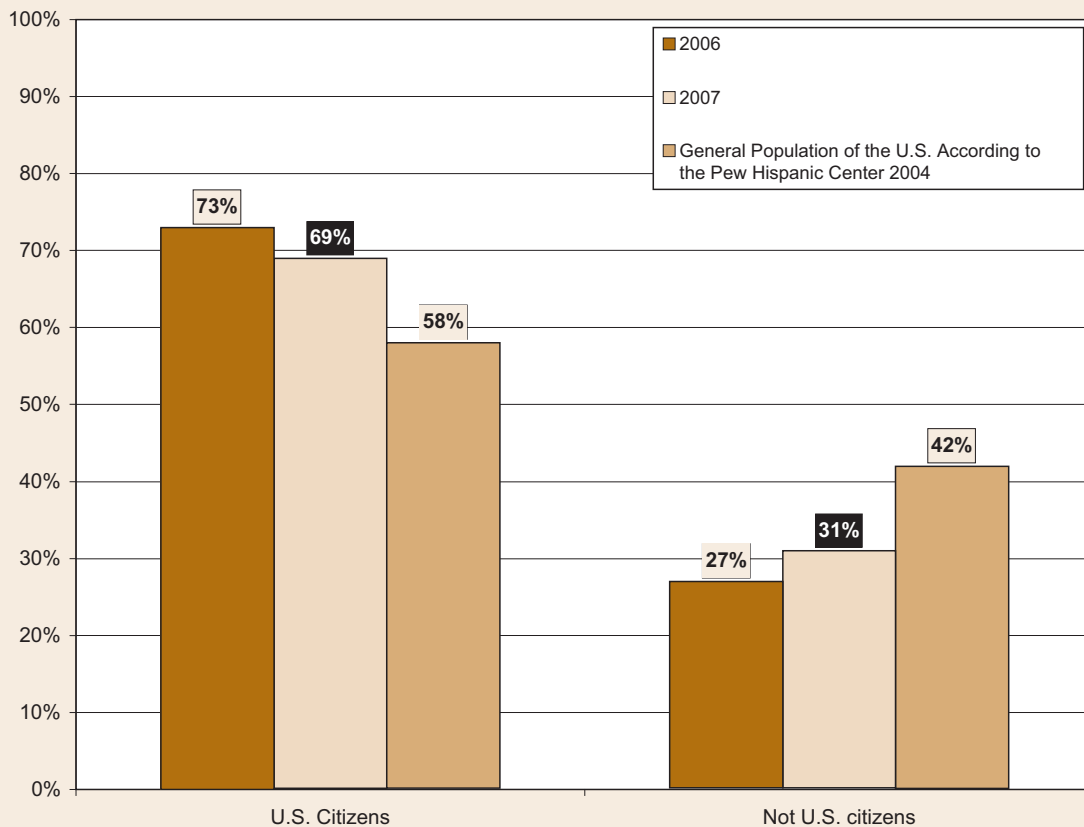


FIGURE 8: Media Through Which Marchers Heard About March, 2006 vs. 2007

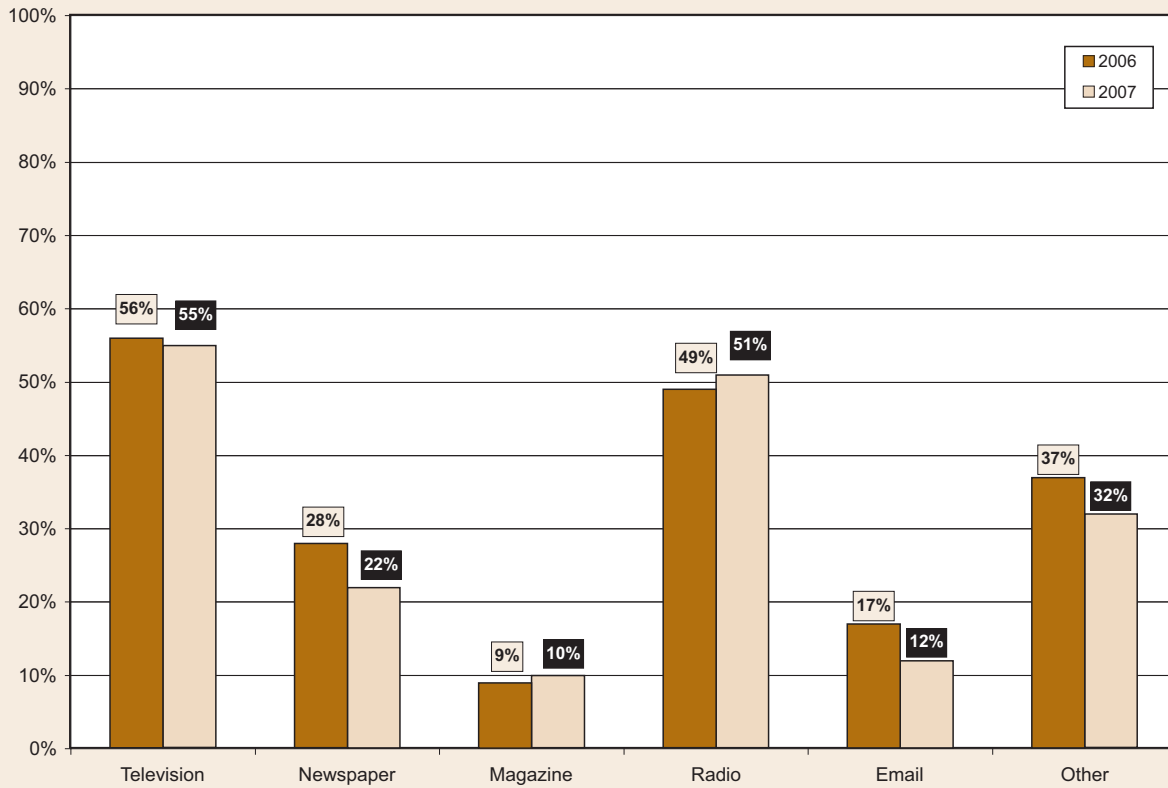


FIGURE 9: Most Important Reason for Marching, 2006 vs. 2007

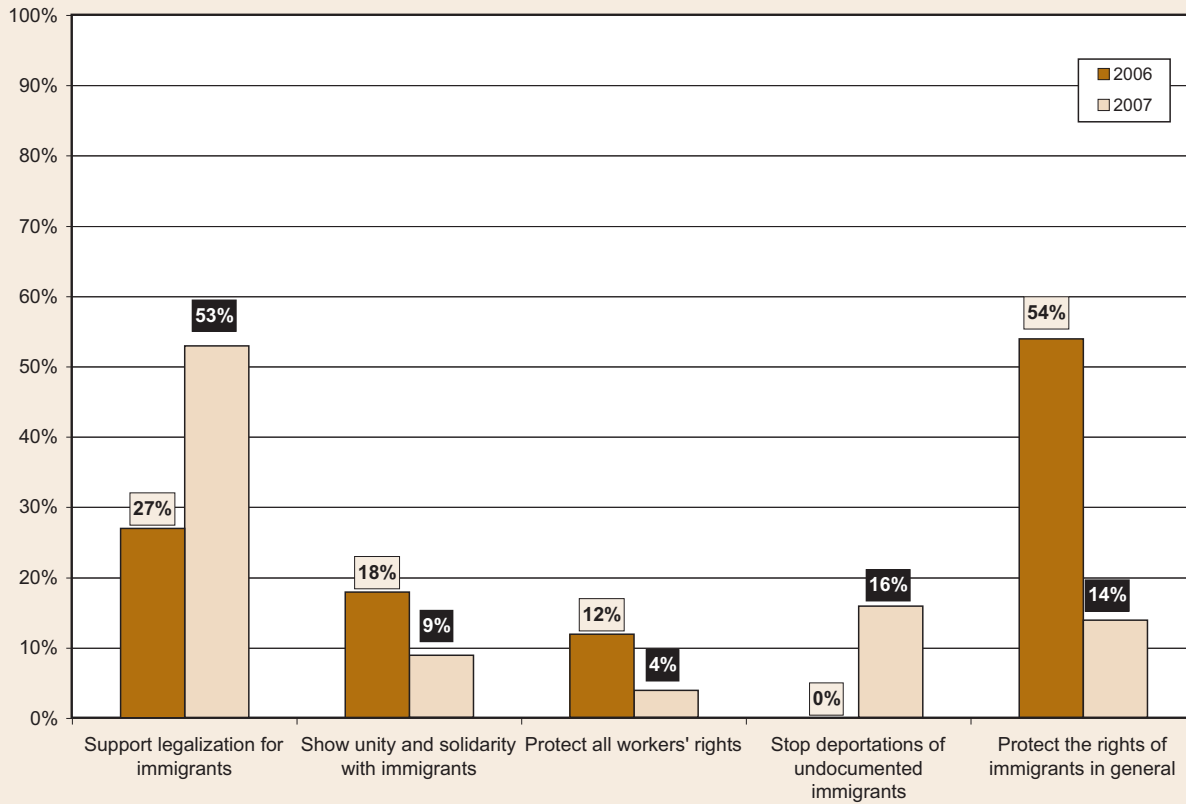


FIGURE 10: *Percentage of Marchers Who Were Eligible to Vote and Who Had Ever Voted in Any Election, 2006 vs. 2007*

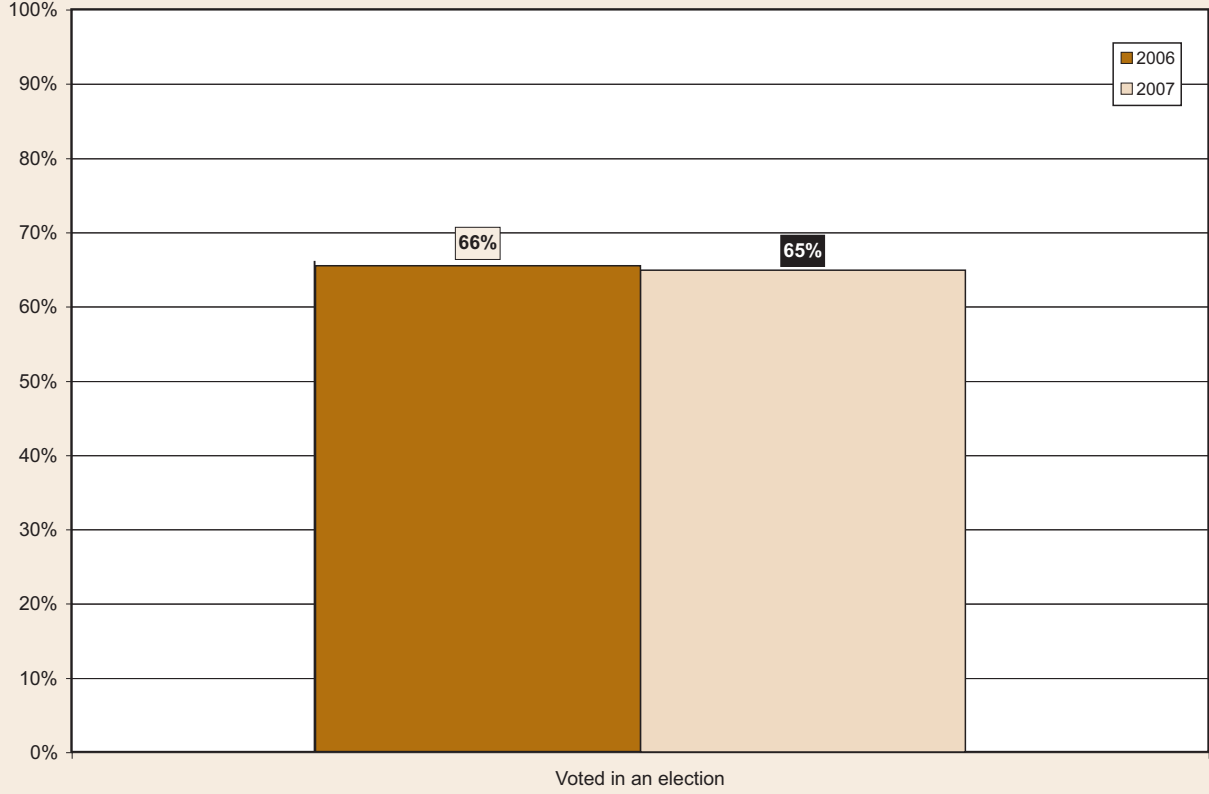


FIGURE 11: *Civic Participation of Marchers*

	2006	2007
HAD SIGNED A PETITION	37%	33%
HAD WRITTEN A LETTER TO OR HAD CALLED AN ELECTED OFFICIAL	31%	25%
HAD ATTENDED A PUBLIC MEETING	55%	27%
HAD CONTRIBUTED MONEY TO A POLITICAL CANDIDATE	22%	10%
HAD ATTENDED A NON-IMMIGRATION POLITICAL RALLY	38%	28%

FIGURE 12: Civic Participation Levels of Marchers Who Were Both Latinos and U.S. Citizens, 2007 vs. Civic Participation Levels for the General Latino Population that Is Eligible to Vote (Registered Voters and Unregistered Voters), 2004

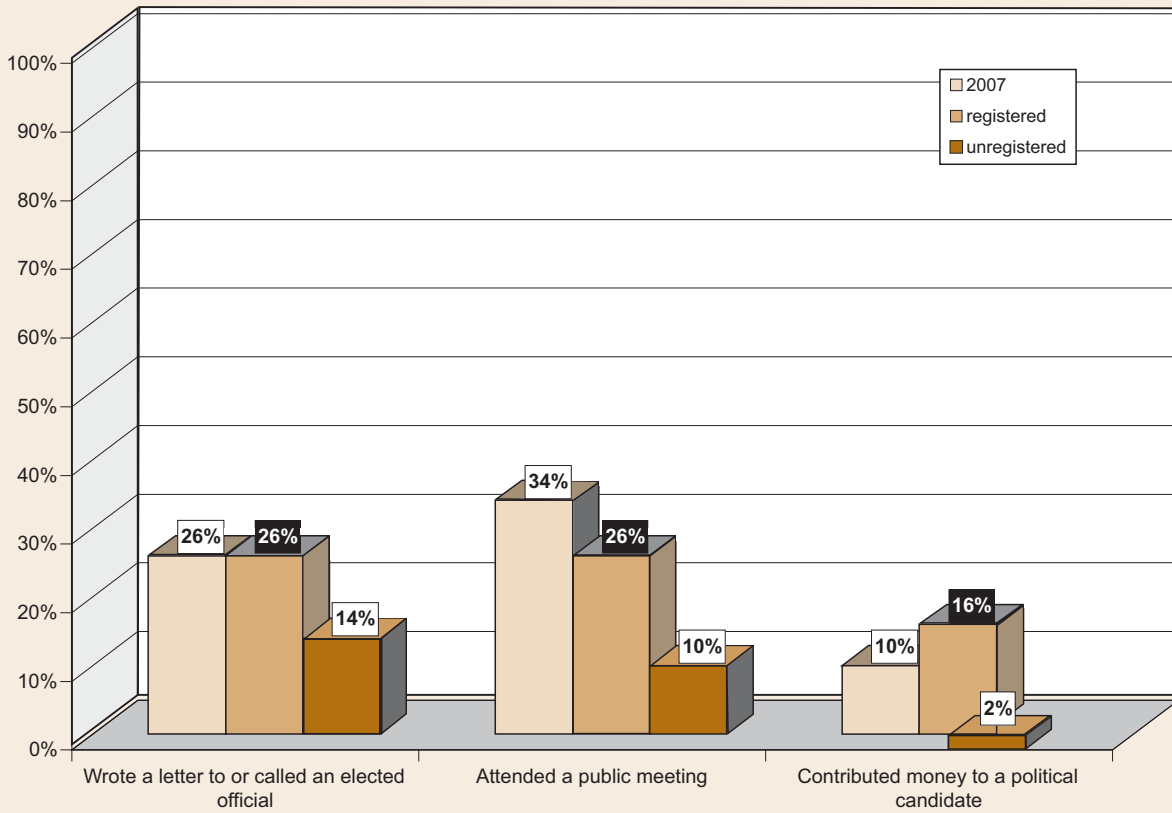


FIGURE 13: Frequency of March Participation, 2007

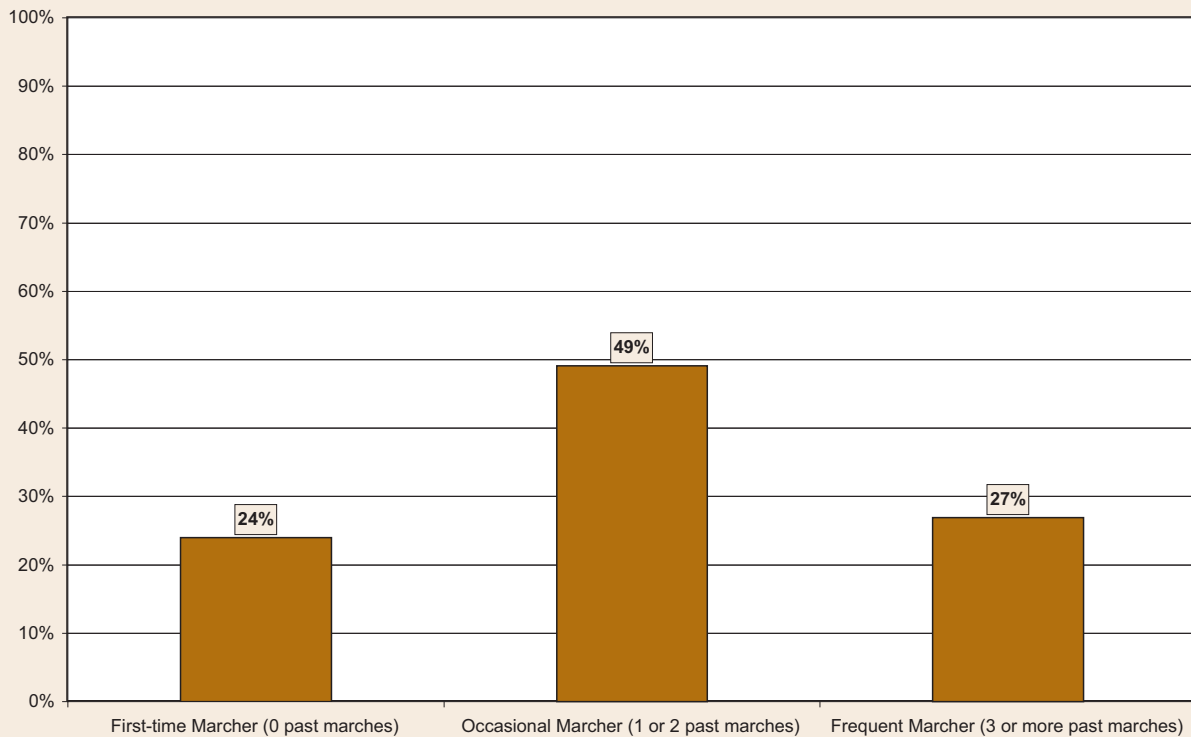


FIGURE 14: *After last year's immigrant marches, did the events cause conditions at your workplace to get better, worse, or did they have no effect?, 2007*

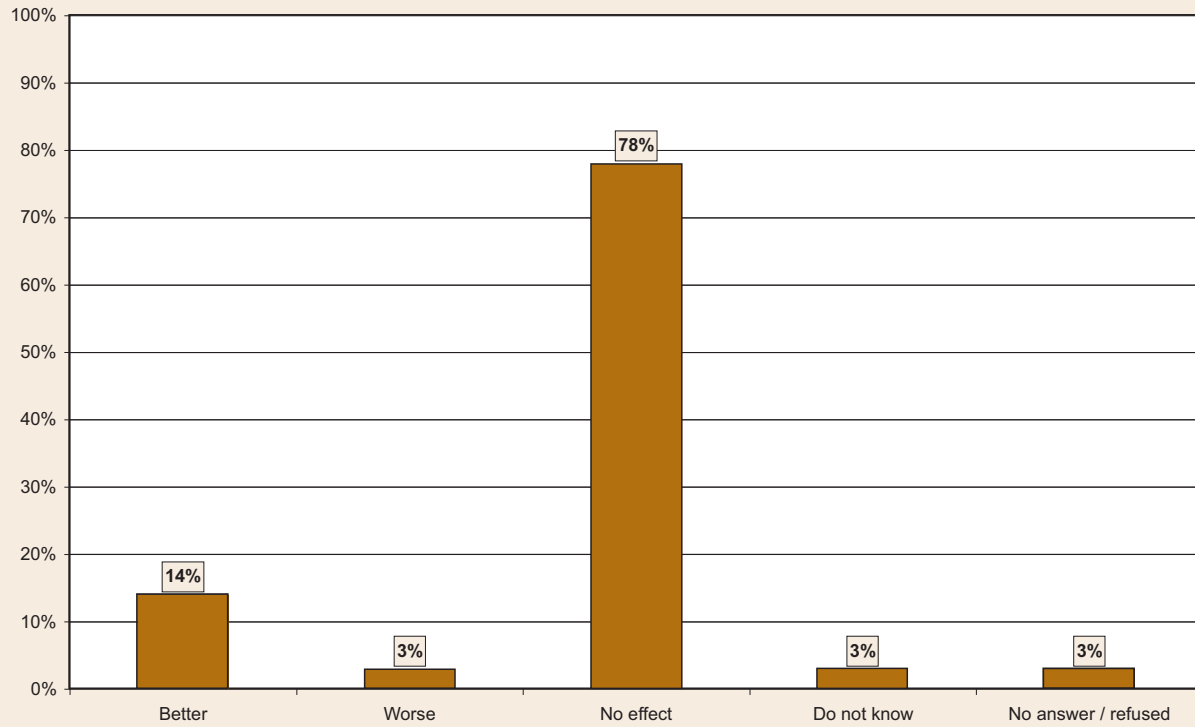


FIGURE 15: *Percentage of Mixed-Status Families at the 2007 March*

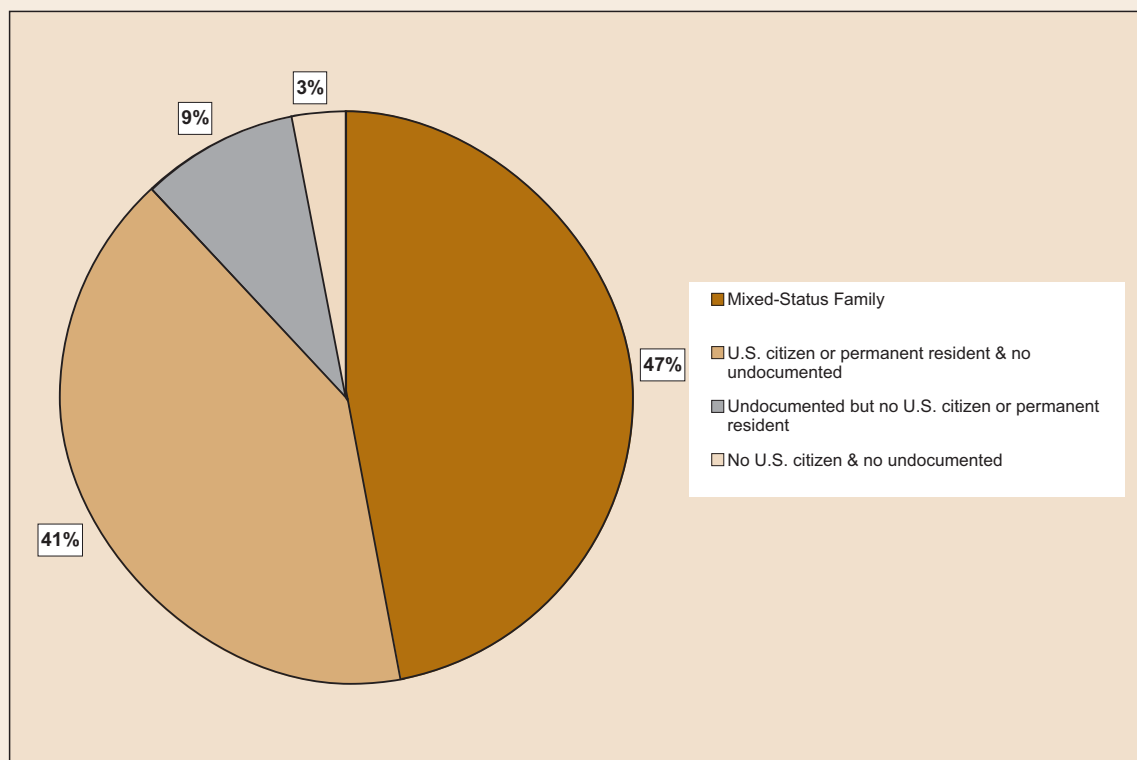


FIGURE 16: *Reasons for Marching, 2007*

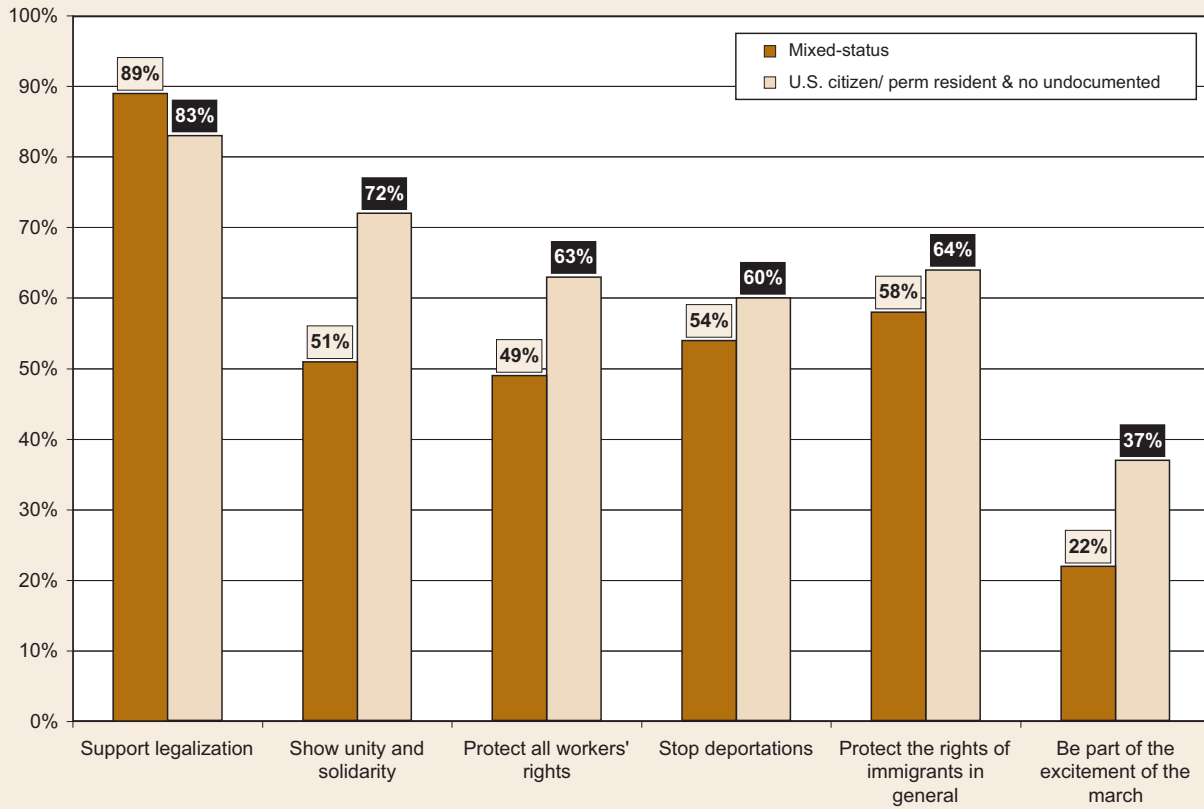


FIGURE 17: *Comparison of March Participation Frequency, 2007*

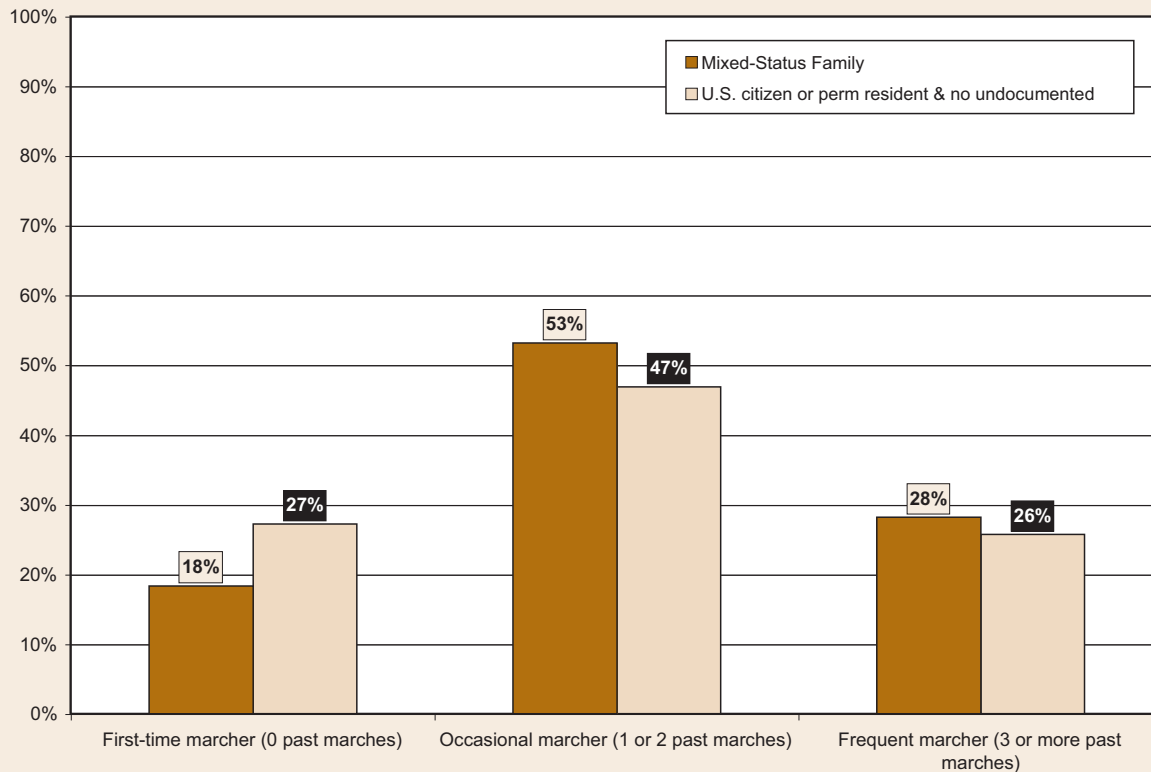


FIGURE 18: *Percentage of Marchers Who Know Who Elvira Arellano Is, 2007*

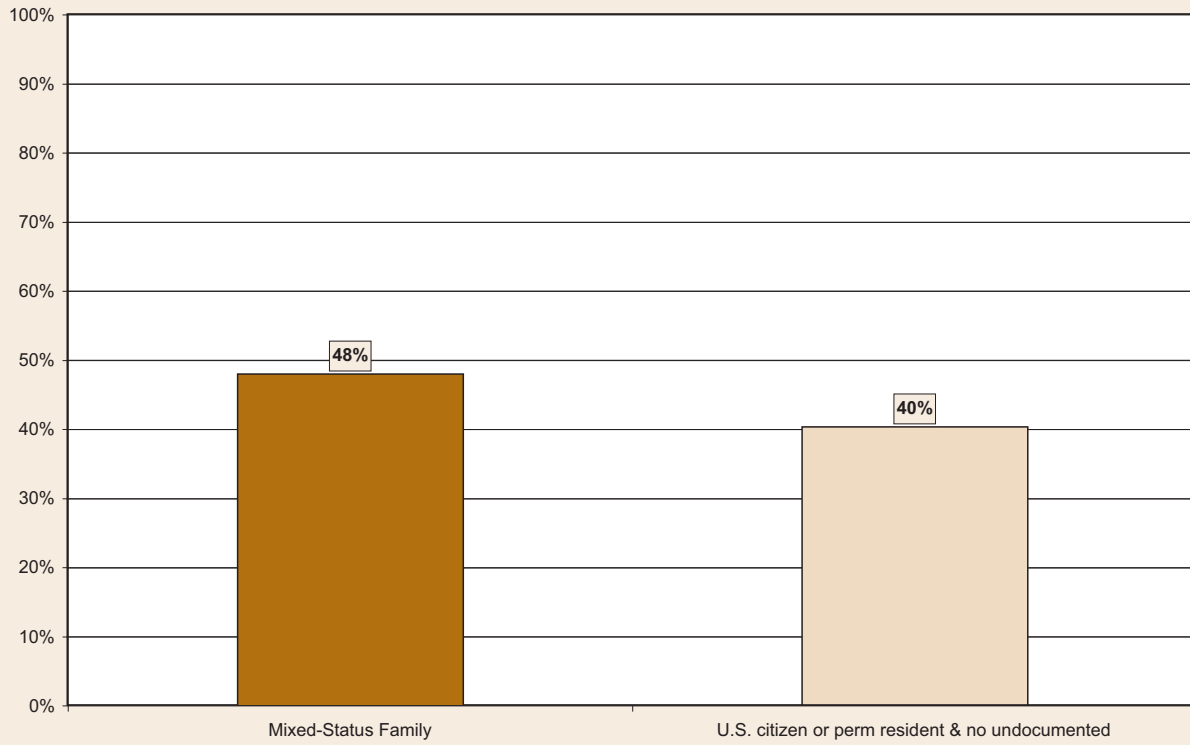


FIGURE 19: *Percentage of Marchers Who Agree with Elvira Arellano, 2007*

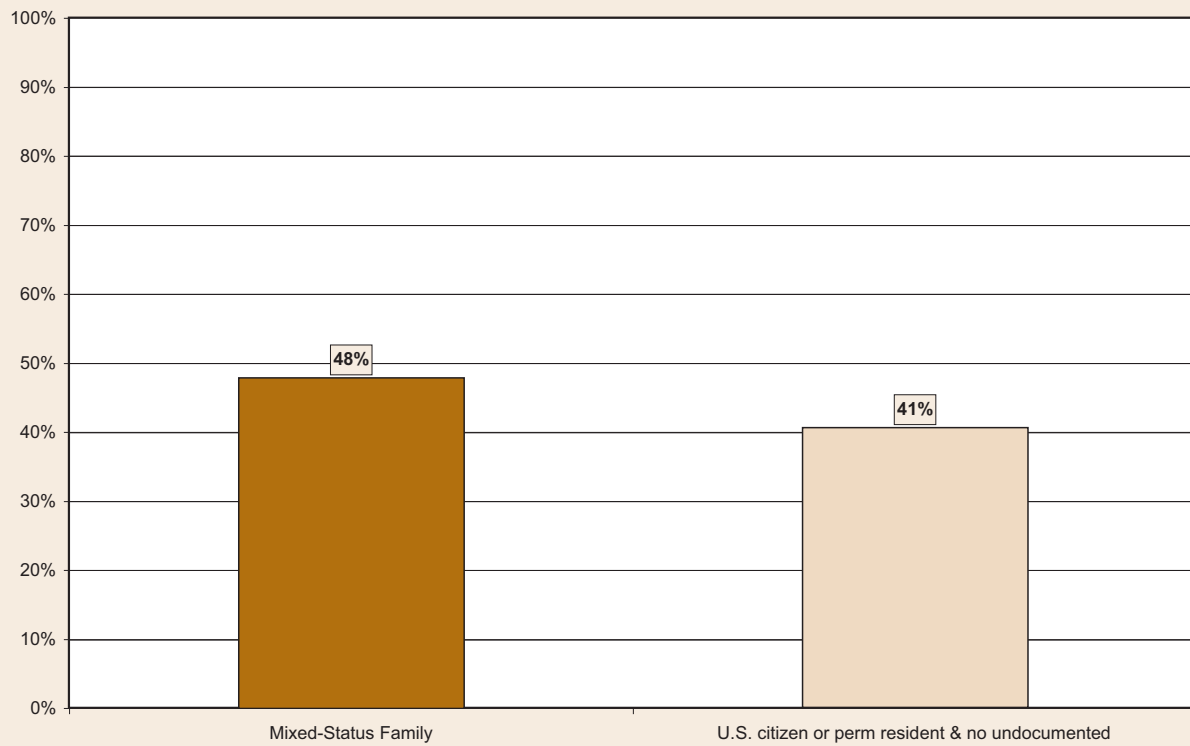
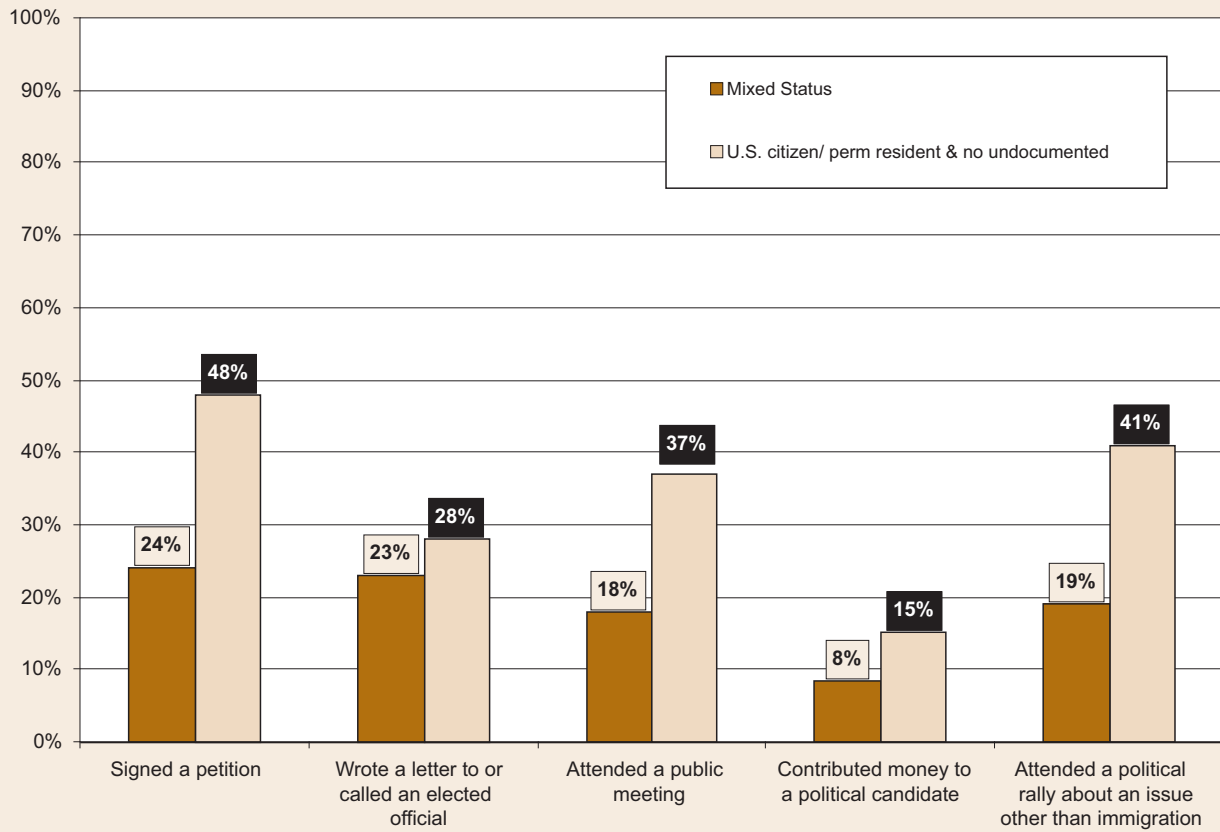


FIGURE 20: *Mixed Status Voting, 2007*

RESPONDENTS FROM MIXED-STATUS FAMILIES WHO HAD VOTED	58%
VOTING BY RESPONDENTS FROM U.S. CITIZEN/PERMANENT RESIDENT FAMILIES	76%

FIGURE 21: *Civic Participation Comparison, 2007*



MEXICAN HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS IN CHICAGO AND THE CONFEDERATION OF MEXICAN FEDERATIONS:

Experiences of Binational Civic Participation

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Abstract: The many Mexican hometown associations (HTAs) in U.S. cities have been recognized as important largely for sustaining transnational ties between immigrants and Mexican society. Yet recent activities in Chicago, including HTA leadership of the dra-

matic 2006 marches for immigrants' rights, suggest that this kind of organization—and, indeed, mobilization itself—may become a significant agent of political incorporation for U.S. immigrants. This paper presents preliminary findings from ongoing dissertation research on Chicago HTAs and their broader coalitions. This project investigates how Chicago HTAs and their larger Latino immigrant coalitions came to play a leading role in the immigrants' rights mobilization of 2006 and how they are continuing to evolve as Mexico-U.S. binational organizations.

The Confederation of Mexican Federations (CONFEMEX),¹ which represents a growing citywide base of politically connected and organized Mexican immigrant hometown associations (HTAs) and federations, is gaining Mexico-U.S. binational political influence. This unique coalition includes Mexican immigrant leaders with decades of experience in creating philanthropic development projects and exerting political influence in their hometowns in Mexico. More recently, however, this coalition of HTA leaders has galvanized its broad membership base throughout Chicago and other Midwest communities to form

wider binational coalitions that address political concerns newly recognized on both sides of the border. Most notably, CONFEMEX's role in launching the extraordinary 2006 mass marches for immigrants' rights points to a dramatic shift in the confederation's agenda to include U.S.-based concerns along with Mexico-based issues. This growing binational activism illustrates how HTAs are creating opportunities to voice vital political concerns in *both* Mexico and the United States.

Overall, it is the increasingly unequal relationship between Mexico and the United States that positions Chicago HTAs and coalitions to have new and unique forms of binational political influence. This is to say, as Mexico's diplomatic influence weakens within U.S. politics, it becomes more dependent on emigrants residing in the United States, particularly those in organized clubs and federations, to influence the immigration debate. At the same time, Chicago clubs and their coalitions have strategically worked to take advantage of these new political opportunities. To construct this argument, I start by providing background on the development of HTAs in Chicago and their mainly Mexico-oriented focus throughout the 1990s. I then turn to common misconceptions about HTAs that have prevented research from moving beyond one-sided, Mexico-only accounts to acknowledge the organizations' evolving Mexico- and U.S.-focused activities. I explore the external and internal factors that have influenced CONFEMEX's transition toward Mexico-U.S. cross-border influences and highlight its extraordinary expansion into binational civic action. I conclude with considerations of potential challenges in maintaining binational priorities into the future.

This paper provides preliminary findings from my ongoing dissertation research, which includes two years of participant observation

with CONFEMEX (from December 2005 to December 2007) and continuing ethnographic work in more limited ways since January 2008. I also conducted ethnographic participant observation with the Chicago chapter of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC). NALACC is a cross-border immigrant rights organization that represents not only CONFEMEX but also more than 85 other Latino immigrant groups that are based in the United States and Latin America and are concerned with transnational immigration issues. Field activities have included taking notes at monthly CONFEMEX and NALACC meetings, volunteering at numerous transnational and immigrant-focused events, and participating in public demonstrations and HTA festivals.

This research experience has opened a window into the workings of Chicago HTAs. It has revealed the ways in which these local immigrant organizations coordinated the dramatic marches of spring 2006, beginning with the first megamarch on March 10, and helped spark rallies nationwide against potentially draconian federal legislation in the form of HR 4437 ("Sensenbrenner Bill"). The leadership of HTAs was pivotal in launching Chicago's demonstrations, with the Michoacán Federation headquarters serving as a crucial planning hub.²

CHICAGO HTA DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1990S: MEXICO-FOCUSED AGENDAS

Mexican immigrant HTAs, which researchers commonly refer to as "transnational organizations," have been largely characterized as organizations primarily focused on Mexican-oriented concerns.³ This conception largely

stems from the fact that HTAs often originate with Mexico-focused priorities. Such clubs are made up of self-organized immigrants from the same hometown of Mexico whose efforts seek to maintain their cultural and linguistic heritage and celebrate their Mexican identity. Such clubs can serve as important resources for members who encounter a xenophobic environment in the United States and for those who wish to pass on their cultural values and traditions to their children.

Numerous clubs have also pooled donations to provide collective remittance-funded infrastructure projects in their hometowns. Such financial assistance goes toward civic, religious, and public works projects to improve the welfare of their communities back home. HTAs find various ways to raise money (soccer clubs, dances, beauty pageants, raffles, picnics, rodeos, membership dues, and private donations) for public works projects (roads, bridges, parks, churches, schools, healthcare clinics, sports facilities, childcare centers, and homes for the elderly). HTAs have also been known to donate ambulances, medical goods, and school supplies and to provide education grants to needy members of their hometown communities (Alarcón (2002); see also Rivera-Salgado (2002)). HTAs not only help to develop the infrastructure in their sending communities, but such projects also serve to promote a sense of community that transcends international borders and strengthens network ties between those residing in the United States and those living in the mother country (Zabin and Escala-Rabadán 1998). Over time, HTAs have also begun to play an important role in local politics in Mexico, and there are numerous examples of clubs influencing local elections to the extent that some club leaders have even returned to Mexico to hold public office (R.C. Smith 1998).

The Mexico focus of HTAs has been encouraged since the 1990s by the proactive outreach of the Mexican national government. Continuing today, the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (El Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior), including the secretariats of Foreign Relations and Social Development (Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores [SRE], Secretaría de Desarrollo Social [Sedesol]), and administered through Mexican consulates throughout the United States, aims to capitalize on the growing political and financial influence of HTAs.⁴ Mexican government outreach encouraged both the growth of HTAs throughout metropolitan Chicago, as well as their unification into broader statewide federations.

The Mexican government has an obvious financial and political interest in maintaining close ties with HTAs and has financed cultural events to celebrate Mexican national holidays, regional sports competitions, and yearly community celebrations. “These ‘cultural’ events are in fact politically motivated, relying on migrants’ loyalty to their communities of origin to gain support for Mexican government policies, both nationally and in relation to the United States” (Rivera-Salgado 2002, 264). Recognizing how emigrants can influence political elections in Mexico, in 1998 SRE began organizing tours for Mexican governors to visit HTAs and state-level federations throughout the United States.

Mexican HTAs were first founded as early as the 1950s, but they have experienced tremendous growth in the past decade. Throughout the United States there were an estimated 320 HTAs in 1996. This nearly doubled by 2003, with 623 HTAs representing 27 of the 31 Mexican states (Smith and Bakker 2008). The highest concentrations of HTAs—due to population size, history of organizing, and Mexican government outreach—are in

California and Chicago (Orozco and Lapointe 2004). Chicago and the Midwest (Illinois, Wisconsin, and northern Indiana), in particular, have experienced major growth in HTAs since the 1990s; by 2007 there were 302 HTAs registered with the Chicago Mexican consulate (270 of which would eventually be organized into CONFEMEX).⁵

Such organizational growth is not surprising, as during the 1990s alone the Chicago Mexican immigrant population swelled by more than 115 percent with the arrival of an estimated 291,000 people. By the end of that decade, 1 out of every 10 Chicago residents was of Mexican origin. In fact, Chicago, with more than 500,000 Mexican immigrants, has the second-largest Mexican population in the United States after Los Angeles (Paral 2006). Such increases in HTAs reflect burgeoning Mexican immigration particularly to Chicago during the decade, the savvy organizational capacity of local immigrant actors, and proactive Mexican government outreach.

Over the years, Chicago HTAs and federations have emerged as key players in Mexico's economic development strategies, further encouraging the Mexican focus of their activities. From 2002 to 2006 the number of club-funded economic development projects in Mexico expanded from 942 to 1,587 with HTAs' financial donations increasing from \$34.4 million to \$136.6 million.⁶

Although Mexican government officials were instrumental in setting up many HTAs and continue to play an important supporting role, certain state federations, as well as CONFEMEX, have recently pursued greater autonomy from the Mexican government. Furthermore, in more recent years the Chicago immigrant organizational scene has advanced into broader, more vibrant, and successful coalitions within and beyond the sphere of Mexican governmental influence.

By focusing only on the interaction of HTAs with Mexico, however, as emphasized by the dominant transnational research paradigms, current scholarship overlooks how such clubs and coalitions have evolved to interact with both Mexico- and U.S.-based concerns. Largely ignored in current research is how Chicago clubs and their members' daily lives are also shaped by U.S. politics at both the local and national levels. Indeed, more recently, U.S. immigration policies, especially as they have become increasingly hostile toward immigrants, have influenced Chicago clubs and coalitions' agendas and strategies. My research, therefore, views Chicago HTAs as living organizations that change according to both external demands and internal issues that occur in *both* the United States and Mexico.

CHICAGO CLUBS IN TRANSITION: BROADER MEXICO AND U.S. INFLUENCES

Beyond Mexico and the United States' separate influences on such organizations, the political and economic relationship between the two countries shape Chicago clubs and coalitions' actions and priorities. Mexico and the United States have had a long-standing asymmetrical economic and political relationship, and globalization factors and the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have only reinforced this unequal partnership (P. H. Smith 1996; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). Since NAFTA, Mexico's economy has become increasingly polarized, further encouraging the growth of out-migration to the United States. In response to such population loss, Mexico has become more reliant on remittances.⁷ Within this scenario, immigrant clubs and federations, representing organized financial and

political capital, become key resources for the Mexican government's emigrant outreach initiatives. As the Mexican government's priorities manifest into what Raúl Delgado Wise and Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (2007) have coined a "remittance-based development model," organized clubs and federations become essential components of Mexico's economic development strategies.

As Mexico grows increasingly financially dependent on its diaspora, targeting specifically those who have organized into clubs and federations, it becomes inclined to support U.S. government policies that help secure their political and economic integration (Guarnizo 2001; see also Fitzgerald 2006). As one of many examples, former Mexican President Ernesto Zedillo (1994-2000) illustrated such support for U.S. immigrant integration in a speech to emigrants at the National Council of La Raza annual meeting in Chicago on July 23, 1997. "I am convinced that Mexico's success will benefit Hispanics in the United States too, and I know for sure that the stronger you get in economic and political terms here in the United States, the better Mexico's image will be" (González Gutiérrez 1999, n. 37). Although it might seem counterintuitive at first, the Mexican government actually *favours* Mexican emigrants' strengthened economic and political position in the United States for two specific reasons: 1) it secures the continuation of remittances to Mexico; and 2) organized emigrants, especially those in clubs and federations, have the *potential* to campaign for Mexico's interests in U.S. political circles.

More recently, political events in the United States have illustrated that although Mexico and the United States are growing more interdependent economically, Mexico remains the persistently weaker actor in this regional partnership. In 2000 Mexico's long-ruling

party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI), lost the presidential election to the National Action Party (Partido Acción Nacional, PAN) candidate Vicente Fox. The rise of the PAN in Mexico legitimized neoliberal reforms and brought state-emigrant relations to a heightened level of political and economic importance. Fox presided over an overhaul of consular programming in which emigrants, particularly HTA leaders, became central players in the state's evolving projects.⁸ The employment conditions, political rights, and integration of Mexican emigrants in the United States would become of central importance to Mexican governmental and political party players (Fitzgerald 2006).

About the same time, U.S. Census data indicated that the Latino population, composed of many Mexican immigrants, was the country's fastest-growing minority. Not only had the Mexican population increased in Chicago, but the nation as a whole had experienced a rapid increase in immigration throughout the 1990s. According to the 2000 census, the U.S. foreign-born population had risen to 31.1 million, 11.2 million more than a 1990 estimate (Zolberg 2006). Among all national-origin groups represented in the country's foreign-born population, Mexicans accounted for the largest share, or 30 percent and an estimated 10 million persons (Aleinkoff 2005).

By April 2001, Fox and U.S. President George W. Bush appeared to grow closer as they began a sequence of immigration reform talks, including plans for a guest worker program. Business interests, along with government leaders, publicly endorsed a continuation of the supply of foreign labor as their central immigrant-related concern (Zolberg 2006). Whereas NAFTA encouraged the economic integration of Mexico and the United

States, Fox seemed willing to become the junior partner in a newly formed post-NAFTA state regime.

The attacks of September 11, 2001, however, severely altered the political course between the two countries. The resulting dramatic U.S. government move toward a “securitization” and “criminalization” of the immigrant agenda created a unilateral shift in future immigration policy. The terrorist attacks nourished political discourses that attempted to more closely link national security concerns with unauthorized immigration. Subsequent policy and strategy shifts by the Bush administration downgraded the priority of a bilateral immigration agreement with Mexico.

This shift in political dynamics between 2000 and 2002 increased Mexico’s dependence on its emigrant community both financially and, specifically in the case of organized HTAs, as a potential conduit to advocate for Mexican interests in U.S. affairs. In this scenario, Mexico became highly invested in the political incorporation of its diaspora in the United States, as its secured status ensured continued remittance flows and enhanced political power on both sides of the border.

By 2002, when Fox publicly questioned the U.S. invasion of Iraq, it was abundantly clear that Mexico’s ability to bargain directly with the United States had been diminished (Zolberg 2006). As it lost its ability to directly relate to the United States on a state-to-state basis, Mexico was forced to create influence by proxy through its diaspora. As a consequence, by 2002 Mexico’s state-migrant relations were further enhanced with consular programming fortifying HTAs and legislating collective remittance-based development projects (“3x1” programs) with emigrant organizations throughout the United States (Goldring 2001; see also Fitzgerald 2006).

Both the external political factors and internal organizational growth of this period speak to the argument that the increasingly unequal relationship between Mexico and the United States positioned Chicago HTAs and coalitions to exert greater binational political influence. As Mexico’s diplomatic authority lessened within U.S. politics, Mexico became more reliant on emigrants, particularly organized clubs and federations, to influence immigration debates in the United States. And as the United States grew increasingly contentious toward immigrants after 9/11, it became imperative for Mexican immigrants themselves—with backing from Mexican political elites—to mobilize and create a voice within U.S. political circles. In the midst of this changing political scene, the Chicago clubs and coalitions expanded their organizational focus and activities to seize opportunities for binational influence. This resulted in the creation of CONFEMEX on February 23, 2003. As Chicago clubs gained power in U.S. political circles, they not only did not lose their political influence in Mexico but widened their realm of influence in *both* the United States and Mexico.

CHICAGO CLUBS EVOLVING: EMERGING BINATIONAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION

As immigration swelled throughout the 1990s, other Latino and Caribbean immigrant populations began forming transnational organizations to support communities in their countries of origin through philanthropic ventures, as well as by influencing local and national politics (Portes, Escobar, and Radford 2007; see also Chacón and Shannon 2006). As these immigrant organizations gained prominence within their countries of origin, which, like Mexico, had asymmetrical political and eco-

conomic relationships with the United States (Guarnizo 2001), there remained a pressing need to create a unified political voice in the United States and to expand their agendas to address binational concerns.

With immigration flows continuing to the United States and George W. Bush seeking reelection in 2004, immigration reform resurfaced as a political priority. In an effort to promote a transnational perspective in the upcoming immigration debates, a network of more than 30 Latino and Caribbean leaders from immigrant-led organizations met in early February 2004. “The meeting also grew out of an increasing conviction among immigrant community-based organizations that the time is ripe to join forces to press for reform of current immigration laws, which have proven to be obsolete, unjust, and inoperable” (Chacón and Shannon 2006, 4).

Wanting to capitalize on first-generation Latino immigrants’ unique transnational understanding of immigration, which links concerns in *both* their sending and U.S. host communities, these groups sought to create an alternative model of cross-community organizing. Soon after CONFEMEX’s formation, Chicago HTA leaders joined with immigrant-based transnational organizations scattered throughout the United States to forge a strategic alliance. This new alliance aimed to bring to the forefront those transnational concerns of migrants that have resulted from greater regional integration, such as in the policy realms of trade, immigration, and economic development. By the end of 2004, more than 85 immigrant organizations had come together to form NALACC. This new alliance sought to reinvigorate the immigration debate with a discussion on the complex structural factors in *both* sending and receiving societies that had driven large-scale unauthorized out-migration.

By 2005, NALACC had formalized its leadership structure and had begun promoting its transnational Familias Unidas (Keep Our Families Together) campaign. Specific working strategies that developed at the annual leadership conference in 2005 included fostering the organizational capacity and empowerment of local communities, enhancing leadership capabilities, creatively utilizing media outlets to communicate NALACC’s agenda to broader masses, and expanding alliances with organizations that share common interests and goals.

While immigration issues were gaining prominence on the U.S. national agenda and immigrant leaders formed political alliances, the Mexican federal government enacted key legislation that enabled its diaspora to maintain its transnational loyalties. Mexicans had been granted dual citizenship rights in 1997, which enabled the Mexican diaspora to seek citizenship in the United States without relinquishing citizenship rights in Mexico. This was extended in July 2006, when emigrants were granted absentee voting privileges in Mexican federal elections. Chicago CONFEMEX leaders were fundamental in sustaining Mexican political loyalty, as they helped their membership base register to vote.

By December 2005, U.S. federal legislative proposals took a dramatic anti-immigrant turn when the Republican-controlled House of Representatives passed HR 4437, legislation sponsored by Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI). The so-called “Sensenbrenner Bill” proposed harsh penalties for undocumented immigrants, as it sought to forbid new temporary guest worker programs and deny a path toward legal residency or citizenship for undocumented immigrants. Additionally, the bill would have made undocumented immigration, as well as the acts of assisting, supporting, guiding, or provoking

a person to either illegally enter or stay in the United States, a felony.

The political threat of the Sensenbrenner bill caused HTA strategies to turn to contentious mobilization. On March 10, 2006, a loose coalition of various Latino immigrants in Chicago responded to this aggressive measure with a massive yet peaceful march to the city's downtown; estimates of the crowd size were of approximately 100,000 protestors. This rally sparked other protests throughout the country. Surprisingly, established national organizations and labor unions were not participants in the initial movement. In Chicago, CONFEMEX and the local chapter of NALACC, along with other Latino immigrant organizations and local churches, spearheaded the planning for more marches (Shannon 2007). Casa Michoacán, the headquarters of the Michoacán Federation and the site of many CONFEMEX meetings, served as the central planning center. Although never before associated with contentious activism, CONFEMEX and NALACC leaders proudly referred to Casa Michoacán as "Casa Del Pueblo" (House of the People), illustrating their pride in connecting with the broader immigrant community in this battle and their determination to extend their political outreach.

Building on the momentum of the first march, CONFEMEX and NALACC Chicago joined with labor unions and larger immigrant coalitions to strategize for their next demonstration. On May 1, 2006, immigrants in various cities throughout the country simultaneously poured into the streets to protest their opposition to HR 4437. Conservative estimates report that in Chicago alone there were more than 400,000 protesters (Olivo and Ávila 2006), while nationwide the total number of protesters was said to exceed the 1-million mark (Martínez 2006).

In stark contrast to the national-level and suburban backlash, numerous city leaders in Chicago showed support for Mexican immigrants. Aware of the large and growing Mexican population in Illinois, Governor Rod Blagojevich, Senator Dick Durbin, and Mayor Richard M. Daley publicly endorsed the marches. This support, in turn, created the space for CONFEMEX's U.S. activism to further develop.

Chicago HTAs, which traditionally served as nonconfrontational, transnationally oriented organizations, transformed into "vehicles of mobilization" on behalf of U.S. immigrants' rights (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). A combination of various factors can be seen as contributing to this evolution: increasingly precarious economic mobility opportunities for the escalating numbers of unauthorized immigrants in the United States; punitive immigration policies that marginalized large numbers of undocumented migrants (De Genova 2005); rising rights consciousness among immigrant groups; multilevel immigrant organizations and alliances, especially CONFEMEX and NALACC; and a growing trend on the part of both Mexican and local U.S. officials (particularly state governors and mayors sensitive to their growing Latino immigrant constituencies) to reach out to immigrants as esteemed workers and contributors to both their sending and receiving societies.

CONFEMEX TODAY: ACHIEVING MEXICO-U.S. BINATIONAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Since the 2006 marches, CONFEMEX's dynamic leadership has strategically used such broad political events to amplify and widen its political reach in both Mexico and the United

States. Chicago federation leaders continue their Mexican-focused activities, with some even gaining political credence in Mexico for their impact in the United States. A case in point: the Michoacán Federation gained absentee voting rights at the state level. Remittance-funded infrastructure development also remains a fundamental priority for CONFEMEX federations. In fact, both the Michoacán and Zacatecan federations' match initiatives have expanded from "3x1" to "4x1," which includes Western Union joining with municipal, state, and federal authorities to match each dollar donated to help finance projects in Mexican communities. To be sure, in the wake of such vast U.S. protests the Mexican government at many levels will likely maintain and perhaps enhance outreach initiatives focused on maintaining the financial and political loyalty of its emigrants.

Following the marches, NALACC held another national assembly in 2006 in Miami, FL, which provided a venue for immigrant activists to discuss the impacts of the rallies in various regions. NALACC representatives from Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, California (Los Angeles, Oakland/San Francisco), Texas (Houston), and New York spoke of the surge in activism that was inspired by the national protests. This activism, they said, was manifested in the formation of broader immigrant alliances, the carrying out of numerous local demonstrations, and the convening of educational forums. Additionally, it meant the coordination of membership-outreach initiatives, the fostering of U.S. electoral participation through citizenship and voting workshops, and the strengthening of existing partnerships with local unions and churches.

As did other chapters throughout 2006, the Chicago chapter of NALACC held news con-

ferences, lobbied local lawmakers, organized immigration rights forums, sponsored leadership training courses, and promoted citizenship and the electoral participation of its immigrant base. It joined a loosely organized local immigrants' rights group, El Movimiento 10 de Marzo (The March 10 Movement), which was formed to launch Chicago's initial mass march. The committee coordinated a four-day *caminata* (walk) of more than 40 miles from Chicago's Chinatown to the western suburb of Batavia to the local offices of then-Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert (R-IL). Mexican, Latino, Korean, and Muslim immigrants and activists joined the *caminata*, with an estimated 150 to 200 participants completing the entire walk. During a 2008 in-depth interview with a Durango federation leader active in both CONFEMEX and NALACC, the leader reflected upon her mixed emotions during the *caminata* as she witnessed both support and backlash while passing through various suburbs. She recalled a vivid moment of tension one evening when a suburban mosque provided participants with food and lodging while members of the Minutemen camped outside. "It was a unique opportunity to unite Latinos and Muslims ... to show those who are against immigrants that we are unified. This is an especially important message after 9/11."

CONFEMEX also joined with NALACC to promote its first international immigrant summit, which was held in Morelia, Michoacán, in May 2007. Stemming from talks held at the World Social Forum in Brazil, a proposal emerged for a Migrant Summit of the Americas, which promoted the idea of immigrants themselves gaining influence in emerging hemispheric policies (Chacón and Shannon 2006). This event drew Mexican political elites, academics, international media, and activists from Latin America, the United

States, and beyond; it even attracted U.S. Representative Luis Gutierrez (D-IL) to speak on behalf of immigration reform. Inspired by the proactive leadership of the Michoacán Federation within the summit, the Michoacán government donated the conference venue and Governor Lázaro Cárdenas Batel made key appearances to show his support. Undoubtedly, the size and importance of the event was partly galvanized by the marches in the United States. Put another way, CONFEMEX's newly acquired political capital in the United States was fungible or convertible in Mexico.

The results are not as straightforward regarding the gains made in U.S. political circles. In terms of national impact, one federation leader wryly noted in 2006 during a CONFEMEX meeting, "*Debemos dar gracias a Sensenbrenner*" ("We should thank Sensenbrenner"), as it was such legislation that propelled CONFEMEX into U.S.-based political action. Such rallies halted the Sensenbrenner bill and also resulted in reshaping the immigration and border security legislation later introduced in the Senate in May 2006. The legislative compromise included a guest worker initiative, along with increased border control measures. The Senate compromise was too tepid to spark the same kind of heated reaction that had met HR 4437, yet neither was it viewed by immigrant advocates as a vehicle to advance their interests.

By September 2006, U.S. federal legislation turned in a punitive direction once again. Unable to pass the Senate proposal through the conservative House of Representatives and wanting to appear tough on immigration before the November 2006 congressional elections, numerous candidates across party lines pushed for an increased militarization of the border. Despite condemnation by then-Mexican President Vicente Fox, Congress passed legislation that mandated the construction of

additional physical and virtual barriers at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Overall, the national immigration debate of 2006 signaled a hostile and fear-driven political moment for immigrants in the United States. Although this threatening environment served as a powerful motivator for the historic marches of 2006, it is important to understand that communities experienced widely different responses to organizing at the local level. While Chicago's downtown marches proved peaceful, a demonstration in support of immigrant rights in California in 2007 was marred by an excessive and inappropriate crowd-control response by members of the Los Angeles Police Department, which resulted in injuries to 246 protesters (Archibold 2007). Such variations were also apparent within broader metropolitan Chicago. Officials in Carpentersville, a suburb contending with a recent surge in Mexican immigration, advocated punishing landlords who rented to and employers who hired undocumented immigrants (Olivo and Ávila 2007).

In great opposition to national-level and suburban Chicago anti-immigrant proposals, many city leaders have shown support for Mexican immigrants. In an attempt to appeal to his vast immigrant base, then-Illinois Governor Blagojevich repeatedly referred to himself as a son of Serbian immigrants. Soon after the marches, Blagojevich appointed a charismatic organizer from the Michoacán Federation and one of the founders of CONFEMEX to head up his newly formed Office of New Americans Policy and Advocacy. This office aims to extend public services to the growing population of Illinois's immigrant residents. Examples of such services are healthcare and early education for all children regardless of immigration status, as well as English-language and citizenship classes. Most recently, the state government opened the first Illinois Welcoming Center to

increase accessibility of its public services to new Americans.

The Illinois government's responses to the marches and the political connections of a CONFEMEX leader are likely to furnish new opportunities for immigrant incorporation. In direct response to the marches, in June 2006 various CONFEMEX leaders teamed with local Mexican immigrant activists in an attempt to mobilize the U.S. electoral participation of its immigrant base. The leaders formed a political action committee called Mexicans for Political Progress, commonly referred to as MXPP. CONFEMEX leaders recognized that while Mexican immigrants are the largest minority group in Chicago, they lack formal political representation in U.S. circles. MXPP formed as a distinctly Mexican immigrant organization to assure that Mexicans have their own voice in U.S. politics. As a CONFEMEX leader on the MXPP executive committee described to me during an in-depth interview in 2008, "We are Mexicans representing Mexicans. It gives us a voice." This is not to limit MXPP's potential, however, in forming broader strategic alliances. "The agenda of Mexicans can be shared with Latinos. We share [many] of the same challenges," the leader said.

The political action committee, although new, quickly organized to provide both financial and volunteer support for the local campaigns of Blagojevich, Gutierrez, and the U.S. congressional campaigns of Democratic congressional contenders Tammy Duckworth in 2006 and Mark Pera in 2008. MXPP is not identified with a specific political party; although it has tended to support Democratic candidates, it is willing to support Republicans who declare a pro-immigrant agenda. During the national presidential primaries, MXPP leadership supported the two top Democratic

presidential contenders, Hilary Rodham Clinton and Barack Obama.⁹

Since the marches, specific federations and CONFEMEX have also fostered new opportunities for Mexican immigrants to form relationships with other organized immigrant groups. MXPP functions as a political action committee aiming to have a direct impact on political campaigns; CONFEMEX is forming deliberate partnerships with a broader regional base of diverse ethnic immigrant groups in order to increase immigrant civic participation in Illinois. With a CONFEMEX leader serving as the political director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), CONFEMEX has become an active member in the coalition's New Americans Democracy Project promoting immigrants' citizenship and voter registration, disseminating general non-partisan education about local elections, and creating a "Get Out the Vote" campaign with mailings, phone calls, and door-to-door visits.

This program aims to reach out to specific geographic areas with high concentrations of immigrants to promote civic education, particularly in specific Chicago neighborhoods and suburbs (Juliet, Aurora, Waukegan, Elgin, Carpentersville, Des Plaines, and Melrose Park). CONFEMEX is seen as "the organized voice of Mexicans" within the ICIRR's New Americans Democracy Project aiming to fortify relations with other Illinois-based Chinese, Korean, Hindu, and Muslim immigrant member organizations. Subsequent to the marches in 2006, the Michoacán Federation initiated work with the New Americans Democracy Project to mobilize civic participation in the heavily Mexican immigrant suburb of Berwyn. Since 2008 CONFEMEX has also worked to galvanize immigrant civic participation in the suburbs of Berwyn and Cicero.

CONFEMEX's emerging binational potential became even more apparent as a result of the visit to Chicago of Mexican President Felipe Calderón in February 2008. CONFEMEX's leadership team sat at the front in the Little Village High School auditorium as Calderón praised the strength and value of the Chicago emigrant community and promised increased funding for Mexican consular services. CONFEMEX leaders were also key players in facilitating a meeting between Calderón and Blagojevich, which resulted in their signing an agreement to strengthen a cooperative educational and cultural exchange of teachers from Mexico and Illinois.

In addition, CONFEMEX remains active in NALACC, promoting its dual agenda in both the United States and countries of origin. In the United States, it continues to advocate for national immigration reform, family reunification policies, Illinois driver's licenses for the undocumented, and general public education on immigrant issues. NALACC also leads delegations to various countries of origin in Latin America, including to Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Venezuela. These official trips help to strengthen alliances with those grassroots organizations abroad that share similar concerns about local economic development and migration.

CONFEMEX AND THE FUTURE: CHALLENGES IN CONTINUING BINATIONAL CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Political and organizational developments over the past 15 years have poised CONFEMEX to serve as a crucial agent for mounting Mexico-U.S. binational civic engagement. Cross-border civic engagement, however, is not without its challenges. How can the binational political

activism of CONFEMEX be sustained into the future?

Mexican HTAs and federations in Chicago and even CONFEMEX itself depend largely if not entirely on voluntary efforts from members. Most of these organizations lack a paid staff or sufficient resources to maintain such a wide array of activities over the long term. Such resource limitations could create tensions about where organizations should concentrate their energies. For example, the recent and rapid expansion in U.S.-focused immigrant advocacy activities might serve as a competing pressure for the organizations' traditional Mexico-oriented philanthropic donations and cultural festivals. Such competing resource and time constraints were abundantly clear in 2006 when CONFEMEX leaders struggled to find the energy and manpower to simultaneously manage numerous marches and protests while coordinating the huge undertaking of the Mexican Independence Day (*Fiestas Patrias*) celebrations in Chicago.

Such challenges raise the following questions: How can a mostly voluntary organization, with a recent expansion in priorities and concerns growing within two countries, manage such competing pressures over time? Will it be sufficient to maintain one confederation with a variety of interests? Could this lead to a trade-off of one set of organizational priorities for another? Or could the coalition potentially spin off into more than one group each focusing on a more narrow set of U.S.- or Mexican-based interests? What are the benefits and costs of maintaining this transnational perspective?

Furthermore, in 2006 CONFEMEX had a hard motivation to engage in domestic activism: the threat of Sensenbrenner bill enactment. Rally slogans, such as "*Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos*" ("Today we march, tomorrow we vote"), echoed as inspiring rhetoric while

demonstrators marched the streets of Chicago's downtown. Putting that slogan into practice, however, may prove more complicated. In fact, the absence of a concrete Sensenbrenner-like motivation could prove challenging for CONFEMEX as it will have to transition from a mobilized *reactionary* coalition into a *proactive* one with the ability to influence policies and elections. Questions remain, such as: How will CONFEMEX's role change over the course of the Obama administration? Will it continue to collaborate with other immigrant organizations? Will it continue to mobilize within the Democratic Party or expand to other parties? What might the role of NALACC be within such developments? Along the same lines, without a Sensenbrenner-like intimidation factor, could some alliances break apart? At some point, stronger organizations within CONFEMEX might feel that their activities may not be enhanced by working with smaller organizations. How might such diversities in organizational strength be managed within one coalition? Although the CONFEMEX coalition is diverse, what gains can be made by these organizations' continuing to work together?

Last, in the face of backlash against immigrants, hints of dual-country loyalty might be interpreted as unpatriotic. Some common examples of CONFEMEX rhetoric include "*Ni somos de aquí, ni de allá*" (We're neither from here nor from there). Or, as widely publicized in an English-language Chicago newspaper, "You can be a good Mexican citizen and a good American citizen and not have that be a conflict of interest. Sovereignty is flexible" (Olivo and Ávila 2007). Although such statements are at the heart of the Mexican immigrant experience, they might be understood by a U.S. audience as an unwillingness to fully integrate into American society. Such dual-country loyalties, while always questioned in the United States,

will likely come under especially harsh criticism in the post-9/11 political environment. As CONFEMEX moves increasingly into the U.S. political arena, it will want to seriously consider how to manage effectively the philosophy of binational participation. In other words, how might CONFEMEX—while not wanting to lose its binational essence—frame the ideals of binational civic engagement so as to communicate this concept more effectively to non-immigrants?

All organizations experience conflict, and CONFEMEX faces definite growing pains as it evolves. Yet its unique position in the broader Mexico-U.S. political arena also gives it a vital opportunity to serve as a vehicle for binational civic engagement now and into the future.

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NOTES

- 1 The Confederation of Mexican Federations (CONFEMEX) is an umbrella organization representing nine Mexican state federations in the greater Chicago area. These states are Aguascalientes, Chihuahua, Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Oaxaca, and Zacatecas. Those federations, in turn, comprise 270 hometown associations.
- 2 The project is now moving to in-depth interviews with Chicago federation leaders and Mexican consular and local U.S. government officials who interact directly with Chicago clubs and their broader coalitions. The study also plans to incorporate a review of archival data to explore federation and coalition developments, as well as responses to changes in the broader political landscape. It should be noted that this account is based on preliminary findings of my dissertation research. Ideas will continue to develop and new insights will emerge as I conduct future archival research and semi-structured interviews.
- 3 HTAs have been characterized as transnational organizations in which immigrants’ energies concentrate on sustaining social and political ties with their country of origin (Goldring 1998, 2002; Rivera-Salgado 2002; R.C. Smith 1998, 2006; Portes, Escobar, and Radford 2007). This characterization, however, has inhibited researchers from capturing the ways in which HTAs are evolving to incorporate Mexico-U.S. binational agendas (for exceptions see Rivera-Salgado, Bada, and Escala-Rabadán 2005; Fox 2005).
- 4 In 1991, a year after President Carlos Salinas initiated the Pronasol social welfare program, the Mexican Foreign Ministry established its Program for Mexican Communities Abroad (Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Exterior [PCME]). The PCME served as a formal channel of communication for the promotion of national interests in Mexico with emigrant nationals living abroad (Fitzgerald 2006). From 1993 to 1995, the Salinas admin-

istration attempted to link PCME to Pronasol through a so-called International Solidarity Program. In this program, Mexican federal and state governments matched the monetary donations of U.S.-based HTAs to fund public works and infrastructure projects in their communities of origin. For every US\$2 donated by HTAs, a matching amount was donated by the federal government and \$1 from the state. The matching-funds program was named “2x1” (Dos por Uno) and when municipal governments also participated, “3x1,” or “Tres por Uno.” The PCME initiated remittance-match programs with the Zacatecan federation of California (Goldring 2002) and had established pilot programs with the Guerrero federations of Chicago by 1998 (Boruchoff 2007). By the mid-1990s, State Offices for Attention to Migrants (Oficinas Estatales de Atención a Migrantes [OEAMs]) had been established throughout the United States, with their presence particularly notable in California and Chicago. The opening of the offices came at a time when the Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) had begun to decentralize its outreach efforts by encouraging state governments to cultivate relationships with their diaspora (Smith and Bakker 2008). OEAMs largely work in conjunction with local consulates.

- 5 Communication with Chicago Mexican consular official on March 13, 2008. It should be noted that there are likely many more clubs in Chicago that, for various reasons, chose not to register with the consulate.
- 6 Chicago Mexican consulate materials, 2006.
- 7 Remittances are Mexico’s second-largest source of income after oil (Delgado Wise 2006).
- 8 Fox overhauled consular programming by replacing the PCME with the Institute for Mexicans Abroad (Instituto para los Mexicanos en el Exterior [IME]), which included an advisory council composed of emigrant leaders (particularly HTA leaders), representatives from influential U.S.-based Latino organizations, consultants, and representatives from Mexican state-level governments. Since 2000, various Chicago HTA leaders have participated in the advisory council.
- 9 Because of its preoccupation with the national primaries, MXPP had not solidified its stance on local aldermanic elections in Chicago. As this research project continues with in-depth interviews, it aims to examine MXPP’s recent efforts to influence Chicago’s local power structure.

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRANT CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

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An earlier version of this essay was composed as a background paper for the Community Dialogue on Transnational Activism, held in Chicago on October 26 and 27, 2007, and sponsored by Enlaces América, the Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the MacArthur Foundation. I thank the organizers, in particular Amy Shannon, for inviting me to participate and I thank the editors of this volume, especially Xóchitl Bada, for suggestions in revising the paper.

ABSTRACT: This paper addresses recent scholarship pertaining to migrant civic and political participation, focusing on Mexico and the United States with particular attention to Chicago. It begins with an explanation of transnationalism, the perspective that has informed much research on migration since the early 1990s. Reviewing selected works within this paradigm and drawing on the author's anthropological research in Guerrero and

Chicago, it highlights advances achieved by members of hometown associations, women, and youth of the second and 1.5 generations, and identifies common obstacles that limit their political efficacy. It finds that for each of these constituencies, what begins as civic participation—whether expressed through participation in hometown associations, in community organizations, or in communal rituals—may provide the forum and the crucial experiences that raise awareness of political issues and that enhance participants' sense of agency. This lays the foundation for politicization and greater political activism in both national contexts that migrants inhabit.

TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON MIGRANT CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

On a recent Friday afternoon, relatives and friends gathered in the backyard of a family that had migrated to Chicago from Guerrero, Mexico. As our host grilled up piles of corn on the cob, beef *arracheras*, chicken, and *cebollitas*, his *compadre* remarked how interesting it was that talk at the gathering was focused on

life and developments in the Mexican village that had been home to most of them. Echoing a common sentiment among migrants, he commented that even though they were in Chicago, they had not left their pueblo behind; it was as if they were in both places at the same time. On that evening, this dual orientation was expressed through familiar foods and nostalgic reminiscences; in addition, many of those gathered expressed this double existence through civic and political participation. On the previous weekend, these two men, who share the presidency of their hometown association (HTA) in Chicago, had been outspoken participants in heated discussions between HTA leaders and Mexican government officials who had traveled to Chicago to meet with them and attend the festivities of the Guerrero organizations' annual *encuentro cultural*. Through their HTA and home state association, these men were active civic and political participants in their hometown, state, and nation. Yet, after more than 30 years' residence in Chicago and with U.S. citizenship under their belts, they also were adamant about their involvement in the United States as voters and as participants in the immigrants' rights marches and in protests in favor of undocumented migrants' obtaining driver's licenses.

In recent years, there has been a profusion of scholarship that seeks to make sense of the experiences of countless migrants, like the *guerrerenses* referred to above, whose lives and communities span nation-state borders. This paper examines some of this scholarship, in particular that which addresses Mexico-U.S. migration and migrants' civic and political participation, as well as recent developments in Chicago in light of these perspectives. Rather than attempting a comprehensive review of all work done in these broad areas of research, it aims to highlight arguments that are particularly novel

and that suggest some of the major obstacles migrants face and, especially, the positive outcomes they might achieve. Whereas this discussion examines work by a variety of social scientists, including sociologists and political scientists, it is informed above all by my training in socio-cultural anthropology. It draws on ethnographic field research I have conducted since 1990 focusing on transnational linkages between Guerrero and Chicago. Through this research I became familiar with daily life on both sides of the border and learned about hometown organizations and government programs for Mexicans living abroad; more recently, I have also become involved with the immigrants' rights movement. To further elaborate the significance of Chicago as a site for the development of migrants' transnational civic and political participation, I also integrate insights from the community dialogue that was the forum in which this work and other papers in this volume were originally presented.

Chicago has been a particularly significant context for innovative migrant civic and political activity. Chicago was a major venue for the development of migrant HTAs; in the early 1990s, it was singled out as a setting for Mexican government officials to promote the formation of HTAs and to pilot the programs that now form the backbone of their outreach to and relationship with Mexican citizens in the United States. Since then, Chicago HTAs have achieved a high level of organizational complexity, forming federations of HTAs from the same Mexican state, some of which have in turn joined together in a confederation. These and other migrant organizations have been at the forefront of civic and political engagement on both sides of the border. Their members, along with other Mexicans in Chicago, were among the first and loudest voices demanding the opportunity to vote from abroad in

Mexican elections. They were active in advancing collaborative efforts with similar groups from other Latin American nations, particularly at the Summit of Latin American Migrant Communities held for the first time in 2007 in Mexico, and in the formation of an umbrella advocacy organization, the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC). They were also instrumental in organizing the largest demonstration in Chicago's history and in catalyzing the nationwide mass mobilization in defense of immigrants' rights on May 1, 2006. Scholars and the American populace are just beginning to recognize the significance of these activities in Chicago.

The first section of this paper reviews the development of a transnational perspective and explicates the fundamental characteristics and advances of this approach. Then, within this approach, it explores concepts and developments that expand our understanding of migrant civic and political participation, with particular attention to new actors including HTAs, women, and the 1.5 and second generations. Based on these findings, it comments on the nature of citizenship and political engagement and ends with reflections on empowerment and the processes through which it might be achieved.

One of the most significant findings is that transnationalism does not necessarily negate nationalism or integration in the United States. Indeed, as in the vignette presented above, it is often the same individuals who engage in civic and political activities in both national contexts. In doing so, they enhance their political power and that of the organizations and communities of which they are constituents. An additional conclusion is that civic participation, whether in an HTA or women's community organization, has the potential to

raise migrants' consciousness and to socialize participants to more effective ways of engaging politically and achieving desired results.

DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Around 1990, there was a significant reconceptualization of (im)migration¹ which was captured by the term transnationalism. This new perspective built on prior scholarship that highlighted how migration takes on a self-sustaining momentum as social networks come to link migrants' hometowns with specific destinations in the United States (Dinerman 1982; Massey, Alarcón, Durand, and González 1987; Mines 1981; Reichert 1981). In pioneering research conducted in Aguililla, Michoacán, and in Redwood City, CA, Roger Rouse argued that "through the continuous circulation of people, money, goods, and information, [these] various settlements have become so closely woven together that, in an important sense, they have come to constitute a single community spread across a variety of sites" (1991,14). Coining the term "transnational migrant circuit" to refer to this phenomenon, Rouse asserted that "it is the circuit as a whole rather than any one locale that constitutes the principal setting in relation to which Aguilillans orchestrate their lives"; as a consequence, Aguilillans have become involved in the "chronic maintenance of two quite distinct ways of life" (ibid.). Writing in a similar vein shortly thereafter, Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc contributed what some consider to be "the most widely cited formulation of a transnational perspective" (R.C. Smith 2003, 301), defining "transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (Glick Schiller, Basch, and

Blanc-Szanton 1992,1; see also Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994, 7).

These insights moved our understanding of migration away from a bipolar framework that viewed migrants' homelands and destinations as autonomous entities. They challenged earlier assumptions that migrants could only be involved in one of these locales at a time, with assimilation being the ultimate outcome, at least within a generation or two. Instead, a transnational perspective opened the possibility that the world in which migrants live, earn a living, maintain social relations and reputations, dream, gossip, build houses, and plan for the futures of themselves, their families, and communities may include two national territories. Whereas the definition contributed by Glick Schiller and her colleagues defines transnationalism in terms of the actions of migrants, it is clear that this phenomenon affects and encompasses not only those who move, but also those who stay put with whom migrants continue to interact. From the start, this perspective made a point of relating the social and cultural reconfigurations captured by this term to political-economic shifts that accompany the current phase of global capitalism. In particular, they highlighted forces that have undermined traditional forms of livelihood in migrants' hometowns while creating a demand for a low-wage "flexible" labor force in the United States. Indeed, Michael Kearney declared that "transnationalism . . . corresponds to the political and sociocultural ordering of late capitalism" (Kearney 1991, 57; see also Rouse 1991).

Building on the insights of Rouse, Kearney, and Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc, it has become common for migration scholars to conduct research on both sides of the border. Resulting studies of "transnational communities" now span a range of topics, in-

cluding impacts of transnational migration on the Mexican sending village (Grimes 1998); the continuing importance of place, viewed through the practice of constructing houses (Fletcher 1999); changing patterns of gender and sexuality, viewed through a focus on marriage (Hirsch 2003); issues of political community, gender, and the second generation (Smith 2006); language and identity, focusing on rural (*ranchero*) linguistic styles (Farr 2006); and indigenous migration, with attention to grassroots organizing and the structural constraints migrants encounter (Velasco 2005, Stephen 2007).² Although the current discussion focuses on Mexican migration to the United States, there is ample evidence that similar transnational reconfigurations are unfolding among other countries that occupy comparable structural positions (for example, see Levitt [2001] and Guarnizo [1998] on the Dominican Republic; England [2006] on Honduras; and Glick Schiller and Fouron [2001], Richman [2005], and Pierre-Louis [2006] on Haiti).

HOMETOWN ASSOCIATIONS (HTAS)

Transnationalism intersects most explicitly with civic and political participation in the hometown associations that migrants form in the United States to carry out public works and other projects in their Mexican pueblos. This is an area that has received extensive attention from scholars in a variety of academic disciplines. Research has established that HTAs are one of the most significant arenas through which migrants reaffirm communal ties and continue participating in their hometowns, thus constituting transnational community forms (Boruchoff 1998, 1999; Smith 2006). Through this process, these migrants have, often inadvertently, enhanced their political

influence. Whereas HTAs typically formed out of members' simple desires to improve circumstances in their hometowns, participants in these organizations increasingly interacted with government officials who collaborated in funding and planning projects, hence drawing these citizens into a process of politicization.

A major turning point in these developments came in 1990, when the Salinas administration introduced the *Programa para las Comunidades Mexicanas en el Extranjero* (PCME). It launched this strategy for outreach to the Mexican citizenry in the United States through pilot programs focusing on Guerrerenses in Chicago and on Zacatecanos in Los Angeles.³ Through the PCME, government officials sought to expand the number of HTAs and institutionalize the continued participation of migrants in projects in Mexico to which the HTA, their home state government, and the Mexican federal government contributed equally.⁴ Whereas the focus was on public works that would raise the standard of living in poor Mexican villages, program brochures and the actions of government agents indicate that this program was also designed to engage expatriate citizens in a new way of organizing and a new way of relating to the government. Citizens would be encouraged to openly express their concerns, make demands, propose projects, and have a say in government expenditures. These objectives were clearly demonstrated, for example, by Mexican officials who traveled to the United States to meet with HTA representatives. In meetings in Chicago in 1993 and 1994, Mexican government representatives reiterated their respect and concern for the citizens and coaxed them to speak up, take initiative, and directly make requests of government agents with whom they should collaborate on an equal footing (Boruchoff 1999).

After a relative lull under the Zedillo administration (1994-2000), Mexican communities in the United States received renewed attention when Vicente Fox entered the presidency. A centerpiece of Fox's agenda for Mexicans in the United States was the "3x1" program created in 2002, which followed similar procedures to those initiated by the PCME, with the additional participation of municipal governments. In addition, to allow for input into policymaking by Mexican citizens and nationals in the United States, the *Instituto de los Mexicanos en el Exterior* (IME), created in April 2003, sought consultation from Mexican and Mexican-American leaders elected to IME's *consejo consultivo* (advisory council). Furthermore, during this time frame, in order to promote coordinated actions, HTAs from the same state had, in numerous instances, joined together in federations. Several of these federations, in turn, collaborated in forming confederations, notably the Confederation of Mexican Federations (CONFEMEX) formed in Chicago in 2003 and the Council of Presidents of Mexican Federations of Los Angeles formed in Los Angeles in July 2002.⁵

Strong government involvement has led some analysts to characterize the development of HTAs as an instance of "transnationalism from above" (e.g., Guarnizo 1998). In contrast, others argue that they exemplify "transnationalism from below," emphasizing the active role of the citizenry in initiating projects and in soliciting and influencing government collaboration.⁶ In fact, these developments are best seen as deriving from both above and below, consisting of negotiations and accommodations. Many HTAs did form thanks to the encouragement of government officials, and government programs provided a structure within which many HTAs came to operate. Nonetheless, it is clear that government officials created the

programs for Mexicans living abroad in reaction to the activities and demands of existing HTAs and as recognition of the great economic and political potential of this constituency whose allegiance they could not afford to lose. This interplay of agency emanating from both above and below is also reflected in ambivalent outcomes for migrant empowerment. Officials affiliated with the PCME encouraged early participants by asserting that organizing would increase their power (*fuera*); and, to the extent that migrants prompted a response from government representatives and entered into negotiations with them, this seems to be true (Goldring 1998, 188; M.P. Smith 2003). At the same time, these programs are a mechanism to hold this power in check via tactics that are reminiscent of old corporatist strategies, while allowing the government to expand and partially control this source of crucial collective remittances (Guarnizo 1998, M.P. Smith 2003, Goldring 2002, Boruchoff 1999).

The thousands of public works initiated by HTAs have clearly brought improvements to migrants' hometowns, although the impact for longer-term development has been questionable. Analysts and government officials emphasize the need to shift the focus from basic infrastructure and social projects to projects that foment sustainable development, though this objective is often a point of contention with HTA members who have other types of projects in mind. A more certain outcome has been the politicization of HTA participants. This process has not proceeded without difficulties, however. Many organizations have been short-lived. Some HTAs and federations have experienced internal conflicts, often leading to splits when dissenting members feel that the organization is not representing their interests due to perceived incompetence, corruption, undemocratic or exclusionary practices, partisanship,

or the impression that leaders are mostly interested in furthering their own power and political careers. Notwithstanding these bumps in the road, HTAs have had considerable impact by involving significant numbers of migrants in civic activities. Indeed, these activities increased what anthropologist Akhil Gupta refers to as "performative competence in navigating and mobilizing state institutions for their own ends" (1995, 381). As noted above, HTAs and the programs for Mexicans abroad depended on citizens' active participation, not only through their forming hometown clubs and raising funds, but in designating priorities by selecting the projects to be carried out in collaboration with the government. Furthermore, as Luin Goldring's observations confirm, although negotiations between representatives of hometown clubs and municipal, state, and federal officials were at times confusing, "overall, they seemed to be learning a new way of participating in local decisions" (2002, 87). Perhaps most noteworthy is that these Mexicans feel empowered to confront and stand up to government officials.

The sense of agency that the PCME aimed to instill may have gone beyond that initially envisioned by designers of the program. HTA participants and organizations have begun to play a role in other political activities and arenas. For instance, they have been active in the movement to allow Mexicans in the United States to vote from abroad, and once this right was recognized they worked to encourage their compatriots to vote. Some HTA leaders have moved on to elected positions in Mexico; these include Andrés Bermúdez, a.k.a. the "Tomato King,"⁷ and Timoteo Manjarrez, who were elected municipal presidents of Jerez, Zacatecas (Smith and Bakker 2005), and of Teloloapan, Guerrero (Olivo and Ávila 2007), respectively. In addition, HTA leaders and organizations

have become increasingly active in the United States, mobilizing, in particular, in defense of migrants' rights. CONFEMEX, for example, "has actively participated in domestic issues such as immigration reform, driver's license bill SB 67, consular identification card bill SB 1623, education reform, day laborers' rights, civil rights, and economic development in Latin America," the latter activities owing to their alliance with other Latin American migrant organizations (Rivera-Salgado, Bada, and Escala-Rabadán 2005,19). Indeed, CONFEMEX explicitly promotes a transnational agenda that aims to "reaffirm [their] binational identity."⁸ And, finally, distinction within the realm of HTA activities has helped certain individuals to enter the political ranks in the United States, as well as in Mexico. José Luis Gutiérrez has risen from leadership roles in his Michoacán HTA and federation in Chicago to be appointed a top aide to the governor of Illinois.

These developments may not be simply the result of the experiences and encouragement gained through collaboration with the Mexican government. HTAs have also drawn the attention of NGOs and philanthropic organizations in the United States that have sought to work with them to enhance their organizational capacities and effectiveness. Such organizations certainly appear to have had an impact in Chicago. Enlaces América, for example, began its Mexican Hometown Federation Leadership Training Initiative in 2002, working with leaders and representatives of federations on organizational development, financial management, and strategic planning (*Enlaces News*, no. 3 [November 2002]). It continued its "leadership capacity-building programs ... to enhance the ability of organized Latino immigrant communities to work collaboratively with civil society allies in the United States and Latin America as transnational change agents"

(*Enlaces News*, no. 8 [November 2004]) until it ceased operation as a separate entity in January 2008, having transferred many of its initiatives to CONFEMEX and NALACC. Recognizing that many of the participants were likely to remain in the area and be involved in other community organizations and institutions, since 2001 the Chicago Community Trust has also awarded a series of grants with comparable objectives (Perry 2006).

This type of trajectory has not been unique to hometown associations. Similar dynamics are found among other social sectors, as I elaborate below.

PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN

Writing in 2001, Sarah Mahler and Patricia Pessar observed that "gender has rarely been a principal focus of studies on transnational spaces and processes, including transnational migration" (2001, 441). Nonetheless, this seems to be changing and existing studies suggest certain patterns and trends. Viewed from a transnational perspective, migrants typically encounter and draw on varied models of gender, as gender norms, ideologies, and roles may differ between their homelands and U.S. places of residence, particularly when migrants move between rural villages and large cities (Rouse 1992; R.C. Smith 2006; Malkin 2004; Hirsch 2003; Grimes 1998, 92-105). Further complicating this picture, scholars are careful to point out that these models of gender are in a constant state of flux; gender ideologies and practices typically vary between generations as well as through the life course, even within a single locale or society. As Robert Smith points out, "the cultures of the countries of origin and destination are themselves both evolving and internally inconsistent" (2006, 126). This

results in complex configurations and combinations of elements, wherein norms and ideals from both locations may influence individuals on each side of the border. To convey this complexity, ethnographic accounts recount the circumstances and life trajectories of several individuals (or couples) that represent the range of variation within the community under study (R.C. Smith 2006, Velasco Ortiz 2005, Zlolniski 2006, Stephen 2007).

There has been an overall trend toward “companionate marriages” based more on *confianza* (trust) than *respeto* (respect) (Hirsch 2003) and toward changing domestic arrangements as men take on some household tasks and women work outside the home, especially in the United States. Still, several factors perpetuate traditional gender patterns and restrict women’s civic and political activities. Since gender is integral to subjectivity and identity, men and women regard their own and others’ gendered behavior as central to their reputations and status as well as to those of their families. Therefore, as Victoria Malkin has argued, social “networks structure female agency”; even as “women may contest their situations, fighting for a chance at progress, new knowledge and experience ... they are subject to social roles and kinship networks that continue to constrain them” (2004, 94). These constraints are further compounded by economic exigencies. However, studies suggest that restrictions on women’s civic and political participation are more pronounced in some arenas than in others.

“The political culture that most transmigrants are familiar with in Mexico does not present many opportunities for, or models of, women’s participation in formal politics” (Goldring 2001, 520). These expectations and norms carry over into the United States. In Zacatecan HTAs in Los Angeles, for example, Goldring found that women may contribute

to preliminary planning discussions and subsequent fundraising activities, but most of the responsibility for organizing and implementing projects, as well as serving on the *mesa directiva* (board of directors), remains the domain of men. Laura Velasco Ortiz similarly observed that “despite the notable visibility of women as activists in organizations on both sides of the border, this visibility diminishes considerably when one looks at leadership” (2005, 161).⁹ Likewise, Lynn Stephen concurred that the hometown “committee does not appear to be a mechanism for expanding women’s political participation and leadership. It may sometimes serve to preserve and strengthen male-dominated political culture in the United States” (2007, 264). Furthermore, state outreach tends to perpetuate male privilege (Goldring 2001, 524). “[T]ransmigrant organizations and the Mexican state privilege constructions of masculinity and femininity that locate women in roles that support men’s participation in hometown organizations. These constructions also normalize a nonpolitical and non-decision making role for women” (ibid., 504).

In contrast to the limited role conferred upon women in traditionally male-dominated organizations like HTAs, “Mexican and other Latina women are, and have a history of being, active in a range of community organizations” (Goldring 2001, 526). Indeed, Christian Zlolniski confirms that various “studies portray immigrant women at the forefront of community activities through which they forge a sense of community, transform their political identity, and advance new forms of political citizenship” (2006, 147-48). In his own study of Mexican immigrants in the Silicon Valley neighborhood he refers to as Santech, Zlolniski depicts the commitment and efforts of women in the areas of education, housing, and family issues and in combating discrimination (see

also Velasco Ortiz [2005, 166] for corroboration). Detailing processes of “political socialization” (2006, 163), he argues that “community politics in Santech formed a gendered space dominated by women who, as they become engaged in these mobilizing activities, develop a strong political and ethnic consciousness. To do so, women activists in Santech struggle to overcome a cultural ideology that restricts them to spheres of the household and work and away from the public arena of politics” (ibid., 148). Stephen describes a similar process among participants in *Mujeres Luchadores Progresistas* (MLP), a women’s leadership project that formed to provide income-producing activities, but also “provides farm-worker women with an opportunity to foster pride and mutual solidarity and to learn new skills in public speaking, leadership, accounting, and public education” (2007, 233). Akin to the processes of political socialization among the women in Santech, through their experiences in a women-only space, participants in the MLP gained self-confidence and proficiency in taking positions, speaking up in public, and assuming leadership roles (ibid., 256).

The gains achieved by these women, while clearly significant, were not unqualified. Velasco Ortiz concluded in her study of Oaxacan indigenous migrants that women’s participation should be seen as way of “claiming agency for women, empowering them in different spaces while keeping them subject to a social order that legitimizes masculine authority” (2005, 77), although this social order is increasingly coming under question. Although women are interested and able participants, their potential contributions may be constrained by continuing obligations at home—where at times they find themselves working “double-duty” inside and outside of the home—and by gender ideologies that deny their equality. Furthermore,

to the extent that political socialization is often effected by collaboration with well-meaning activist organizations, such alliances may compromise the full extent of women’s agency and achievements in the end. In the case of Santech, for example, through such collaboration, the women gained access to influential leaders and public officials and developed more effective strategies for negotiating with them and others; yet, in the process, “residents partially lost control of their own meetings and of the power to decide which goals and issues would be addressed by collective action” (Zlolniski 2006, 165).

Nonetheless, as was the case with the HTA participants discussed in the previous section, the skills and new attitudes acquired within the context of women-dominated community organizations may in turn be mobilized in other domains (Stephen 2007, 256). Although the community-oriented organizations in which women predominate provide a crucial counterpart to male-dominated organizations, these studies raise the possibility of women making inroads into the latter’s political spheres. One of the participants in MLP was elected to the board of directors of the male-dominated farm workers’ union that was the parent organization of the women’s project. Having become “a charismatic speaker” who was “comfortable asserting her ideas in a wide range of arenas,” she developed as a leader in women’s, immigrants’, and labor rights, close to home and nationally, including in mixed-gender organizations (ibid., 235).

These trends appear to be manifest in Chicago where women are highly visible in immigrant organizations, including Mexican federations; yet the reality remains that the cultural expectations and sexism intrinsic in the community are serious barriers to participation (see the rapporteur’s report in this volume). Although Goldring’s general observa-

tions about the limited role of women in HTAs still ring true, it is important to cite exceptions to this rule. A notable case in Chicago is that of Marcia Soto who was elected president of her home state federation and, subsequently, of CONFEMEX, which she has used as a springboard to act as an outspoken advocate in a number of realms. Whereas such cases are still exceptional, it is instructive to examine the extent to which such accomplishments may be due to personal or local idiosyncrasies and the extent to which they may indicate the leading edge of a growing trend. Given that the position of president requires the support of the largely male CONFEMEX membership, the election of a woman suggests the broad acceptance of women as leaders and the potential for women's participation to expand beyond their traditional roles and spheres of civic action. An exemplary area in which women take leadership roles is in the immigrants' rights movement; some of the principal organizers in Chicago are women. These women are clearly significant figures in their own right; however, they tend to come from families in which other members have similar involvements. Although their cases confirm the acceptance of women taking the helm, they also raise interesting questions about the socialization processes through which women gain the drive and skills for civic and political leadership and point to the likelihood of increased involvement of women, especially in their daughters' generation.

1.5 & SECOND GENERATIONS

Robert Smith has argued that the "transnationalization of second-generation adolescence seems to be historically new" (2006, 283). He presents a very interesting case in which an

important part of many second-generation youths' personal development involved return visits to their parents' villages in Mexico, especially in order to participate in activities for the patron saint's fiesta. Smith demonstrates how the positive experiences and feelings of belonging that these youths acquired in Mexico not only inspired them to create a youth group with functions akin to the adult men's HTA committee, but, additionally, provided them with a foundation to assimilate in a positive way in the United States. This enhanced successes in their educational and career endeavors. He contrasts this positive scenario with the trajectory commonly found among the so-called 1.5 generation, youths who came to the United States as teenagers, often to join parents who acquired legal status through the amnesty of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Many of these youths had difficulty adjusting, not only to an unfamiliar way of life that included violent targeting by other neighborhood minority peers, but frequently also to living with their parents for the first time in years. Hence these members of the 1.5 generation found a greater sense of security and belonging among gangs that were entrenched in their neighborhoods and schools, the gangs serving "as an institution of migrant reception and recruitment" (*ibid.*, 218). While return visits built up the self-esteem of second-generation youths, the 1.5-generation gang members were typically accused of disruptive behavior and came away from visits to their hometowns with no greater sense of belonging or security than they found in the United States.

Smith's is but one of a few works that focus on youth from a transnational perspective. Although some might balk at his emphasis on youth who come under the sway of gangs, since many in the 1.5 generation do not share such experiences, Smith's findings not only

depict an important reality for many young migrants, but, more broadly, are suggestive of crucial experiences in adolescents' lives that can direct them toward particular paths. His conclusions suggest the need for ways to instill a sense of belonging and self-esteem in migrant and immigrant youth on which they can build in positive ways throughout their lives. Emphasizing the symbiosis between transnationalism and assimilation, he demonstrates how these experiences play out in contexts that span the border. Smith, moreover, notes how, as they mature, successful, upwardly mobile second-generation immigrants tend to decrease their participation in the transnational community. Even when they have an interest, the pressures they feel to achieve educational and career success in order to fulfill the "immigrant bargain" (2006, 125)—that is, getting ahead so as to honor and compensate for their parents' sacrifices—reduce the time and energy they have to devote to civic and political activities on either side of the border, especially once they undertake the added responsibilities of raising children of their own (*ibid.*, 194).

The challenge remains of how to channel ongoing transnational dispositions into greater civic and political engagement. Leaders of Chicago social service agencies like Erie House, Latinos Progresando, and Latinos United (now "Latino Policy Forum") are making strides toward addressing the particular difficulties faced by migrant children and teens. Youth are frequently an area of concern for these agencies, which have special program areas specifically addressed to young people. Early childhood education is identified as particularly crucial. Effort is made to assure that appropriate services and infrastructure reach the areas that immigrants inhabit (specific urban neighborhoods and, increasingly, specific suburbs) and to educate parents and involve them in the

education and lives of their children. Leaders advocate an approach that involves youth in meaningful ways, listening to them and affording them space to develop their ideas, and giving them active roles, especially in projects that are of direct interest in and would have a direct impact on their lives, such as lobbying for the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (the DREAM Act). It is also productive to capitalize on skills at which youth excel, for example in technology, and to engage them as bridges to involve other youth. These same tactics may be fruitfully employed by HTAs and other organizations with a more specifically transnational orientation, as children are likely to attend meetings with parents who lack access to childcare and are likely to help their parents with activities such as preparing and selling snacks at fundraising events (Mora 2008).

These agencies seem cognizant of the conclusions offered by Smith's study of the second and 1.5 generations. However, their focus has traditionally been on "immigrants," that is, those who presumably are in the process of settling in the United States, rather than explicitly addressing the transnational nature of migration. Hence they have emphasized assistance in integrating newcomers through advocacy in areas such as education, housing, legal services, and the promotion of immigrants' rights. Yet, as was the case with the organizations that worked with HTAs and women's groups to enhance their leadership abilities and political efficacy, these agencies now go beyond their traditional roles and increasingly position themselves as centers of political education and mobilization. In fact, the leaders of many community-based organizations themselves come from the 1.5 generation (Gzesh 2008), thus demonstrating the potential for civic engagement of immigrant youth. Given their own

migration experiences, these leaders may also be ideally positioned for their agencies and the civic and political mobilization they engender to operate in a transnational context.

CITIZENSHIP

Migrants often find themselves in a position of being denied full citizenship rights in both of the national contexts they inhabit. For instance, the ability to vote in Mexican elections from abroad has, until recently, been denied and continues to be constrained.¹⁰ The right to dual nationality, approved in 1998, facilitates continued participation in Mexico even if one were to take citizenship elsewhere. However, this provision hinges on a distinction between citizenship and nationality; those born in Mexico, who become citizens of another country, and the children of those born in Mexico, regardless of their citizenship, are eligible to claim Mexican nationality. Mexican nationals are granted certain additional rights, especially to own property and to work in Mexico, but not full citizenship rights such as the right to vote and hold office. Likewise, these same rights are denied in the United States, unless or until an immigrant becomes a U.S. citizen. Limitations are perpetuated by the fact that naturalization rates for Mexicans are markedly lower than those for immigrants of other nationalities, although the rates have risen significantly in recent years (Fox 2005b, 27). As Woody Carter (2007) suggests, it is much more difficult for those with lower levels of education and wealth, as is the case for most Mexican migrants, to successfully complete the requirements to become U.S. citizens.

Transnationalism stretches our understanding of the concept of citizenship that conventionally assumes full membership and legal rights in a state within whose territory

citizens reside. Today, concepts of citizenship take into account active citizens who reside abroad, as well as noncitizens who participate in civic and political processes of the nation-state whose territory they inhabit. HTA members who negotiate with Mexican government officials about public works projects in their hometowns or migrants who lobby for the ability to vote from abroad may be referred to as “extraterritorial citizens” (M.P. Smith 2003) or as “transborder citizens” who are “long distance nationalists” who claim a single national affiliation that they express from outside that nation’s territory (Glick Schiller and Fouron, 2001, 25). Indeed, ironically, the case of HTA members suggests that such citizens have not only exercised but have, in fact, *enhanced* their participation in the Mexican state by residing outside of Mexico’s territorial borders.

Adding another twist to this concept, recent scholarship also recognizes that civic and political participation encompasses a much broader range of activities than voting, full enjoyment of public benefits, and other citizenship rights. Hence scholars propose the concepts of “substantive membership and citizenship” to speak of “de facto forms of participation and membership claims not limited to formal political citizenship” (Goldring 2002, 64; see also R.C. Smith [2003] on “citizenship” vs. “membership”). “When people make claims to belong to a state through collectively organizing to protect themselves against discrimination, gain rights, or make contributions to the development of that state and the life of the people within it, they are said to be substantively acting as citizens, whether or not they have legal documents that recognize such a status” (Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001, 25).¹¹

Substantive citizenship seems to be on the rise. Many HTA leaders are now U.S. citizens whose participation in Mexico exceeds the

limits of conventional notions of citizenship. Perhaps even more striking is the increased mobilization of HTA members and organizations on the U.S. front, in spite of—or perhaps because of—increased restrictions on noncitizen residents in the United States, especially those who are undocumented. This phenomenon is manifested most vividly in the huge immigrants' rights marches, which represented the "largest congregation in Chicago's history" and the "first national-level movement in U.S. history spearheaded by Latinos" (Flores-González et al. 2006, 1). Even though a majority of marchers were U.S. citizens (a majority of whom were foreign-born), a significant percentage were not;¹² the latter marchers were thus exercising substantive citizenship. For many participants, this demonstration was the "first time they had engaged in political activities" (ibid., 4); though, presumably, many of the non-U.S.-citizen marchers may also have expressed substantive citizenship in other venues such as labor unions, school councils, and other community organizations.

In a discussion of what he refers to as various forms of "transnational citizenship," Jonathan Fox cautions us that "influence is not the same as rights, and not all rights are citizenship rights" (2005a, 174); "claiming rights is not the same as gaining citizenship" (ibid., 176). His observations raise the question of whether it is still most politically effective to encourage migrants to gain U.S. citizenship so that they may enjoy full protections and rights and affect political processes at the ballot box. This tension over the emphasis on gaining citizenship in order to vote and exercise influence through formal political channels versus the emphasis on mobilizing broad participation to exercise a voice and exert pressure, regardless of the participants' formal citizenship, seems to underlie the varied approaches of different

segments of the immigrants' rights movement in Chicago. By 2008, the original organizers of the 2006 megamarch had diverged into two main groups that had nevertheless collaborated in organizing a May 1 march; while they agreed on a common goal of legalization for all (im)migrants, they differed in the emphasis of their organizing strategies.¹³ The Chicago May Day group appeared to operate from a vision of empowerment grounded in collaboration with politicians, working through existing political channels, and an emphasis on the importance of the vote. They thus seemed to favor the acquisition of traditional forms of citizenship and the vote as the ultimate path to ensure rights and produce political change. The *Movimiento 10 de Marzo* group, on the other hand, seemed to embrace a vision of empowerment grounded in a broad-based grassroots mobilization. Their efforts were directed toward outreach to involve participants regardless of their official citizenship in protests and actions that might pressure officials, influence public opinion and political processes, and keep their agenda in the public eye, as well as on the agenda of those who influence and make policy.

Clearly the various forms of substantive participation in no way should detract attention and efforts from maximizing the rights and influence of both citizens and noncitizen residents; nor should it detract from assuring the potential for noncitizen residents who fulfill reasonable requirements to eventually become citizens should they choose to. The impact of substantive citizenship by noncitizens remains to be proven and evaluated. However, as was the case in the efforts of the two main groups that organized the May 1 march in Chicago, conventional formal citizenship and political channels, on the one hand, and substantive citizenship and the promotion of a social movement regardless of participants' formal

citizenship, on the other, may be complementary strategies geared toward common goals. Whereas Fox's cautionary words are well taken, the exercise of substantive citizenship may be significant for overall empowerment—an issue on which I comment further in the final section of this paper.

CONCLUSION: FROM CIVIC TO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Scholars are ever more attentive to the myriad ways that (im)migrants negotiate and at times transform structural limitations imposed by global economic forces, states, and cultural norms and expectations. Whether we consider HTAs, women, or youth, we find similar transformations taking place thanks to experiences they attain through civic participation. Participants may come together for a defined communal goal: to carry out public works in their hometown, to improve conditions in their local schools, or to participate in the fiesta of their town's patron saint. But, along the way, they gain self-confidence, a greater sense of their own agency, and an awakened consciousness that may ultimately point them toward greater political engagement. Carol Zabin and Luis Escala concur that “political empowerment is [in part] ... constructed through participation in civic organizations” (2002, 8). HTAs furnish members with a “source of civic education” and provide youths with activities and “traditional” Mexican values that “shield them from the influence of gangs or the drug culture” (*ibid.*, 18). Some participants may, in turn, go on to more explicitly political struggles, fighting for the rights of expatriate citizens, disenfranchised migrants, women, or workers. Some may attain political offices themselves.

As evidenced in the HTAs, the transnational context may actually enhance effective political engagement. After all, migrants' access to economic resources in the United States made them an object of attention for Mexican government officials who vied for their continued allegiance and some control over migrant collective remittances. This lent these migrants a degree of influence most would not likely have achieved had they remained in their hometowns. Through programs focusing on collaborative public works, HTA members gained experience in negotiating with and making demands of government agents. They developed an increased sense of political agency and became more outspoken and proficient political actors. Perhaps most notable is that many of these migrants assumed a similar stance toward the United States. Several of the most prominent organizers of the immigrants' rights marches in Chicago also play prominent roles in Mexican extraterritorial political processes as members of CONFEMEX, the IME, or Mexican political parties. In this regard, viewed from a transnational perspective, migrants' continued participation in civic and political processes in their native land is not at odds with integration in their destination country; in fact, engagement in one of these arenas may enhance participants' efficacy in the other.

It is important not to exaggerate the gains achieved, nor to romanticize the individuals and groups that achieve them. Many would-be participants are constrained by economic and ideological demands that prioritize work and caring for home, children, and family. Furthermore, as Fox points out, “It is also important to recognize that transnational migrant political mobilization may be undemocratic” (2005a, 190). Grassroots movements are not immune to developing authoritarian, clientelistic, and patriarchal practices. We must be

attentive to the ways that old-style Mexican political practices are perpetuated, even in new contexts, as well as to the ways in which new experiences in the United States may contribute to transforming political culture in Mexico. There are also potential pitfalls when communal organizations collaborate with government agencies or with more formal, experienced organizations; through these relationships, organization members may lose some control over goals and decision-making processes.

(Im)migrant political participation and claims to substantive membership have expanded in ways that would not have been predicted, even a few years ago. It remains to be seen whether this trend will maintain its momentum and, if so, where it will lead. We should bear in mind that organizers of the immigrants' rights marches capitalized on networks of civic organizations in order to mobilize demonstrations of unprecedented scale. Their success was built on a groundwork laid by countless prior civic actions. One can only speculate about the effect of these marches on the many participants for whom this was their first involvement in political activities. Some evidence seems to support the assertion of one of the leaders of the Chicago marches: the presence of children and youth in today's marches and labor picket lines is like a school through which they will be socialized toward greater political awareness and activism and an attitude that "*¡Sí, se puede!*"

Yet others express concern about the challenges that persist. Many feel disillusioned and frustrated that so little seems to have happened after so many people participated in the marches in 2006 and 2007; it is difficult for them to understand why they should continue to engage in civic and political activities. As Luis Gutierrez, executive director of Latinos Progresando, suggests, there is a need to edu-

cate (im)migrants about the nature of U.S. political processes and why it is so important to continue participating. These challenges are compounded by a widespread fear, which has intensified in the wake of increased raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, including of one at the Little Village Discount Mall, which is frequented by Mexican migrants. Nonetheless, there is a demonstrated interest in participating, especially by a dedicated core of leaders and participants in HTAs and in community and immigrants' rights organizations. There are concerns about increasing the effectiveness of participants and of leadership in order to develop an approach that will be strategic in promoting their agendas rather than merely reacting to challenges that arise. While advocates concur on the need for training, it is crucial to offer training that will enhance the skills of participants without compromising the power and agendas at the grassroots. Likewise, as leaders become more sophisticated and professionalized there are always greater risks that they will become less representative of their constituents. Whereas there are clearly challenges ahead, especially with the recent rise in anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States, Chicago is likely to continue as a significant venue for continued and innovative migrant civic and political action in domestic, as well as in Mexican contexts.

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NOTES

- 1 I use the term (im)migration to connote the often uncertain distinction between the impermanence of the migrant and the more settled nature of the immigrant.
- 2 This list gives only selected book-length works; many more articles add to this scholarship.
- 3 Both of these states had established offices similar to the PCME. For descriptions of PCME see Boruchoff (1999), de la Garza (1997), Goldring (1998, 2001, 2002), González Gutiérrez (1995, 1997), M.P. Smith (2003), and R.C. Smith (1998, 1999, 2003); on the Guerrero–Chicago case, see Boruchoff (1999); on the Zacatecas–Los Angeles case, see Goldring (1998, 2002), González Gutiérrez (1995), M. P. Smith (2003), and R.C. Smith (2003).
- 4 The monetary contributions were equal; the HTA, the state government, and the federal government each contributed a third. In planning and executing projects, each party's role was equally essential, though qualitatively different from that of the other parties.
- 5 See Rivera-Salgado, Bada, and Escala-Rabadán (2005) for discussion and comparison of Chicago and Los Angeles confederations.
- 6 See Goldring (2002) and Guarnizo and Smith (1998) for discussion of this distinction.
- 7 The late Andrés Bermúdez resigned the mayoral post in Jerez to run for federal deputy winning a seat in the lower-house Chamber of Deputies for the National Action Party in July 2006.
- 8 See the list of projects under the membership link on the NALACC website at: <http://www.nalacc.org>.
- 9 Although Velasco Ortiz's research focused on indigenous migrants from Oaxaca, her findings are applicable to mestizos as well; likewise for Stephen, discussed below.
- 10 Even having won the right to vote in presidential elections, the ability to do so appears to be diminished by logistical complexities and by the prohibition against candidates campaigning in the United States (McCann, Cornelius, and Leal 2006; Fox 2005b).
- 11 An affiliated concept, "cultural citizenship," has been proposed "for conceptualizing how marginalized social groups move from claiming recognition, public space, and eventually specific rights to changing formal political systems" (Stephen 2007, 269). See also Flores and Benmayor (1997) for discussion of Latino cultural citizenship.
- 12 According to Flores-González et al. (2006), 27 percent were noncitizens. Considering the survey conditions, it is reasonable to expect that additional respondents may have falsely claimed U.S. citizenship, thus increasing the tally of noncitizen participants.
- 13 Note that labor unions were a third major party involved in organizing for May 1.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVISM:

A Rapporteur's Report

by Amy Shannon

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

The Community Dialogue on Transnational Activism took place over two days, October 26 and 27, 2007, at the Casa Michoacán, headquarters of the Michoacán Federation in Chicago, and site of the national coordination office of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC). Participants represented a diverse set of organizations and perspectives and included a strong set of local immigrant leaders, from both the Mexican and Central American communities; academics working on issues of civic engagement in the greater Chicago region; activist organizations whose focus is mostly domestic; and more traditional “service” organizations working locally in the Latino community. In total, more than 55 people participated in the event.

Additional documents pertaining to this conference can be found at: <http://www.nalacc.org/>. The presentation on the Chicago immigrant marches by Amalia Pallares, along with audio versions of the papers presented at the conference, are available in electronic format on the NALACC website. Additional audio segments available for download include presentations by: Luis Gutiérrez (Latinos Progresando) on barriers to civic engagement

and how to overcome them; Woody Carter (University of Chicago) on civic engagement in a world dominated by electoral politics; Maricela García (Latinos United) on the key integration challenges for Latinos posed by early childhood education and housing; Jesús García (Little Village CDC) on the challenges for immigrant integration posed by the demographic shift in the settlement of recent immigrants from traditional urban centers to the suburbs; and Ricardo Estrada (Erie House) on what it will take to build political power for transnational activism.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2007

PRESENTATIONS

Oscar Chacón (NALACC): Chicago and Transnational Activism

Chacón emphasized that Chicago is an important space for transnational activism and global citizenship because of its vibrant Latino (and especially Mexican) community. Mexican hometown associations (HTAs) have a long history in the city. In recent years, they have

come together into statewide federations and have become the center of direct action and intervention in their hometowns. They have promoted projects that have enhanced their communities back home and have prompted discussion with sending country governments on how they should be treating immigrants.

A major challenge is how to take this vibrant civic energy and use it in a more effective way in relating to the public at large; that is, to demystify misconceptions about immigrant communities in a move toward more healthy dialogue. This challenge applies both in the United States and in home countries; policy agendas that look beyond national borders have the best chance of getting at the root causes of migration.

Judith Boruchoff (University of Chicago): *Transnational Perspectives on Migrant Civic and Political Engagement in the United States*

Boruchoff began with an explanation of transnationalism, the perspective that has informed much research on migration since the early 1990s. Reviewing selected works within this paradigm and drawing on her anthropological research in Guerrero and Chicago, she highlighted advances made by members of HTAs, women, and youth of the second and 1.5 generations and identified common obstacles that limit their political efficacy. For each of these constituencies, what begins as civic participation—whether in hometown associations, community organizations, or communal rituals—may provide a forum and crucial experiences for raising awareness of political issues and enhancing participants' self-confidence and sense of agency in effecting change. This lays the foundation for politicization and greater political activism. It is

important to recognize substantive citizenship as a form of political participation; people can become important actors in their community without formal citizenship.

PANEL I: INTEGRATION, CITIZENSHIP, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This panel began with a presentation based on a paper by **Susan Gzesh** (Director, Human Rights Program, University of Chicago). Gzesh's paper provided a broad overview of Latino (particularly Mexican) immigrant civic participation in the Chicago area with the goal of shedding light on why and how Latino immigrant civic participation has developed there over the past two decades. The panel also included a case study by **Sylvia Villa** (Director of the first Illinois Immigrant Welcoming Center) on the efforts of the government of Illinois to integrate immigrants into civic life in Chicago; an extemporaneous reflection by **Woody Carter** (Professor, University of Chicago) on the state of civic engagement; and a discussion by **Luis Gutiérrez** (Director of Latinos Progresando) on barriers to political participation following the large immigrant marches of 2006.

Several important points were made, including the following:

- Social citizenship can be expressed when people do not have legal citizenship. It can be practiced on many different levels, such as participating in marches, attending meetings, and so on. But voting is still the key to wielding power at the formal level, so becoming a citizen is important.
- The issue of immigration has not been as polarized racially in Chicago as it has been in other parts of the country, per-

haps due to the fact that other immigrant groups, such as the Poles and Irish, also had undocumented relatives in the community until very recently. Nonetheless, there is a growing anti-immigrant constituency in the Chicago suburbs, due mainly to demographic changes.

- The state of Illinois has taken an active role in trying to promote immigrant integration, culminating in the New Americans Democracy Project, which promotes citizenship and has established a welcoming center in an attempt to connect newly arrived immigrants with appropriate services and institutions. However, people are still fearful of deportation and raids. There is a sense that the political leadership in Washington does not represent their interests, which is compounded by a lack of understanding of the roles of the different branches of government.
- The economy is the driving force behind how people view the immigration issue.

PANEL II: LOCAL CHALLENGES: EDUCATION AND HOUSING

In this session, several leaders with many years of experience in local activism on housing and education issues spoke of the practical challenges for integration that impact immigrants' ability to engage civically and politically.

Maricela García (Latinos United) stressed the importance of early education in long-term development. Parent engagement programs and facilities that offer full-day services to meet the needs of working families are important. A recent study that her organization carried

out on housing overcrowding suggests that it is more of a political issue than a quality-of-life issue and reflects the lack of dialogue between new immigrants and local communities and elected officials.

Jesús García (Little Village CDC) added that since 2000 the majority of Latinos now live in suburban areas where housing is more affordable and better education available. In the city, gentrification has become a real factor in shrinking the availability of affordable housing. There is also a predatory lending problem, with foreclosures on the rise.

Ric Estrada (Erie House) pointed out that there are still serious barriers for immigrant families when it comes to education. For early childhood education, there is a mismatch between service providers and where the need is. Infrastructure needs to be developed in those areas that have the most people who would utilize the services. There is also an incorrect perception that families do not want institutional childcare. Latino immigrant extended families also have eligibility barriers; some cannot show income because they are working without documents; others living in shared households exceed income eligibility thresholds since combined income is used to determine eligibility.

Amalia Pallares (Professor, Latino and Latin American Studies, University of Illinois at Chicago) presented a paper describing four different strategies used to mobilize for immigrants' rights and, more specifically, to prevent the separation of mixed-status families in Chicago: marches, lobbying, advocacy, and sanctuary. For each of these strategies, the paper examined the actors involved, the messages they convey, the goals they seek,

and the impact they have on shaping public opinion and public policy. The paper was complemented by a media presentation of a comparative analysis of surveys of the immigrant marches of May 1, 2006, and May 1, 2007.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2007

On this second day of discussion, the composition of the group shifted, with a notably larger presence of members of local Mexican HTAs and significantly fewer academics and “professional” NGO staff. This shift was expected. In fact, the Friday-Saturday structure of the meeting was designed, in part, to draw on a diverse set of participants as members of volunteer-based hometown associations often find Saturdays to be good days for meetings.

The opening session included a recap of the previous day, for those who were unable to attend, and a small group discussion on how to make transnational activism more inclusive of groups that are sometimes left out, including women, young people, and suburban residents. The issue of women’s participation produced lively debate, with some participants noting that in Chicago, women play a strong and visible role in immigrant organizations, including Mexican federations. Some of the women leaders suggested that this fact did not detract from the reality that for many women, cultural expectations and intrinsic sexism in the community do present serious barriers to participation.

Some of the ideas that emerged from that conversation included the following:

- Groups interested in broadening participation need to get to where the people are, including newer immigrant commu-

nities in Wisconsin, Indiana, and in the Illinois collar counties.

- A conscious strategy for engaging women and young people should include a strong training component.
- Participation of young people should be cultivated by focusing on issues that appeal to them, e.g., the DREAM Act. Youth are interested in active participation, such as theater, sports, and so on, and in having meaningful roles in the organization. An obvious area in which young people can be engaged is technology.

The remainder of the morning’s discussion centered on a paper written by **Rebecca Vonderlack-Navarro** (doctoral candidate, University of Chicago), who is carrying out dissertation research on the binational advocacy efforts of the Confederation of Mexican Federations (CONFEMEX) in Chicago. CONFEMEX is an alliance of eight state-level hometown federations in Chicago, including the largest federations, those of Michoacán and Zacatecas. CONFEMEX played a key role in organizing the large immigrant mobilizations that took place in Chicago in March and May of 2006. CONFEMEX has also been an active proponent of absentee voting by Mexican citizens in Mexico, as well as of voter registration in Illinois. Vonderlack-Navarro’s paper traced some of the history of CONFEMEX and its incursion into civic participation, with an eye toward both Mexico and the United States. Her paper also signaled some possible challenges ahead, including the lack of institutional infrastructure (no paid staff), an overloaded agenda (overly high expectations), and the potential for conflicting priorities in terms of local and international work.

After a question-and-answer session, the group divided up to discuss a related set of questions aimed at teasing out the current and future roles of immigrant networks in transnational advocacy.

REACTION VS. STRATEGY

Several participants pointed out that even though people recognize the importance of careful analysis and strategy, it is much easier to communicate the urgency of organizing and action in the face of a concrete threat, such as unfair legislation. Also, in some cases, reacting may be the appropriate strategy since governments (rather than civil society) are often driving the political agenda. Others noted that being able to shape the agendas could change that dynamic over time, and pointed to serious barriers that impede strategic approaches, including lack of experience/training in strategic planning, lack of paid staff in many organizations, and language barriers for some leaders.

MAKING CONFEMEX AND OTHER TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS MORE EFFECTIVE

Participants suggested that a conscious effort must be made to learn from mistakes and document experiences. Much has already been accomplished simply by working together over time. An effort must be made to identify individual roles and responsibilities in collective processes, and appropriate alliances should be made with government agencies, identifying the officials with whom to be in dialogue. Leadership must be constantly trained and developed, and funds must be raised to carry out the work plans that are identified. Counterparts

in places of origin, such as the “mirror clubs” that are springing up in several states, should be supported and nurtured, as well as other civil society organizations that may share interests in specific issues, such as human rights, local development, and microfinance.

In the wrap-up conversation, the issue of academic researchers vis-à-vis community groups surfaced as a concern for many participants. Among the HTA participants, there was a sense that academics often take advantage of community groups by studying them, publishing work that will advance their own careers but that they do not then take the next step of using their research to advance local organizing. This is an issue that immigrant organizations need to pursue on a more systemic level. To the extent that the organizations can negotiate effectively and make specific requests of researchers and academic institutions, the relationship will better resemble a balanced partnership.

DIALOGUE AND AREAS OF DEBATE

The discussions over the two days touched on many themes, but several issues came up a number of times in different forms. The issue of **citizenship and expressions of civic engagement** evoked lively debate, with some participants emphasizing the electoral component and others stressing the diverse ways in which immigrants can make effective political interventions. Several participants pointed out the significant challenge of engaging Latino immigrants in electoral politics when many of them are unable to vote and may have also had negative experiences with party politics in their countries of origin. In the United States, those immigrants who are likely to be able to vote (i.e., those in the country 15 years or more) are

clustered in a relatively small number of places, few of which are political “battleground” states. For this reason, many politicians from both parties have calculated that they can get more benefit from immigrant-bashing than from looking for sensible solutions to immigration reform.

Another challenge is that the **mechanisms for transnational political engagement** are not always obvious in a world that is dominated by the logic of the nation-state. Social/substantive citizenship may exist even when people do not have legal citizenship, but it can be hard to make this concept meaningful under the current rules. Creative responses will be critical. Several participants pointed out that many Latino immigrants have become important actors in their community without formal citizenship. In addition to the major marches of 2006 (discussed in more detail below), some groups have mobilized voters, held candidate forums, and organized get-out-the-vote drives, using a volunteer base that often comprises noncitizens. Chicago allows all those who have children in the public schools to vote for and participate on local school councils, and several organizations have promoted this as part of a strategy for engaging immigrant parents on civic issues.

Given the extreme negative content being promoted in the mainstream media, participants discussed the urgent need for **new media strategies** that can put a human face on the issue of migration. As several participants pointed out, the messages of fear that flood the media make the prospect of meaningful immigration reform, or even a healthy debate on the issue, very complicated. They debated the importance of agreeing on a consolidated set of messages. Although several participants conceded that it would be important to come up with a coordinated media strategy, others

wondered if that was the best approach, or if it would be more effective to identify multiple messages that reflect regional diversity and could appeal to different audiences. Those who favored the single-message strategy stressed the importance of saying the same thing over and over in many different venues until it creates an “echo effect” in the public. All agreed that it would be important to reach beyond the Spanish-language media and get messages to the English-speaking public. The issue of message testing was discussed, with participants arguing for a flexible strategy that could allow for learning from successful communications experiences at the grassroots, rather than just relying on centralized focus group testing.

Another issue that evoked significant interest was the challenge posed by shifting demographics in the greater Chicago region. Over the past 10 years, the location of the Latino immigrant population has **shifted from the city to the suburbs**. Now more than half of the immigrant population is living in the collar suburbs of Chicago, rather than in the traditional urban gateway neighborhoods. The infrastructure to serve these new communities is largely absent or developing only slowly, with most traditional service providers and community organizations, and even the immigrant-led HTAs still based in the city. This demographic shift has also provoked fear among traditional powerbrokers in suburban areas who wonder how new voters in the areas that have recently received immigrants will affect the political landscape. The changing demographics present an opportunity to frame discussions more broadly in order to build bridges with other communities; for example, the African-American community faces many of the same barriers in terms of education and housing as do immigrants. These shared interests should form the basis of new alliances.

For many groups, including HTAs, the **2006 immigrants' rights marches** represented a key turning point in engagement in national politics. Groups learned much about organization and about the many factors that were out of their control. Because so many families participated in the marches, the marches also became a way of engaging children in the political process. However, many people have become disillusioned since the last "megamarch" and feel that their participation does not have any effect on the system. Participants emphasized the need to develop a political strategy that frames the marches in a broader context, seeing them as a means to an end, not merely as goals in and of themselves.

Participants identified several **key strategies and next steps** for building political power for transnational activism. One subject that came up many times in different contexts was **alliances**. Participants emphasized the need to build bridges with others, emphasizing shared interests; for example, messages should be developed to communicate the economic interdependence of U.S. society and immigrants. As one participant put it, "Latino immigrant

children are going to be paying my Social Security." Messages should be tailored to specific audiences; for example, if the discussion of economic justice is framed more broadly, then Latino immigrants and the African-American community could find common ground. Forging effective alliances requires understanding what others' issues are and how Latino immigrant communities and organizations could provide meaningful reciprocal support on those issues. Also, likely allies must be identified, such as bankers who may want to sell products to the community but who are challenged by Patriot Act restrictions, or insurance companies that want to limit the number of uninsured motorists. Making such personal connections at the local level is a key development.

The need for constant **leadership development** also topped the list of recommendations in nearly every discussion. As one participant stressed, there needs to be a new generation of leadership that is supported and encouraged by the current leadership within the community. New leadership emerged from the organizing process of the marches, but there has not been time to nurture that new leadership.

APPENDIX 1:

Persons Naturalized During Fiscal Years 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008

PERSONS NATURALIZED DURING FISCAL YEAR 2005 BY CORE BASED STATISTICAL AREA (CBSA) OF RESIDENCE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

CBSA: Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
TOTAL	27,054	12,546	14,508	-
<i>Age</i>				
UNDER 18 YEARS	-	-	-	-
18-24 YEARS	2,938	1,334	1,604	-
25-34 YEARS	7,467	3,363	4,104	-
35-44 YEARS	7,285	3,499	3,786	-
45-54 YEARS	4,580	2,149	2,431	-
55-64 YEARS	2,864	1,337	1,527	-
65 YEARS AND OVER	1,920	864	1,056	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Marital status</i>				
SINGLE	5,457	2,940	2,517	-
MARRIED	18,857	8,691	10,166	-
OTHER	2,680	869	1,811	-
UNKNOWN	60	46	14	-
<i>Occupation</i>				
EXECUTIVE AND MANAGERIAL	1,130	665	465	-
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL	1,729	735	994	-
SALES	717	293	424	-
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT	259	61	198	-

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
FARMING, FORESTRY, FISHERIES	14	14	-	-
OPERATORS, FABRICATORS, LABORERS	1,674	1,198	476	-
PRECISION PRODUCTION, CRAFT, REPAIR	420	405	15	-
SERVICE	864	330	534	-
MILITARY	74	59	15	-
NO OCCUPATION	3,228	1,059	2,169	-
UNKNOWN	16,945	7,727	9,218	-

Top 20 countries of birth

ALBANIA	255	133	122	-
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	874	441	433	-
BULGARIA	648	323	325	-
CHINA	922	351	571	-
ECUADOR	245	119	126	-
GUATEMALA	290	141	149	-
INDIA	2,906	1,383	1,523	-
JORDAN	310	178	132	-
KOREA	700	292	408	-
LITHUANIA	405	159	246	-
MEXICO	4,739	2,436	2,303	-
NIGERIA	410	219	191	-
PAKISTAN	771	364	407	-
PHILIPPINES	1,714	612	1,102	-
POLAND	3,548	1,581	1,967	-
ROMANIA	516	245	271	-
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	578	295	283	-
SOVIET UNION (FORMER)	493	217	276	-
UKRAINE	418	163	255	-
VIETNAM	578	243	335	-
OTHER	5,593	2,586	3,007	-
UNKNOWN	141	65	76	-

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

PERSONS NATURALIZED DURING FISCAL YEAR 2006 BY CORE BASED STATISTICAL AREA (CBSA) OF RESIDENCE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

CBSA: Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
TOTAL	29,047	13,154	15,893	-
<i>Age</i>				
UNDER 18 YEARS	-	-	-	-
18 TO 24 YEARS	3,121	1,327	1,794	-
25 TO 34 YEARS	7,927	3,431	4,496	-
35 TO 44 YEARS	8,213	3,847	4,366	-
45 TO 54 YEARS	4,504	2,130	2,374	-
55 TO 64 YEARS	3,086	1,443	1,643	-
65 YEARS AND OVER	2,196	976	1,220	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Marital status</i>				
SINGLE	5,915	3,100	2,815	-
MARRIED	20,290	9,148	11,142	-
OTHER	2,842	906	1,936	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Occupation</i>				
MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	3,047	1,446	1,601	-
SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	1,137	437	700	-
SALES AND OFFICE OCCUPATIONS	1,289	359	930	-
FARMING, FISHING, AND FORESTRY OCCUPATIONS	48	48	-	-
CONSTRUCTION, EXTRACTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OCCUPATIONS	467	463	4	-
PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS	1,935	1,401	534	-
MILITARY	78	65	13	-

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
NO OCCUPATION/NOT WORKING OUTSIDE HOME	3,273	1,104	2,169	-
HOMEMAKERS	727	12	715	-
STUDENTS OR CHILDREN	1,932	783	1,149	-
RETIREES	373	211	162	-
UNEMPLOYED	241	98	143	-
UNKNOWN	17,773	7,831	9,942	-

Leading countries of birth

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	812	383	429	-
BULGARIA	584	280	304	-
CHINA	1,027	408	619	-
ECUADOR	256	124	132	-
GUATEMALA	373	169	204	-
INDIA	3,104	1,472	1,632	-
JORDAN	272	121	151	-
KOREA	787	312	475	-
LITHUANIA	340	133	207	-
MEXICO	6,466	3,085	3,381	-
NIGERIA	406	219	187	-
PAKISTAN	733	348	385	-
PHILIPPINES	2,116	782	1,334	-
POLAND	3,339	1,483	1,856	-
ROMANIA	503	216	287	-
RUSSIA	278	100	178	-
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	414	216	198	-
SOVIET UNION (FORMER)	332	149	183	-
UKRAINE	505	215	290	-
VIETNAM	486	199	287	-
OTHER	5,809	2,699	3,110	-
UNKNOWN	105	41	64	-

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

PERSONS NATURALIZED DURING FISCAL YEAR 2007 BY CORE BASED STATISTICAL AREA (CBSA) OF RESIDENCE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

CBSA: Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
TOTAL	37,736	17,392	20,344	-
<i>Age</i>				
UNDER 18 YEARS	-	-	-	-
18 TO 24 YEARS	3,774	1,652	2,122	-
25 TO 34 YEARS	9,709	4,246	5,463	-
35 TO 44 YEARS	11,430	5,332	6,098	-
45 TO 54 YEARS	6,261	2,948	3,313	-
55 TO 64 YEARS	4,131	2,098	2,033	-
65 YEARS AND OVER	2,431	1,116	1,315	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Marital status</i>				
SINGLE	7,532	3,933	3,599	-
MARRIED	26,688	12,281	14,407	-
OTHER	3,516	1,178	2,338	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Occupation</i>				
MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	4,009	1,922	2,087	-
SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	2,079	787	1,292	-
SALES AND OFFICE OCCUPATIONS	1,933	562	1,371	-
FARMING, FISHING, AND FORESTRY OCCUPATIONS	107	104	3	-
CONSTRUCTION, EXTRACTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OCCUPATIONS	733	722	11	-
PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS	3,166	2,258	908	-
MILITARY	81	62	19	-

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
NO OCCUPATION/NOT WORKING OUTSIDE HOME	4,029	1,260	2,769	-
HOMEMAKERS	1,072	16	1,056	-
STUDENTS OR CHILDREN	2,286	891	1,395	-
RETIREES	458	264	194	-
UNEMPLOYED	213	89	124	-
UNKNOWN	21,599	9,715	11,884	-

Leading countries of birth

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	981	474	507	-
BULGARIA	588	289	299	-
CHINA	1,420	601	819	-
COLOMBIA	269	86	183	-
ECUADOR	359	160	199	-
GUATEMALA	540	231	309	-
INDIA	3,991	1,975	2,016	-
JORDAN	343	175	168	-
KOREA	761	326	435	-
LITHUANIA	350	124	226	-
MEXICO	10,858	5,149	5,709	-
NIGERIA	423	221	202	-
PAKISTAN	889	441	448	-
PHILIPPINES	2,383	955	1,428	-
POLAND	4,341	1,888	2,453	-
ROMANIA	510	239	271	-
RUSSIA	308	101	207	-
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	398	188	210	-
UKRAINE	591	243	348	-
VIETNAM	476	196	280	-
OTHER	6,875	3,296	3,579	-
UNKNOWN	82	34	48	-

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

PERSONS NATURALIZED DURING FISCAL YEAR 2008 BY CORE BASED STATISTICAL AREA (CBSA) OF RESIDENCE AND SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

CBSA: Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
TOTAL	43,548	19,873	23,674	1
<i>Age</i>				
UNDER 18 YEARS	-	-	-	-
18 TO 24 YEARS	3,723	1,623	2,100	-
25 TO 34 YEARS	10,910	4,616	6,294	-
35 TO 44 YEARS	13,084	6,131	6,953	-
45 TO 54 YEARS	7,993	3,750	4,243	-
55 TO 64 YEARS	5,340	2,581	2,758	1
65 YEARS AND OVER	2,498	1,172	1,326	-
UNKNOWN	-	-	-	-
<i>Marital status</i>				
SINGLE	8,210	4,079	4,131	-
MARRIED	31,402	14,528	16,874	-
OTHER	3,935	1,266	2,669	-
UNKNOWN	1	-	-	1
<i>Occupation</i>				
MANAGEMENT, PROFESSIONAL, AND RELATED OCCUPATIONS	5,651	2,801	2,850	-
SERVICE OCCUPATIONS	3,076	988	2,088	-
SALES AND OFFICE OCCUPATIONS	2,876	828	2,048	-
FARMING, FISHING, AND FORESTRY OCCUPATIONS	151	141	10	-
CONSTRUCTION, EXTRACTION, MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OCCUPATIONS	1,000	985	15	-
PRODUCTION, TRANSPORTATION, AND MATERIAL MOVING OCCUPATIONS	4,487	3,114	1,373	-
MILITARY	104	85	19	-

Characteristic	Total	Male	Female	Unknown
NO OCCUPATION/NOT WORKING OUTSIDE HOME	4,918	1,397	3,521	-
HOMEMAKERS	1,512	10	1,502	-
STUDENTS OR CHILDREN	2,615	982	1,633	-
RETIREES	504	298	206	-
UNEMPLOYED	287	107	180	-
UNKNOWN	21,285	9,534	11,750	1

Leading countries of birth

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	520	252	268	-
BULGARIA	600	299	301	-
CHINA	1,465	652	813	-
COLOMBIA	368	138	230	-
ECUADOR	424	169	255	-
GUATEMALA	655	279	376	-
INDIA	4,689	2,371	2,318	-
IRAQ	312	135	177	-
KOREA	780	326	454	-
LITHUANIA	401	160	241	-
MEXICO	13,160	6,100	7,060	-
NIGERIA	498	277	221	-
PAKISTAN	923	507	415	1
PHILIPPINES	2,655	999	1,656	-
POLAND	5,804	2,444	3,360	-
ROMANIA	548	237	311	-
RUSSIA	404	145	259	-
SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO	412	198	214	-
UKRAINE	724	307	417	-
VIETNAM	468	181	287	-
OTHER	7,674	3,657	4,017	-
UNKNOWN	64	40	24	-

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security

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Judith Boruchoff received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Chicago where she is currently a Research Associate of the Katz Center for Mexican Studies. She has conducted ethnographic research on transnational connections between Guerrero, Mexico, and Chicago since 1991, focusing on the mechanisms through which transnational orientations and social spaces are constituted and on relationships between the Mexican government and its citizens in the United States. Currently, she is researching the politics of Guerrero hometown organizations in Chicago and will explore the interrelationships between these organizations and members' native villages as a Fulbright Fellow in Mexico during the 2009-2010 academic year.

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Mr. Chacón has dedicated his life to working for justice from his early years as a Catholic lay

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Since 2001, Susan Gzesh has been a senior lecturer and the director of the Human Rights Program at the University of Chicago. Her research interests include human rights and migration policy, with particular emphasis on the North American corridor. She holds a law degree from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree from the University of Chicago. From 1996 through 2001 she co-directed the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration, an international civil society coalition, which advocated for the human rights of migrants with governments in the North American corridor. Gzesh is a nonresident fellow of the Migration Policy Institute and sits on the board of directors of the International Network on Migration and Development. She serves on the advisory boards of the Illinois State New Americans Task Force and of the Mexico City-based non-governmental organization, PRODESC. She has worked as a consultant for philanthropic foundations, international organizations, and the government of Mexico. She lectures on migration and human rights before academic and community audiences in the United States and Mexico. Her most recent article on re-conceptualizing forced migration appears in the journal *Migración y Desarrollo* (www.migracionydesarrollo.org).

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Amalia Pallares is an associate professor of political science and Latin American and Latino studies. She has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Texas. She studies social movements and ethnicity and race in Latin America, as well as among Latinos in the United States. She focuses particularly on the relationship between political activism and identity formation among newly politicized groups. Her book, *From Peasant Struggles to Indian Resistance: the Ecuadorian Andes in the late Twentieth Century*, analyzes the social, economic and political conditions that inform contemporary indigenous activism and identity in Ecuador. Recently, she has focused on immigrant activism in Chicago. Her co-edited book, *Marcha: Latino Chicago and the National Immigrant Movement* (forthcoming Spring 2010, University of Illinois Press), explores the roles of institutions, collective organizing experiences, political coalitions, and public policies in shaping immigrant activism and subjectivities. She is also developing a manuscript on how mixed-status families in Chicago and elsewhere are mobilizing to prevent family separations.

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Amy Shannon is a program officer in the Environment Program of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, working on sustainable international finance in South America. At the time of the Chicago Community Dialogue, she was acting director of Enlaces América, a program of the Heartland Alliance for Human

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Ms. Vonderlack-Navarro is a doctoral candidate at the School of Social Work at the

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