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PANEL 1: COLLECTIVE LATINO POWER—MYTH OR REALITY?

JUAN PEREA:¹ There has recently been a good deal of publicity about whether collective Latino power is a myth or reality, especially given the growing number of Latinos in the United States. To some extent, this publicity is misleading. Latinos are not new in the United States, or at least to this continent. Nonetheless, we are a fairly recent discovery for the mass media.

What are some of the issues that arise from the recognition of our increasing numbers? What are the possibilities of forming coalitions across national origins and ethnic and racial lines, all of which are prominent issues in the Latino community? What does our diversity imply for American society? What kind of potential do we have to identify a single agenda, or various agendas, or at least elements of a national agenda? Is the idea of collective Latino power a myth or possibly a reality?

With the exception of Puerto Rico, New Mexico has the distinction of being the federal territory that has taken the longest in American history to become a state. Sixty-two years elapsed between the conquest of Mexico and the achievement of statehood for New Mexico. Why was this? In large measure, it was because Mexican people populated New Mexico and because they spoke Spanish.

During the nineteenth century, much of the justification for the conquest of Mexico was bound up with racism with respect to Mexicans: assumptions about the so-called “mongrel race” and their supposed inability to participate in self-governance. Hence, despite consistent petitioning for statehood beginning in 1850, citizens of New Mexico did not achieve statehood until 1912.

* The views expressed at the Sixth Annual Harvard Latino Law and Policy Conference are solely those of the panelists and are not necessarily endorsed by their employers.

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In 1910, the Senate Committee on Territorial Affairs wrote, “Since we are about to admit this territory, New Mexico, as a state of the Union, the disposition of its citizens to retain their racial solidity, and in doing so to continue the teaching of their tongue, must be broken up.” This, to me, is an astonishing statement. It means that statehood in the United States requires a weakening of the racial identity of Mexican Americans and a dissipation of the Spanish language. A study of history reveals that fear of that racial solidity and the Spanish language motivated denial of statehood for many years with respect to New Mexico.

In general, I think history exposes a theme of denying to Latino peoples in the United States political participation because of assumptions about their unfitness for self-governance and participation in democracy. I would like to provide relevant statistics about Latino political power, which I characterize as kind of a fairy tale. I mean fairy tale both in positive and negative senses of the word. If you read fairy tales as an adult, you will recognize that they serve the function of allowing children to master their fears by portraying fairly scary events in the emotional life of the child and outwardly producing some experience of mastery.

A striking characteristic about Latino demographic growth in the United States is that it is presented as a very scary statistic: “Watch out! There are 37 million Latinos.” Further, the statistics are always presented in opposition to the presence of African Americans, as demonstrated by the oft-repeated fact that the Latino population has surpassed the African American population in the United States. Why does that matter? In some ways it does not matter at all. It is presented in a particularly divisive way, apparently calculated to make African Americans and others fearful of Latinos.

More important than the question of the sheer size of the Latino population, however, is the question of why our political power is not commensurate with our numbers. As I mentioned before, 37 million Latinos live in the United States. Although this sounds like a large number, several calculations reveal the weakened state of our power. Political participation is obviously limited to Latinos ages eighteen or over—about 22.9 million since Latinos are on average a younger community than many other communities. The 22.9 million figure includes over 4 million undocumented adults who cannot vote. Thus, we need to subtract 4 million undocumented adults from 22.9 million, bringing us down to about 18.9 million. Approximately 1.6 million Latinos are permanent residents currently not eligible for naturalization. In addition, there are about 2.4 million Latino permanent residents who have not yet become citizens. Thus, we subtract another 4 million from 18.9 million, which takes us down to about 14.9 million.

Can you see where I am going with the numbers? 14.9 million Latinos includes about 3.8 million Puerto Ricans who are resident on the Island. Puerto Ricans resident on the Island are United States citizens, statuto-

rily, but they are not entitled to vote for president or vice president and they have no voting representation in Congress. We therefore subtract 2.4 million, an estimate of the number of adult Puerto Ricans living on the Island, from 14.9 million. The result is 12.5 million Latinos who are actually eligible to vote out of 22.9 million who otherwise might be eligible. Hence, approximately forty-five percent of adult Latinos resident in the United States and Puerto Rico are ineligible to vote. About half of us do not count with respect to American politics.

It is important that we think about ways of enfranchising ourselves. We often assume that our increasing numbers will inevitably lead to increasing power in the face of demographic change, which is not necessarily true. Consider the history of the disenfranchisement of African Americans after their citizenship was constitutionally guaranteed in the Fourteenth Amendment and their voting rights were protected in the Fifteenth Amendment. For roughly one hundred years following the adoption of these amendments, state and local governments effectively disenfranchised the African American community. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 ultimately fashioned a response to this problem.² Yet the lesson to learn from the long and painful disenfranchisement of African Americans is that political power does not simply flow from just sheer numbers. Therefore, Latinos should not feel politically secure owing merely to a growing population. Efforts to further restrict Latinos' political power abound. For example, one of the goals of the official-English movement is to do away with multilingual ballots, in addition to rolling back multilingual education. These are examples of measures that will very clearly restrict the ability of some American citizens to vote.

What can we do to enfranchise Latinos—to guarantee maximum political participation? First, there should be a constitutional amendment to enable Puerto Ricans resident on the Island to vote for president and vice president and to have voting representation in Congress. Why is that not on the top of every Latino's political agenda? There is really no decent counter-argument to these goals. Puerto Ricans are American citizens. Puerto Ricans serve in the military. Puerto Ricans participate intimately in our national affairs. They are subject to federal law. Puerto Ricans resident on the Island deserve a constitutional amendment as was done for the citizens of the District of Columbia, which is similarly situated as a federal territory.

A second step to ensure maximum Latino enfranchisement implicates broader legalization options for undocumented persons resident in the United States. This would bring into the fold a very large number of people who have made a commitment to be in the United States. These individuals should have the right to vote in time and should be legalized.

² Voting Rights Act of 1965, Pub. L. No. 89-110, 79 Stat. 437 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 42 U.S.C.).

In addition, I think we should oppose guest worker programs because they perpetuate the cycle of exploitation without representation that has been built into every such program since the early twentieth century.³

Thirdly, we must promote naturalization for legal residents of the United States. No good reasons exist as to why a legal permanent resident should not become naturalized and vote.

The fourth item is to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act,⁴ the National Labor Relations Act,⁵ and other employment legislation in order to eliminate substandard treatment of agricultural employees. Many Latino and African American employees work in the agricultural industry. Currently, much of our legislation guarantees unequal treatment by making agricultural workers ineligible for overtime protections, unionization, and minimum wage.

Lastly, it is very important to oppose official-English legislation and anti-bilingual education legislation. We must provide Latino children—future voters—with the foundation they need to become educated and active members of the American political scene. That concludes a short list of steps we can take in order to more fully enfranchise Latinos in this country.

SANDRA DEL VALLE:⁶ When I was given the task of figuring out whether collective Latino power was a myth or reality, my initial reaction was to say, “Oh, of course it’s a myth.” The Latino dropout rate is rising. Socioeconomic indicators for Latinos are not positive right now.

As I was thinking about Latino access to education, I started to contemplate the complex issues involved in education and whether anyone has a collective agenda on education issues. There is a current push to have standards-based education and high stakes testing implemented throughout the country. As of September 2002, twenty-four states have established or are in the process of establishing statewide exit or graduation exams. Massachusetts is among these.

New York adopted such a system in 1996 and has been phasing it in. The state now requires about four tests to graduate. The first exam phased in was an English language arts exam. New York’s Commissioner of Education claimed that any child who attended English language arts class for two to three years would be able to pass this exam easily. Needless to say, the group with highest number of students who were not able to pass the exam were Latino students, a disproportionate number of whom were English language learners. The state had many reports indicating that English language learners and children of color in New York would individually or collectively have problems meeting the English Regents Exam requirements.

³ See generally Juan F. Perea, *A Brief History of Race and the U.S.-Mexican Border: Tracing the Trajectories of Conquest*, 51 UCLA L. REV. 283, 303–12 (2003).

⁴ Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, 29 U.S.C. §§ 201–219 (2000).

⁵ National Labor Relations Act, 29 U.S.C. § 151 (2000).

⁶ Civil Rights Attorney, Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF).

One state report even acknowledged that some English language learners will simply not be able to pass this exam, through no fault of their own. The report recognized that students coming into the school system, having been the subjects of civil strife or having had their formal education interrupted, will likely never be able to pass this exam. Yet the state refused to propose any alternatives for these students, and also would not waive the exam for them. Despite having been asked repeatedly to grapple with this issue for English language learners, the state has refused to budge.

In New York City, the official dropout rate is estimated at 27% for Latinos and 30% for English language learners. The unofficial numbers are probably higher and the national numbers reflect a similar picture. Certainly, the testing situation is not helping to improve such dismal statistics.

Some of the issues that have come up with high stakes testing have also caught the attention of the national press. Recently, an educational periodical reported on studies from Arizona about the number of high stakes graduation exams that were not properly validated. The same issue affects New York, and we have been stalled in court for three years attempting to address it.

I think that the movement in support of high stakes testing makes it very difficult for Latinos to realize that this is their issue. Education often involves such gray areas. People say, "Well, don't you think tests are good? And don't you think we should be held to high standards? And don't you think the kids can meet those standards?" Parents may think that their opposition to such testing will be interpreted as a lack of faith in the abilities of their children. Students are generally not provided with the additional resources needed to pass the high stakes tests. The results can be devastating: leaving high school without a diploma poses obvious barriers to future advancement. Hence, we must take a deeper look at this very difficult issue.

When we fought to have the other subject area exams translated, such as science and social studies, the only thing that saved our argument was the notion that, students taking these exams would still have to pass the English exam. People were very anti-translation and openly voiced the view that if a student cannot speak the English language, he or she does not deserve to graduate. Latinos in New York and nationally have not identified the high stakes testing trend as an issue. However, it is having a terrible effect on our children and the education they receive.

Focusing on Latino collective power in the education arena is difficult, since identifying unifying issues may be complicated. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 may be another area where we should focus our energies.⁷ The Act is President George W. Bush's federal plan for educa-

⁷ No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

tion. It is the biggest source of federal money being given to schools, and unfortunately the money comes attached to a lot of testing.

That federal money also comes attached to something that many of us, especially in the civil rights world, would consider good: the disaggregation of test scores along racial and language lines. For instance, this could involve collecting statistics on English language learners versus native English speakers. Differential success and failure rates among different groups will be more easily exposed. The legislation dictates particular requirements regarding how the data should be disaggregated, what is considered a “failing” school, and what one’s rights are as a parent if a child’s school is indeed failing. There are already lawsuits in New York involving parents who were not given their right to pull their children out of failing schools. New York City has hundreds of such schools, which makes school choice a real question.

Another requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act is to have highly qualified teachers by 2005–2006. New York City and many other states are already moving toward that objective. Clearly, there is nothing wrong with highly qualified teachers. This is another issue where I do not think the Latino voice is going to rise up in anger and say, “We don’t want highly qualified teachers.” Of course you want highly qualified teachers. But the devil is always in the details, at least with education. The greatest number of teachers who will not be considered “highly qualified” will be the teachers who were home grown in New York and they will probably be the minority teachers. This is a trend that we must resist.

The final trend that I would like to address involves the anti-bilingual education mood that is growing in our nation. This has taken root as an outshoot of the anti-immigrant sentiment epitomized in California with Proposition 187. Anti-bilingual education initiatives started in California, succeeded in Arizona, were fought down and killed in Colorado, and were recently passed in Massachusetts. Ron Unz, who spearheaded many of these campaigns, came to New York and thought he had found friends there, but he was booed away. However, this will continue to be a live issue in many jurisdictions.

In sum, the possibilities for collective Latino power in the education arena are mixed. Educational issues are unique in that there are rarely clear-cut answers to pressing policy questions. With education, we are all struggling to find the “right” answer to address students’ needs. This is a confusion that is not limited to Latinos, since there exists national confusion on education.

CLARISSA MARTINEZ:⁸ In the discussion about whether Latino power is a myth or a reality, some people point out that national Latino organizations do not march to the same tune—in other words, there is disagreement on issues, tactics, and politics. The critics cite this disharmony

⁸ Director of State/Local Policy, National Council of La Raza.

as evidence of a lack of collective Latino power. In fact, I would argue that the variety of perspectives among Latino organizations shows that the community is coming into a greater level of sophistication as it grows.

Is Latino power a myth? Latino power is indeed a myth if you want to view the Latino community as a monolith in which people need to have the same interests and they have to act and react in the same way. In that sense, it would definitely be a myth. Latino power is a reality in the sense that an organization like mine—the National Council of La Raza—would not be able to function if there were no common issues to bring Latinos together, regardless of national origin or language spoken. Most Latinos can identify with certain issues either because they have lived them, their parents lived them, or they are close to others who are living them.

There are many issues affecting leadership and power among Latinos. One issue is the lack of strong, historic institutions that allow the community to flourish, such as churches and their role in African American communities. Even without such institutions, there is definitely a level of community involvement that allows people who may not even have the right to vote to participate at the community level. People go through an evolution that eventually leads them to get more involved in their community.

This may be important given the trend of devolution of decision-making authority from the federal to the state level. We should try to manage that process to make sure that Latinos are truly represented. For Latinos, who seem to be more oriented toward having power and leadership structures located at the local level, this process of devolution could present a very good opportunity for the Latino community to shine. This potential model of local-level concentration of Latino power may be unique, but it should not be discounted.

When the standard benchmark is that everyone in our community should be able to name our national leaders, the fact that Latinos do not readily do so is interpreted as a lack of leadership, a lack of unity, and a lack of power. We need to constantly challenge those myths because they demonstrate a lack of understanding of the unique ways in which collective Latino power may manifest itself. Given the complexity of the Latino community, one cannot make such generalizations. For example, Catholics are often talked about as a voting bloc, but I do not think anyone would venture to say that Catholics vote the same way on every single issue, or that they all agree with what the Pope says, or that they all practice what the Catholic Church says.

Similarly, there are certain issues that are going to bring Latinos together and other issues on which people are going to go their separate ways. This is also important in the current political environment because it is time that Latinos started being taken more seriously. Being taken for granted by Democrats and completely ignored by Republicans has not been very helpful. Political parties and politicians are still at the stage of

performing “Spanish lip service”—throwing out a greeting or phrase in Spanish. Our hope is that this is the first step in recognizing the Latino electorate, and that at some point it will be translated into a truly meaningful acknowledgment of Latinos’ needs. Elections in this country are being decided by very small margins. Hence, politicians are being forced to pay attention to a more diverse portion of the population.

Certain myths about our community need to be dispelled. For example, some people have taken the fact that Latino children are not performing to the maximum of their ability in the education system to mean that Latino parents do not care about their children’s education. In reality, there is a big disconnect that needs to be explained to those who do not understand it. Part of that disconnect is related to the experiences of Latino parents, particularly recent immigrants who are used to dealing with a very different type of education system. Dealing with education in the United States requires a very different set of skills and dispositions—such as assertive parental advocacy—which take some time to understand and adopt. This lack of advocacy does not mean that there is no interest on the part of Latino parents in their children’s education. It means that they expect the system is designed to provide for what their children need and, therefore, the reaction to the system is different. Trying to understand these disconnects and bring them to light so that the community can make more progress is an important responsibility for us and something that my organization has been trying to address.

Lastly, I would like to say that legalization is a very important issue for collective Latino power. For the National Council of La Raza, immigration is among our priority issues because we see it as a civil rights issue. Latinos do care about this, particularly when evaluating candidates and political parties. Even if you are not an immigrant, you will likely feel the backlash of certain immigration laws thanks to the color of your skin. Most Latinos, at one point or another, will be confronted by the fact that they are still perceived to be immigrants, regardless of how many generations their families have been in the country. Thus, legalization is very much a civil rights issue for all Latinos. It has a wide range of implications for immediate living conditions, workers’ rights, labor rights, and a host of other civil rights.

Within the framework that Latinos are far from a monolithic group, there is still room to work together and room to exercise power. We need to define power in our own terms and we need to educate others who measure our success based solely on their expectations and frameworks of power.

CRESENCIO ARCOS:⁹ I am going to discuss Latinos in terms of foreign policy and try to give you a smattering of my impressions, having

⁹ Director of International Affairs and Senior Adviser for Foreign Policy to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; Former American Ambassador to Honduras;

been a practitioner as a diplomat and also a business executive dealing with the international dimension. I can tell you that there is one establishment in this country that is very aware of our numbers: the advertising and marketing world. Why? Because Latinos are consumers.

To cite an example, even Mexican businessmen know that the 4 million Mexicans in Los Angeles County have greater purchasing power than all of Mexico City's 22 million people. Latinos' purchasing power is recognized not only by domestic purveyors of products, but also by the international community. The Latino community remits over \$30 billion to Latin America annually. Consequently, we are an economic power in the sense of purchasing power.

In terms of defining and identifying the role of Latinos within the formation of U.S. foreign policy, we are up against a wall. Traditionally, formulation of foreign policy in the establishment has not been open even to middle America. It was always dominated by Ivy Leaguers, WASPs, elitists, good old boys' clubs, corporate bankers, the finance leaders of Wall Street, or the Council on Foreign Relations. This was the case for the first 200 years. These individuals were the high priests of foreign policy and committed the country to all sorts of things—whether that was war, peace, trade, or immigration policy. It affected us all.

Even if we go back to the debates on Vietnam, where were we? We took positions on issues by being active in organizations such as the American GI Forum. Latino veterans took stands in support of the war and, in the end, against the war. We were heard in some instances when it affected our community and when we were losing soldiers from our neighborhoods. But in the last thirty years, the foreign policy establishment has gone largely unchallenged even by the good work of the National Council of La Raza, the NAACP, and MALDEF. First we had to overcome the hurdle of not allowing women to participate in the foreign service of the United States once they got married and had children. Until 1970, this was not permitted. In 1979, a court decision reversed this policy. At the same time, there was an earnest effort on the part of the establishment to include non-Ivy Leaguers and non-WASPs in foreign policy circles. Yet Hispanics have been slow to actively challenge the exclusionary status quo. While African Americans and women went to court to demand representation in the foreign service, we have not done the same.

Despite our lack of activism on this issue, Latinos have slowly—very slowly—gained some positions in the foreign policy establishment. The first Hispanic Ambassador, Raymond Teodoro Moscoso, was named Ambassador to Venezuela in 1961. In 1965, the first Latino career foreign service employee to attain the title of Ambassador was Joseph John Jova, a Cuban American. He served as Ambassador to Honduras, Ambassador to the Organization of American States (OAS), and Ambassador to Mex-

ico. When I was named Ambassador in 1989, I was the sixth Hispanic career foreign service employee to attain that position. At that time, there had been about fourteen Hispanic political appointees. Since then, the number of Hispanic career foreign service individuals who have been named ambassadors has more than doubled.

Our progress elsewhere is weaker. We have had few Latino National Security Advisors to the Presidents. Mexican Americans have served as Secretary of the Navy under President Carter and as Secretary of the Army under President Clinton. Hence, despite some recent inroads, Hispanics have been absent from the inner circles that are able to shape America's foreign policy. The lack of Latino voices in the foreign policy establishment is, I believe, a function of the fact that we are not seen yet as real players in the national arena.

How can we remedy this problem? What can we as Hispanics do to be fully recognized as the important political force that we truly are? First, we need to make monetary contributions to campaigns and causes that matter to us. Second, Hispanics must develop better lobbying skills and take stands on such issues as Iraq, the environment, and human rights. Next, we must make sure that we do not ignore the international dimension of issues that we care about, beyond only what happens in Mexico and Cuba. We must also encourage public intellectuals from our community to address the foreign policy issues that confront us, and we must develop leadership on these issues.

We have not only a right, but an obligation to participate in the fundamental foreign policy decision-making processes that are currently impacting our community and the rest of the world. We are 37 million strong—or effectively more like 12 million, as Juan Perea has pointed out—but we must work to make sure that Hispanics have a place at the table in foreign policy debates and discussions.

Q: Did you say that your views on the best redistricting strategies were to create majority Latino districts? In the past, the focus was on creating majority Latino districts to be able to elect Latino representatives, but since packing them in has led to Republican advantages, now it seems that the focus is on creating coalition districts where Latino influence can be better used. What do you think is the best way to approach these questions in order to increase Latino power? Is it more important to elect Latinos or to elect white Democrats who may still represent Latino issues?

DEL VALLE: I am not a redistricting attorney but my organization works on redistricting cases. I think we are still following the strategy of pursuing majority Latino districts. Maybe that is provincialism, but I believe that it is still the way to go. I always think that if you cannot get a good Latino representative—in the sense of a person who would best represent the interests of the Latino community—then communities should

support the individual of whatever race who will advocate for their interests.

I would also like to comment on the issue of Democrats taking the Latino vote for granted. That really played out in recent New York City elections. Latinos thought that Mark Green, the Democratic mayoral candidate, was taking Latino voters for granted. He lost the election. Apparently Latinos either stayed home or voted for the Republican candidate, Michael Bloomberg. Mayor Bloomberg has not shown a particular attentiveness to issues of interest to many Latinos. I think that if he strikes hard on bilingual education, it will be seen as a direct hit to the Latino community. So, should Latinos have voted for Mark Green and kept their anger about him in check? Would he have been more attentive? These are complicated questions that may play out as voters get a better sense of Mayor Bloomberg and his policies.

MARTINEZ: I think the redistricting question is getting more complicated. On the one hand, we definitely want to ensure that there is increased Latino participation and representation. We tend to think that Latino elected officials are the only ones that can represent Latinos well. We also believe that Latinos should be represented in every profession commensurate with their population.

However, the issue of incumbency protection complicates redistricting. It raises the question of whether creating a Latino district is a good idea. The power of incumbency and people's ability to protect that incumbency is making the political arena less open and free for new people who come in.

Q: I have a brief question for Professor Perea regarding Puerto Rico, the right to vote, and the U.S. Constitution. Puerto Ricans have consistently voted in referenda against statehood over the last two decades, including in the last five years. They have maintained their special commonwealth status. Do you feel that the current situation that exists in Puerto Rico undermines the effort for constitutional amendments? In a sense, giving them the right to vote allows Puerto Ricans to maintain their political sovereignty and not associate fully as a state. Do you see a contradiction there?

PEREA: Puerto Ricans are often depicted as a confused population. I think that the outcome of the last referendum on Puerto Rico's status shows that many Puerto Ricans were dissatisfied with the status quo, yet there was not a decisive majority for either statehood or independence. The results are always mixed. One issue is that many Puerto Ricans are not clear about exactly what they are voting for in the context of statehood because Congress has not made clear what it will demand as conditions for Puerto Rican statehood.

Tax exemptions for Puerto Ricans—an issue often raised in these debates—are entirely a function of Congress. People love to say, "Puerto Rico should not have statehood if they do not pay federal income taxes."

However, this is blaming Puerto Ricans for something that Congress created. Puerto Ricans are entirely subject to federal congressional will. There is more self determination in the commonwealth arrangement, but not with respect to the basic issues of being subject to federal law without any vote.

This would be a great issue for the Latino community to espouse because there is no good reason to deny U.S. citizens the right to vote for president. Whether you are a Republican or a Democrat, what is the counter-argument? Everyone who is burdened by federal government responsibility should have a say in the creation of those policies. These are basics of democratic theory. Puerto Rico is populated by 4 million Latinos who are unable to fully participate politically. We should rally around that issue. Will people have different feelings about that? Absolutely. I think part of the concern would be the meaning of statehood.

DEL VALLE: I am not an expert on the issues of Puerto Rico, but I do have a family perspective. If my aunt were to come over and establish her residence in Florida, as she has done in the past, she would be voting for president. Then after about six months or so she might go back to Puerto Rico, as she has also done in the past, and would not be able to vote for president. When you look at it in terms of a practical reality, it does not make sense.

I echo Professor Perea's remarks in terms of the onus of federal legislation and also in terms of economics. My own experience, based on having family in Puerto Rico and visiting the Island, has been that Puerto Rico bears an extraordinary economic burden given its usefulness to the United States. The situation is more complicated than simply stating that Puerto Ricans do not pay federal income taxes. One can drive down little back roads and see Pepsi signs appear out of nowhere, and the agricultural system has been undermined by enormous pharmaceutical companies getting free rides in Puerto Rico.

This situation has a lot to do with identity, history, economics, culture, and language. It does not help that the first thing the United States did when it took over Puerto Rico was to change the spelling of its name and make English the official language. Language is an issue that evokes much passion in Puerto Rico. If it is tied up with statehood, that will doom the statehood argument.

ARCOS: Alaska, Hawaii, and New Mexico were not granted statehood until they affirmatively demonstrated that the majority of their citizens wanted statehood. The problem is that, if made a prerequisite, this is not going to happen in Puerto Rico because of issues of culture and identity that will continue to fuel resistance to statehood.

PEREA: One of the themes that seems to emerge from history is summarized by the quote with which I started my remarks, regarding breaking up the racial solidarity of the Latino population in New Mexico. When Puerto Ricans become part of a large majority that may or may not represent

their particular interests, Puerto Ricans as a discrete group lose their voice just as Mexicans lost their voices when New Mexico was admitted. This was part of the strategy.

The other comment is that, just as with the District of Columbia, the statehood question does not have to be resolved. It is a federal district, not a state. Yet the residents of the District of Columbia have the right to vote for president and vice president.

MARTINEZ: I think a notable difference there, however, is that you cannot simply divorce the question of a vote for president from the statehood question. Many Puerto Ricans join those questions together. The environment in which this debate would take place in Puerto Rico is very different.

PEREA: Then it would become very important to emphasize that it is in fact possible to keep the issues separate. What is the reason for having U.S. citizens who cannot vote? Whether they want to become a state or not is a distinct question. Why is Puerto Rico not like the District of Columbia?

Q: Many assert that bilingual education is not working and should be eradicated. However, why not take a middle-of-the-road approach and propose reforms to bilingual education? Not very many bilingual or dual-emersion programs exist. Is there a potential for rallying around that sort of issue?

DEL VALLE: As I discussed earlier, we are fighting for bilingual education to be an option, as has been made clear by the examples in California, Arizona, and Massachusetts. We are bracing ourselves for that same fight in New York City. I have heard people say, "Bilingual education is not working the way it is." In New York City, the majority of schools are not working the way they are supposed to and there is a need to reform almost everything. However, the bilingual education programs are not as big a failure as people always seem to say. For example, the latest study published on bilingual education in New York City was on a transitional bilingual education program. Opponents have harshly criticized such programs. Yet according to the study, they were not working too poorly after all. Seventy percent of the students in the transitional bilingual education program completed the transition. Most were transitioned out after four years. If you follow them after the program, those who had been in those transitional bilingual education classrooms outperformed, on academic subject matters, the students who had taken only English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

There is, of course, room for improvement. In bilingual education we still need really good teachers, much smaller classrooms, a curriculum that parallels the mainstream, and real textbooks instead of mimeographed sheets of paper. We are predicting that the mayor is going to get rid of all transitional bilingual education programs and replace them with ESL or dual-language programs. However, we only have eighty-five dual-

language classrooms in the entire city. There are 145,000 English language learners. About a thousand will get into dual-language programs. For the rest of these students, bilingual education will not even be an option.

You do have to come out in support of bilingual education because nobody else is doing so. And, even if the bilingual education system is not perfect in its current form, we need to at least keep bilingual education as an option.

MARTINEZ: I think the National Council of La Raza has come into conflict with some of the traditional bilingual education advocates about alternative bilingual education models and also about testing issues. You need to reform the education system and that requires considering a variety of options that might not be very popular.

If one looks at all the political forces involved with money and influence in setting education policy or lobbying, one can identify only a few organizations that represent parents or the interests of children. Teachers, principals, and administrators are all very important components of an education but, ultimately, the organizations that represent them are interested in protecting the rights of their constituencies.

Q: I am interested in hearing the panel address recent governmental anti-immigrant campaigns such as Operation Tarmac. What are we doing as a political power to try to increase immigrants' rights and human rights policies?

MARTINEZ: The National Council for La Raza does significant work on immigration. Increasingly, we are focusing on issues that arise at the state level, in addition to the work that we have historically done at the federal level. We are opposed to Operation Tarmac and are very concerned with anti-immigrant groups that have used the post-September 11 environment to advance a series of harmful positions. They have capitalized on people's fears and on the willingness of people to look away while civil liberties and other rights are being eroded.

Some time back, expectations were raised during conversations between Mexico and the United States regarding the possibilities of a legalization program. However, there has been a huge effort to drive undocumented immigrants further underground at both the federal and state levels in the form of restricting access to driver's licenses and encouraging local police to cooperate with the former INS.

The backlash, however, has created a great level of energy at the local level for people to organize and fight for their rights. People are organizing and lobbying legislators regardless of what their immigration status is and reminding those in power of the idea that the United States is a nation of immigrants. This is, of course, one of the founding values of our country. Many think that immigrants are politically expendable and that they are easy scapegoats because they do not vote. Yet legal permanent residents who may soon become citizens and individuals who have already naturalized, among others, are reacting to the backlash. In

some ways, the anti-immigrant sentiment is serving as a catalyst for people to connect with each other. What is happening is very exciting. Mobilization around immigration policy is energizing people who do not yet have the power to vote in such a way that, when they do become citizens, they will be a forceful part of the political equation.

PANEL 2: ACCESS TO CAPITAL

MANNY GONZALEZ:¹⁰ As we work toward gaining access to power in the political realm, in Hollywood, and elsewhere, what is the importance of financial capital, and what is the importance of social capital to our community? Is one more important than the other? Social capital is considered to be the glue that connects individuals to their community. Social capital is also a means by which to improve the condition of communities and propel their agendas to the spotlight. How do we gain social capital in our communities? How do we increase the amount of monetary capital in our communities? Understanding the differences and interactions between social and monetary capital are vital to the success of our communities.

In my view, social capital is particularly strong among Latinos. Our sense of community and our interactions bolster our language, music, food, and other social elements, with which we readily and enjoyably identify. These cultural elements fuel our social circles and networks. We want to make use of these and other elements of social capital to enhance the financial condition of our community.

Social capital is a means to obtain financial capital. With thirteen percent of the nation's population, Latinos have become the nation's largest minority. In the last ten years, we have seen a concurrent rise in the prevalence of these social capital elements in mainstream America. Both well-known individuals and specific geographical communities have financially benefited from this mainstream popularity, particularly in the entertainment industry.

We have also translated this social capital into political capital, thereby enabling the election of more Latinos to political office. Thanks to the Latino populations and communities in states like Florida, Texas, California, and New York, we can have—and at times, have had—an impact on issues of national importance. But on average, our community still does not have the financial capital it needs.

We need to do a better job of translating social and political capital into financial capital. First, we need to increase the number of Hispanics graduating from college and professional schools. Today only about eight percent of college graduates are Latinos. It is clear that better-educated communities have more financial capital. Our Latino political and eco-

¹⁰ Director, Latin America, Global Team/Global MDO, Procter & Gamble.

conomic leaders need to support and fund Latino scholarships and early education programs for our Latino youth. Second, we need to increase Latino representation in corporate America. At thirteen percent of the U.S. population (and growing rapidly), our community has tremendous power in driving domestic economic consumption. Many leading companies in the United States have recognized Latino consumption power and are tapping into it to increase their profits by marketing their products and services in a way that targets Latinos.

Yet, despite available talent in Latino managers and graduates, we are grossly underrepresented in corporate America. As just one data point, Latinos hold only 96 board seats in Fortune 500 corporations of the approximate 5900 seats available, or only about 1.6% when we are over 13% of population and represent about 8% of college graduates. This translates to less than one quarter of parity with Latino college graduates' availability. Many groups are already attempting to organize and channel Latino collective consumption power to make corporate America realize that obtaining their fair share of Latino consumption money depends on Latinos obtaining a fair share of management in their companies. This would increase Latino financial capital in our communities. The glass ceiling held up by the pillars of arbitrariness, which are not based on skills or results, needs to be eliminated. The glass ceiling hurts every group, but it especially hurts Latinos and other historically disadvantaged minorities. Latino managers in corporate America, Latinos in government, and Latino elected officials are the key to ensuring fair share Latino representation at all levels of U.S. corporations that sell to our communities.

No country can flourish on a sustained basis financially, socially, or politically if a major segment of its population does not have an appropriate fair share of the wealth that it helps to produce. Additionally, our country cannot achieve its true economic potential if its most talented people do not manage its most important resources, increasing the nation's total wealth for the benefit of everyone.

This is not about giving Latinos and other historically disadvantaged minorities special treatment. Rather, this is about giving them fair treatment for the benefit of the economy and everyone in it. The fate of Latinos in America is the fate of America itself.

MASSEY VILLARREAL:¹¹ I am a first generation American. I grew up in Corpus Christi, Texas, where my mother stayed at home with the kids and my father worked seventy-five hours a week at seventy-five cents an hour.

¹¹ CEO and President, Precision Task Group, Inc.; National Chairman of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly; Chairman of the Board of the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce; Chairman of the Board of the Texas Association of the Mexican American Chambers of Commerce.

Looking back at where I came from, I know what it means to live in *el barrio* and aspire to do better. My parents constantly repeated, “You have to go to school,” although at that time I had no clue as to why they were so insistent. However, that push for education is the reason that I am here today.

As an appointee of then Governor George W. Bush, I spent six years on the Board of Regents of the Texas State University system. That was a great experience because I had the opportunity to work on higher education and to try to promote the Latino community in other ways as well. During the first board meeting that I attended, the first issue that I voted on was whether to construct a new building at Texas State University-San Marcos. A \$100 million building was to be constructed without using a single minority contractor. In front of a crowd and on the record I stated, “For the next six years, I will vote against every motion that comes before us that does not involve a good faith effort to procure a minority vendor.” For the next six years, I stuck to my guns.

Regarding access to capital, I have been blessed that my colleagues in the business community elected me to serve in the leadership of the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. We had the highest amount of lending for Hispanics during my watch at the organization. An important priority for us was making sure that businesses had access to capital.

Perhaps a story from my own experiences with this issue might illustrate its urgency. I own a technology company that was growing so rapidly that I needed to take out a few loans. I am the most visible Hispanic in Texas as far as advocacy for access to capital is concerned. I am in frequent contact with our state legislature, pushing them on home equity issues and Latino access to resources. In preparation for taking out a loan, I hired a consultant to help build a successful, complete, and well-prepared bank application. Having the access that I do, I sent my application directly to the chairman of the board of this bank. I also sent the application to the minority lender and the loan officer in the bank. People at multiple levels of the bank, from top to bottom, received a copy. I waited three weeks without receiving a single phone call. After another week passed, I called the bank. The individual on the line verified that they had received my package, and seemed surprised that no one had returned my call. A few hours later, I received a call back and a representative promised that they would consider my application. Another week went by, at which point I received a call from the bank, this time inquiring about the purposes for which I planned to use the loan. I pointed the bank employee to page two of my application, where the use of the loan proceeds were itemized to the penny, followed by three contracts and a seventeen page business plan.

By that time, I had more bankers—Latino bankers—soliciting my business. It took me only one day to make the decision to switch banks. Shortly thereafter, I found myself having dinner with the chairman of the

board of the bank that had delayed my loan. He was telling me about how good his bank's policies were with regard to minority lending. In response, I recounted the events that I had experienced, not revealing that it was my own story. He said, "Well, bring him in and I will make it right." I replied, "Here I am." The man was shocked. I emphasized that since this had happened to me, as the leader of an organization which represents 12,000 Hispanic businesses, then I could not imagine what other Latinos must be experiencing.

ROBERTO CARMONA:¹² Social capital has a definitive space in civil society. In this space, we can dialogue as Latinos and Latinas, and as Republicans and Democrats. We need spaces in which we can engage each other in a meaningful way and where we can build off of one another's strengths.

Many of us do not have a healthy sense of entitlement even though Latinos attend Harvard and other prestigious universities. These brand names belong to us too. I would often strike up a conversation with a Latino saying, "Where you going to school?" "Oh, I'm going to school out on the East Coast," he would say. "Where?" "Oh, Massachusetts." "Where?" "Boston." "Where?" "Harvard." Why are we so shy to admit this? We belong in these places. Many Latinos who reach such institutions seem to believe that they are some kind of anomaly. We must not be afraid to leverage our social capital and claim that space which is ours.

Developing social capital requires creativity. I have four basic principles in mind when I talk about networking and leveraging social capital. The first one is simply to know something. It is important to carve out an area of expertise for yourself. Early in my career, for example, I built a knowledge base around learning nonprofit work and economic development. Secondly, nurture your reputation. It is one thing to make promises and another thing to deliver on those promises. Next, one must appreciate the value of networking. Know your nonprofit people. Finally, reward people within your network. When I help people in that way, I make sure that they understand something: I equate excellence with being Latino. I will not act as a job reference for someone simply because we are friends. That person must also have the skills. That is the responsibility of our people. There are those who think that Latinos get where they are because the standards have been lowered. This is not the case, and we must be prepared to prove these assertions wrong.

America is starting to understand that Latinos have power in their pocketbooks. We have power in our votes. We must work to better leverage this power.

¹² Former employee, U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration.

IRMA MUÑOZ:¹³ My family immigrated to the United States after my parents realized that they could not give their children the life that they wanted to give us in Mexico. Although none of us spoke English, we left everything behind and came to California. We settled in a one-bedroom apartment that was literally next to the railroad tracks. As we arrived here, my father began defining success for us. He did so in two ways. The first one was by making sure that his children became successful. The second one was by setting the goal of owning a home. Every single day for years I heard my father say, “*Mi hija*, when things get better we will buy a little home.” I worked toward my father’s first goal by earning my undergraduate degree and then going on to graduate school. I ended up working in housing finance.

For people who knew me in college and graduate school, my career path might be surprising to them. I was one of those people who was always protesting, always talking about Latino and immigrant power, and always working on campaigns. I never thought I was going to end up in the private sector, since my view was that only “sell outs” worked in the private sector. I thought that making money was dirty. But then I received my first student loan bill. More importantly, I saw that my parents and siblings were in economic need and that I had the capacity to help them. So in my mind there was no question: I had to make money in order to contribute to the family. Also, I had to get my siblings into college so that they could benefit from education in the same way that I had.

This is when I began working in the area of home ownership. Part of my job was to speak about the importance of home ownership. I would give speeches on wealth building and about the impact that home ownership has on communities, but I never truly understood what I was saying until very recently. Two years ago, my siblings and I bought our parents their first home in the United States. Soon after they moved in, we were having dinner together. I had never seen as much peace in my parents’ eyes as I saw that night. I had never seen them as happy as they were. Home ownership did that for them. After they became homeowners, they became voters. They are involved in the community. They participate in the school system. They advocate for other Latinos in the area. And after September 11, my parents’ house instantly had an American flag on the garage door.

My parents feel fully like a part of this country. Home ownership was the catalyst to make sure that they felt like part of the United States. This has given new meaning to my work. Today I hope to address how home ownership is an essential and necessary component of any wealth-building strategy within the Latino community.

There is a perception that there are no racial inequalities in this country anymore and that all people have the same access to resources. Some

¹³ Senior Business Manager, Emerging Markets Initiative, Fannie Mae.

believe that whites, Latinos, and African Americans can achieve wealth and financial stability on equal footing. An article I saw last year polled white Americans about wealth. That poll stated that seventy-two percent of respondents believed that there was no discrimination and that access to wealth was commonplace throughout America's communities. Yet, if America had racial equality in education and jobs, then Latinos would have 2.7 million more high school degrees. We would have 1.9 million more college degrees, nearly 2.3 million more professional and managerial jobs, and we would be earning \$300 billion more in income. If there were racial equality in the United States, we would have 4 million more Latinos as homeowners. Latinos would have \$860 billion more in home equity, \$200 billion more in the stock market, \$120 billion more in their retirement funds, and \$80 billion more in the bank. We would have accumulated over \$1 trillion more in savings alone.

That tells you how unequal things are. But what exactly does this have to do with home ownership? Housing is the number one consumer product in the United States. Families spend an average of \$16,000 a year on housing, and in 2001 consumers spent \$1.7 trillion on housing related goods. When you look at the impact that housing has on accumulation of wealth, the argument for home ownership is apparent. Housing is the number one consumer investment in America. The average earnings for a homeowner in home equity are \$44,000, versus \$23,000 in the stock market. Over the last thirty years there has not been a single year where a homeowner has lost money on their home, whereas in the stock market, the decline is periodic.

The differences in wealth between owners and renters are also staggering. Homeowners have 64% more wealth than renters. There is a huge difference in home ownership rates between Latinos and non-Latinos. The overall home ownership rate in the United States is 75%, compared to a Latino home ownership rate of only 46%.

So why are we not all homeowners, particularly since we know that home ownership is a great wealth-building strategy and because this is a way of gaining stability in our communities? There are many barriers to home ownership. Among these are redlining and predatory lending: practices where people take advantage of Latino families and charge them exorbitant interest rates. There exists an inherently discriminatory home ownership process.

Further, institutions do not understand the unique needs of the Latino community. They do not understand the fact that many of us come from an immigrant-based culture and that we remember the way things were in our home countries. For example, cash is the predominant way that people make transactions in our Latino society, not through credit cards or other means of accruing debt. So when a Latino or Latina comes to this country, the idea of borrowing hundreds of thousands of dollars to buy a home is so incredibly foreign that he or she is scared even to initi-

ate the process. The majority of Latinos do not have credit cards, because that scares us, and that system is just barely beginning to penetrate our home countries. Therefore, when we come to the United States, the way that we interact with financial institutions is very different from the way that we interacted with financial institutions back home. There are other issues as well. Underwriting guidelines for approval of home loans are very murky and do not benefit Latinos. Also, there is a lack of affordable housing stock in our communities.

What I want to say today is that, despite all of these issues, I actually do not believe that these barriers to home ownership are the real problems that Latinos face today. The real problem is that, as a community, we have failed to embrace asset building and wealth building as strategies for political, social, and economic empowerment. We talk about education policy. We talk about immigration policy. We talk about welfare reform. We talk about all the things that directly impact our communities and are incredibly important. However, equally important are strategies that can increase our economic power in this country.

With respect to home ownership, things are going to change. Minorities, and Latinos in particular, account for 75% of the household growth in this country. Latino purchasing power is scheduled to increase 300% in the next decade, compared to a 35% average increase in the general population. If you believe, like most scholars do, that at any given time 25% of families choose not to be homeowners, for whatever reason—because they are in transition or simply do not want the responsibility—then the 75% home ownership rate within white America would make for a saturated market.

Banks have no choice. They must change the way they do business, and that is why they are now targeting Latinos and minority communities. In order for these institutions to maintain their double-digit earnings growth and revenue projections, they must target Latinos in a way that they have never been targeted before. The system is inherently going to change.

What is not changing is where we are coming from—the way that we see wealth building, the way that we see money, the way that we see economic empowerment for our communities. This is where I think we need to have more discussions, because it is right here—in places like this conference—that these types of policy changes begin.

I work for Fannie Mae, and Fannie Mae is committed to bringing more housing finance to underserved communities. Last year we launched our American Dream Commitment, which is a commitment to issue \$2 trillion in housing finance to underserved communities in the United States. Four hundred billion dollars of this \$2 trillion is going directly to minority families. We need to begin making a difference and talking about wealth building as a strategy for growth, not just within the political and social sphere, but also within the economic sphere.

JARRETT BARRIOS:¹⁴ My name is Jarrett Barrios, and I am the State Senator for this area of Massachusetts. I represent the Middlesex, Suffolk, and Essex District, which is typical of Massachusetts in that it is about four percent Latino. I am one of about three or four Latino state senators in the country representing non-Latino districts. This has given me a very interesting perspective in terms of how I advocate for Latinos in this state.

I grew up in a Democratic Cuban neighborhood in West Tampa, Florida. I came here to Massachusetts for college in the 1980s and have remained here ever since. During college, I became involved with an organization called Centro Presente, which works with Central American refugees. I did a lot of relief work there, such as helping people get their driver's licenses and assisting them in applying for asylum. As I began to get to know the Latino community in Massachusetts, I began to see some real differences from the Latino community in my home state. It is easy for those of us who come from states with large Latino populations to gloss over some of the less politically attractive arguments that we need to make. It is easy to talk about minority subcontracting, for example. It is an important issue, yet as I said one that is easy to discuss.

Yet there are some issues facing members of the Latino community that tend to be ignored. I am not referring to issues facing Latinos who have a relatively stronger voice because they have gained access to places like Harvard. Rather, I am referring to individuals who are worried about their immigration status and who are not getting paid minimum wage, yet are afraid to step forward because their employers may turn them in.

In Massachusetts, Latinos are the largest minority group. But we are different from Latinos in places like Texas, Florida, and California because we are extremely new to the state. We do not have an established Latino middle class. Given Massachusetts's unique Latino demographic, I would like to name a few Latino issues specific to our situation here in order to give you a sense for how our agenda is different.

We are talking today about access to capital. I believe that before we can talk about asset building and financial capital, we have to first make the connections that allow us to develop social capital. What do I mean when I say social capital? It is a prerequisite for the Latino community's quest to build assets and financial capital.

Until 1990, immigrants in Massachusetts did not have to obtain a social security number in order to get a driver's license. As a result, immigrants could come here from any country and obtain a driver's license so that they could drive to work legally. In the early 1990s, Republican William Weld succeeded Michael Dukakis as Governor of Massachusetts, and Weld was not as friendly to immigrants as his predecessor. In 1991,

¹⁴ State Senator, Middlesex, Suffolk, and Essex District, Massachusetts; Chair, Joint Committee on Public Safety; Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care.

Weld began to require social security numbers in order to obtain driver's licenses. The result of that policy is that currently tens, if not hundreds of thousands of drivers in this state are driving illegally. Some estimates place this number as high as 150,000.

Another problem created by the policy is that without a driver's license, an individual cannot get car insurance in Massachusetts. Without car insurance, one cannot register a vehicle. Latinos in Massachusetts do not all live in Boston, but are dispersed throughout the state. The largest concentrations of Latinos in Massachusetts, in fact, are outside of Boston, far from the places where there is reliable and convenient mass transportation. That is precisely why people need cars.

Before we can adequately address financial capital, we have to talk about the basics, such as being able to drive to work. There is a bill this year before the state legislature that could help solve some of the problems I just described. The federal government has a way to collect taxes from immigrants. It involves a tax identification number that is unrelated to a social security number. The point of the pending legislation is that if the tax identification number is good enough for the IRS, it should also be good enough for the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles for the purposes of allowing people to obtain driver's licenses. Incidentally, allowing people to register for licenses with tax identification numbers would generate another million dollars in revenue for the Commonwealth. That is a social capital agenda item. To me, gaining access to the basics, such as driver's licenses, precedes purchasing a home. If you are going to have the job that you will need to put on the mortgage application, many people need a car.

Let me give you another example of the importance of building social capital. In Massachusetts right now, there is a bill which emulates similar legislation in Texas, Utah, California, and New York. Those who are not citizens or those who have green cards—even those who have grown up here, attended school their entire lives here, and cannot even speak the language of their country of origin—are treated as out-of-state residents for purposes of state university tuition. This means that these individuals will pay two to three times more tuition than people in an otherwise identical situation.

This is not a particularly easy issue to talk about because advocates on the other side of this issue like to say, "They are illegal." Indeed, this is about people who do not have the same documentation as you or I do. But they were raised here. And they pay taxes. When I bring to light the fact that even undocumented immigrants pay taxes, most people are shocked. The federal and state governments both deduct taxes from their paychecks. This is money that subsidizes state universities. So they should be able to take advantage of the same educational opportunities at the same price. This implicates access to some of the most basic forms of social capital.

I am not a financial analyst or a financial expert. I am somebody who is very involved in promoting asset-building legislation in my statehouse. My belief is that people feel more comfortable as they rise on their own personal economic scales and go to places like Harvard, such that they start focusing on the easier issues. However, there are some very fundamental issues impacting our Latino community that necessitate talking about hard issues, such as the issues confronting immigrants. My Latino constituents are new arrivals, so this is simply part of my agenda. It is easier to bypass these issues when we are not new arrivals, but are instead second, third, or fourth generation. We cannot give up keeping these issues alive because they are fundamental to capital building.

Paying attention to the well-being of our entire community is what will eventually get us to the place where we can afford to buy a home, where we can start our own company that may go public some day, and where we can take advantage of all those opportunities that are promised as ours, as members of this society.

Q: I would like to pick up on the issue of the glass ceiling. In my professional experiences, I have consistently noticed a lack of Latinos in positions of leadership. I am wondering what we can do to crack that glass ceiling.

BARRIOS: I think that one of the biggest problems that we face as a Latino community involves the differences within our community on foreign and domestic policy issues. That hurts us. Another problem is that Latinos, despite our big population, do not use our economic power effectively. U.S. corporations are in business for one purpose: to make a profit. Their actions are all directed and focused around increasing these profits. This is reflected in targeted marketing. There are now Hispanic television advertisements on mainstream channels, products and services have been developed and targeted just for Hispanics, and labeling increasingly caters to Spanish speakers. All of this is meant to tap into the economic purchasing power of Latinos.

Yet we have not gone to those companies to find out why there are few or no Latinos in their management. We have not held their feet to the fire on this issue. We do not utilize or leverage our economic purchasing power to gain fair share representation. We see such a small number of Latinos in U.S. corporations on significant rungs of the corporate ladder because we have not organized to leverage our economic purchasing power to gain fair share access.

MUÑOZ: It is important not only to acknowledge the glass ceiling, but to shatter it. In a recent study of Latinos in professional schools throughout the country, over seventy percent chose a career in public service or the nonprofit world. When we discuss the glass ceiling, note that there are indeed barriers to advancing in the private sector. Not many of us are working in the private sector or in places where we need to be completely embedded so that we can make positive changes on behalf of our communities.

PANEL 3: ACCESS TO POWER

LARRY GONZALEZ:¹⁵ Power is at the core of what we will discuss today. What exactly is access to power? We have six thousand elected Latino officials in this country. What does that really mean? Are these people, by virtue of becoming elected officials, allowing Latinos to access the halls of power? The number of Latino elected officials at the state level has continued to grow. Further, we saw a large growth in the number of Latino members of Congress following the 1990 redistricting, although there was a significant drop from those numbers during the latest round of redistricting. By virtue of the fact that we currently have political representation in Congress, does that mean that we have attained power? Do we now have full access because Latino elected officials speak for our communities?

Does having political appointees and other kinds of appointees within an administration allow Latinos to access power? Once Latinos assume those positions, what are they doing in order to open doors for others, so that more Latinos can share power?

After the 2000 Census data was released, there was a lot of discussion about what the numbers mean. Many of us were excited by these numbers, and got caught up in the press coverage and the fact that there are over 30 million Latinos in the U.S. But what does this data actually signify? Many of the questions I receive from reporters are very basic, such as, “What is it that Latinos want? How will you know when Latinos have achieved power?”

Many members of leading media publications are not convinced that Latinos truly have power. They have their own definition of what that day will look like. Many simplistically equate power with political representation. They see that our total numbers are 37 million but that we only have approximately 6000 elected officials. At first that number sounds quite significant: 6000 Latinos hold office and represent their communities. Yet Latinos have only about 25 representatives in Congress. In state legislatures, there are approximately 7100 seats in 50 states across the country and approximately 215 of those are held by Latinos.

Members of the mainstream media look at this gap between our total numbers and the numbers of Latino elected officials and comment on the disconnect. This disconnect can be explained by the fact that a third of our population is under the age of eighteen and Latinos are still maturing politically as a community. Despite this data, it seems that the easiest way for the mainstream media to gauge whether Latinos truly have access to power is to look at political power. Let us turn to our panelists to challenge, confirm, or complete that story.

¹⁵ D.C. Director, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund.

GRACE FLORES-HUGHES:¹⁶ Do Latinos have leaders whom people respect and know? Do our leaders actually know the Hispanic communities they serve? Who is part of the Hispanic community? A survey published several years ago asked people to name the most famous Hispanic American that they knew. I want to hear who you think they said.

AUDIENCE: Sammie Sosa?

AUDIENCE: Jimmy Smits?

AUDIENCE: J-Lo?

FLORES-HUGHES: The most common answer was Juan Valdez, the fictitious character that markets Colombian coffee. That is the most famous Hispanic to these readers. This gives you an idea of why we have a lot of work to do in describing and defining ourselves, and where we stand as we talk about knowing who Hispanic Americans are and what Latinos do.

I recall coming to a conference at Harvard's Kennedy School several years ago. For a whole afternoon, all the students discussed was what they called themselves—Chicanos, Mexican Americans, Latinos, or Hispanics. In the meantime, bombs were falling and economies and stock markets were bottoming out.

We already discussed earlier today how difficult it has been for Latinos to get involved in the economy. Some people still question why Latinos would even want to play the stock market, given that this is not something that Hispanics have traditionally done. I think that too often Latinos buy into this mentality—that certain places are not meant for us. My response is that I do not have to be invited anywhere. I was not invited to join the Republican Party. The Party is supposed to be for the rich, but I decided that I wanted to be a Republican. So I knocked on the door, opened the door, and walked inside. They tried to close it back, believe it or not, but I walked in anyway. Another example of this is how I started in government as a GS-2, the lowest of the low on the federal government pay scale. I worked my way up the pay scale and finally decided that I wanted to be involved in campaigns and politics. Despite the fact that no one ever mentored or encouraged me to work in that arena, I was determined.

When I worked for the Reagan-Bush campaign in 1984, it was clear that some people thought that there was no room for me there. That was simply not true. I learned that if you let people tell you that, you are never going to succeed in anything. From the day I was born, I have been reminded that I am a Mexican. And I was not called a Mexican. I was called a “wetback.”

¹⁶ Vice President, F&H 2, Inc.; Member of the Federal Service Impasses Panel, Federal Labor Relations Authority; Principal, Council for Excellence in Government; Board of Directors, Hispanic Foundation for the Arts.

There are a lot of goals that I have always wanted to accomplish in life. The only way to pursue those objectives was to empower myself, instead of waiting for someone to empower me. You must make your own destiny. Power starts with you. You have to understand the concept of individual responsibility. Do not wait for some organization to give you permission to go ahead. Do not use the excuse that you have not been invited or asked to join something or apply somewhere. To me, power is believing in yourself and pursuing your goals. Then the important questions become: What are you going to do with your power? How are you going to spread the power to other Hispanics?

Despite our numbers, Hispanics are not going to emerge as the most powerful community unless we all work together to accomplish that. How many of us really vote? The Republicans are not courting us, and the Democrats are not courting us. As a group we should be more vocal, and we should not be waiting for somebody to court us. We are a political force. We know this because George W. Bush won Florida. Some of you may disagree with that outcome, but the fact is that Hispanic Americans helped him do that. More specifically, it was Cuban Americans who helped him gain that victory. Cuban Americans have tremendous power within this administration.

We have to be realistic. That is why you have to be involved in politics, why you have to contribute, and why you have to get involved in corporate boards. Otherwise, we just go day-to-day accepting life as it is, and no one is going to give you anything or invite you. No one is going to know who you are. It all boils down to feeling a sense of individual power. That individual power can then be used to expand power for all Hispanics.

GONZALEZ: So part of your belief is that we can achieve whatever our definition of power is through the political process?

FLORES-HUGHES: Yes. Voters must pressure their representatives to act. The electorate needs to be active, voice its opinions, and write letters. Nothing will change unless everybody gets involved on an individual basis and in a very strong way, regardless of political views or party affiliation.

GONZALEZ: In terms of access to power and appointments, the Bush Administration is doing a very good job. The current administration has done better on this score than President Clinton. However, we are still at a point in our community where, even under this administration, we are not getting past mere tokenism. This is evident on Capitol Hill among staff people where we are making gains with Democratic and Republican senators who feel that the easiest solution is to make a symbolic gesture of hiring more Latinos on staff. Once they hire one, they say to NALEO or MALDEF, "Okay, leave us alone." A big part of opening up those doors is to get past the mentality of, "If I hire one, then I am covered."

FLORES-HUGHES: One particular person high in the first Bush Administration brought two additional Hispanics on board. In response, he was told by his Anglo boss, "What are you doing bringing the whole *barrio* in here? I think we have had enough." This individual did not speak out against his boss's statement. He could have empowered many people behind him by stating, "This is a racist statement, and I am not going to accept it." He was afraid. Do not be afraid when you go out into the real world because you are going to find racism wherever you are. The real world will be the place where your beliefs and convictions are tested.

HENRY A. J. RAMOS:¹⁷ I know from my own experiences as a student here at Harvard that it is extremely difficult to gain an appreciation of our community's needs, particularly in the absence of greater representation on the faculty of the university's various schools and departments. This is a problem that I was well aware of as a student here over twenty years ago. I know that we still have a long way to go, but I am personally satisfied and encouraged to see today's able and talented students who are building on past efforts and continuing to push institutions like Harvard forward into the twenty-first century with respect to Latinos and our issues.

Regarding the topic at hand, I believe that there are three important elements in how Latinos can access power. First, we need to develop leadership. Second, we need to build effective institutions. Third, and probably most important, is our need to build an agenda, which is something that relates to what Grace Flores-Hughes addressed earlier.

Achieving these three goals requires four essential foundations: knowledge, organization, consensus, and advocacy. We need knowledge of our history, what we have experienced and learned along the way, and where we want to go from here. Next, it is critical to organize our community's many impressive resources, talents, values, and visions in ways that provide a strong platform to advance our interests in the larger society. Thirdly, consensus means building a bipartisan consensus as Latinos on our vital interests as a community—not as Democrats, not as Republicans, not as anything other than Latinos. Finally, advocacy is our will and commitment to be educators, to be agents of change for our people and the advancement of American civic culture in every way that is possible and constructive.

As a policy analyst and civil rights historian, I am especially concerned about our public prominence, especially as it relates to our pursuit of power. No American community can really gain power in this culture without the capacity to tell its own story in ways that define the national

¹⁷ Principal, Mauer Kunst Consulting; Executive Director, University of Houston/Arte Público Press Hispanic Civil Rights Book Series; Board of Directors, National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC); Founding Editor, *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy*.

narrative from which all people—key decision makers and society at large—make choices about what is important.

To control information about who we are, what we have contributed to American civilization and democracy, and where we aim to go is power in contemporary American life. For example, think about the Jewish American community in this country, women in the suffragist and feminist movements, or African Americans from abolition through the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. All of these groups have come to realize that a significant aspect of accessing power in America is telling their stories so that the rest of the general population knows the stories and never forgets them. These efforts have helped Americans of all backgrounds to better understand and support the policy positions of these groups. This in turn has enhanced these constituencies' public traction, their position in society, and their power in American political discourse.

Our communities, by contrast, still have remarkably little traction in the national narrative or in the policy discourse of our day. Let us be honest about this: Latinos as a people are mostly a mystery to other Americans. We are largely invisible and highly misunderstood. To many Americans who believe that they have a sense of who we might be, we are school dropouts or, at best, humble servants. At worst, we are drug traffickers or criminals.

Most Americans, including most Latinos, still do not appreciate or understand the depth or the richness of our impressive history in this country, or our many contributions to American culture and democracy. Without telling those stories and making them a part of the national narrative and public record, we will never access the level or kind of power that our numbers warrant.

Our work at Arte Público Press, the nation's oldest and largest Hispanic content publisher, is intended to fill the void that exists in this area. Through a series of Latino civil rights history books, we are trying to advance a broader comprehension of who we are as a political people and what it means to be an American at the outset of the twenty-first century. For the first time, our books are telling the stories about our significant leaders, organizations, and movements since World War II, and how we have defined America for the better. We are also telling the stories of the first generation of Latino and Latina rights and justice figures, whom many of you may not be familiar with. Let me tell you about a few of them very briefly.

One is Antonia Pantoja, a Puerto Rican woman who founded the Puerto Rican educational organization ASPIRA. This organization went to the U.S. Supreme Court during the 1960s to compel the New York Public Schools to teach children who had multilingual roots in both English and Spanish. Bilingual education resulted from this woman's efforts, and although many of us are indebted to her, few know her story.

Hector Garcia founded the American GI Forum. Through his veterans' movement following World War II, he put Latinos on the national political map for the first time, closely associating himself with people including Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Reagan. Hector Garcia was also the first Latino ever to serve on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. More Latinos, and society in general, need to know about this man and his story.

Another book in our series highlights Evelio Grillo. You have probably never heard of Evelio Grillo, but he is a fascinating man. He is a black Cuban from South Florida, who faced dual discrimination because he grew up under Jim Crow and spoke Spanish. He overcame the barriers he faced and joined forces with César Chávez in California as a labor organizer in the 1950s. He later became a sub-cabinet official in the Carter Administration.

From these stories, Arte Público Press is attempting to establish a framework for Latinos to relate to power. We are trying to impart knowledge and a sense of organization to form a basis for informed consensus and effective advocacy. We are especially trying to target emerging leaders because we do not want them to be out there on their own. We want these leaders to build upon the lessons of our rich history.

We also seek to inform our relationship to power by publishing leading thinkers and doers. One of our authors, former San Antonio Mayor and HUD Secretary Henry G. Cisneros, is writing a very important new book with us on the future of Hispanic America, focusing on the key issues of our times from a decidedly forward-looking perspective. This too is an essential way to access power: to inform contemporary public debate through the projection of our collective wisdom and voice.

This fall, Arte Público Press will publish a critically important biography of the late Willie Velasquez, a former Harvard Institute of Politics fellow and the founder of the Southwest Voter Registration Education Project. It is a very important book that puts the question of Hispanics and power squarely into focus. Willie Velasquez's work probably had more to do with expanding Latino political power in America than any other individual of his generation. By increasing our strategic use of votes, Velasquez helped us to radically alter the balance of power in virtually all of the states that currently determine who will sit in the White House. That is a significant and epic body of work that we all need to understand.

Willie Velasquez was as wise as he was politically astute. He came to understand in the final years of his life that gaining and accessing power, as hard as it has been for our people, surprisingly turns out to be the easy part. Getting power by being elected to office, or securing a job at a prestigious law firm or corporation, is difficult but increasingly possible for us due to the efforts of those who fought before us to create opportunities. We expect these opportunities now, and we should. We ex-

pect our young emerging leaders and professionals to get in the door and to have a meaningful share of power. But Velasquez understood too well that our real challenge is not to gain power, whether in politics or any other field. The challenge is knowing what to do with power once you have it.

It is not enough for us to be beneficiaries of many decades of struggle only to get in the game and to play by the same old rules, pursuing the same old ends. It is essential that we have a sense of purpose. It is imperative that we exercise leadership in new and different ways, building on the best of our heritage, traditions, and experiences so that we move forward as an entire community, not just as disconnected individuals pursuing purely self-interested aims.

It is equally essential that we begin to think about using our growing power in ways that transcend mere community or ethnic self-interest. We need to be strong leaders in our Latino communities and institutions. Now more than ever, however, we also need to use our expanding access and power in ways that speak in a compelling fashion to Americans of other backgrounds. This is the definition of leadership. When we accomplish these things, we will know that we have finally become a powerful people in American society in the ways that matter most.

GONZALEZ: The idea of telling our story is indeed important. What kind of role do you believe the mainstream media should play? I ask this because there is a movement, among some groups and some of the finer thinkers in our community, to talk about Latinos in the context of an American agenda. How important is it to tell America that we are just like them and that we want the same things?

RAMOS: Obviously, our Latino community-controlled Spanish language press is essential. No one should suggest that this is not an important vehicle of transformation and leadership in our communities. Even more importantly, we need to build a more significant, far-reaching public presence and voice outside of our communities. This cannot be accomplished without the mainstream mass media. We live in a mass media culture and most Americans get their news and their views from the English-speaking media.

We have to consider the cumulative effects of getting more of our people in front of the camera in the major media venues that shape national discourse in America. We do not want to change who we are to appeal to the public. That would not be an appropriate strategy. It is important, however, for us to acknowledge that many people in this society are finally seeing Latinos and Latinas emerge. Most are overwhelmed initially to learn that the U.S. Census Bureau itself is predicting that by 2050 one in four Americans will be of Latino heritage. Non-Latinos are suddenly seeing these statistics and panicking. Part of the reason for the unease is that they just do not understand us, especially in the non-traditional places where we are growing fastest as a community, like the

deep South, the Midwest, and the Northwest. What one does not understand is often very threatening, so we have to create comfort. The only way to do this in my judgment is to utilize the media as an affirmative instrument. We must advance our most articulate leadership to explain, translate, and communicate to that larger audience in a way that helps them comprehend that we are a powerfully supportive reinforcer of the great traditions of this country. Our fundamental community values related to family, religion, and hard work are all core American values that more established American citizens can relate to and respect. To the extent that we are different, we must explain much more effectively than we have to date that these differences are actually an asset to America. We can and need to do a better job of speaking more coherently as a community about these affirming attributes of our development as a community in every aspect of our media and public engagements.

OTTO SANTA ANA:¹⁸ We must learn to tell our own story to control information. What I am going present, unfortunately, is an analysis of the 1990s and how Latino and Latina political issues were misrepresented or poorly represented. I want to give you a tool for power, public policy formation, and access.

I landed a job at UCLA and was thrilled to be going to Los Angeles. But in 1993 when I got off the plane at LAX, the heat of the political atmosphere was palpable. It was burning because the whole state was engrossed with Proposition 187. It seemed that everyone hated and feared immigrants.

The media has a tremendous amount of power to characterize what we want, like, and dislike—just look at the clothes we wear and the food we eat. I presumed upon my arrival in Los Angeles that the mass media, the *Los Angeles Times* in particular, was responsible for this anti-immigrant attitude that was so intense in California. Even some Latinos seemed to have bought into it. Twenty percent of Latinos voted for Proposition 187, against their own people.

Again, I thought that this might be attributable to the *Los Angeles Times*. So as an empirical scientist, I performed a classic content analysis of six weeks of the *Los Angeles Times*. I examined the copy, size of the print, content, who was quoted, and the pictures that were included. I did not find what I expected. I was wrong. The coverage was, in fact, fairly balanced. My theory on the *Los Angeles Times* was deflated. However, days later several phrases that I had run across rang in my head. “Rising like

¹⁸ Associate Professor, University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA); Faculty Member, UCLA's César E. Chávez Center for Chicana/o Studies. Professor Santa Ana's comments draw from ideas presented more fully in his book, *Brown Tide Rising: Metaphors of Latinos in Contemporary American Public Discourse*, which was named 2002 Best Book on Ethnic and Racial Political Ideology and/or Political Theory by the American Political Science Association. OTTO SANTA ANA, *BROWN TIDE RISING: METAPHORS OF LATINOS IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN PUBLIC DISCOURSE* (2002).

a brown tide.” “Sea of brown faces.” “Rolling surges of Mexicans and Central Americans.” These phrases made it click. These were metaphors.

Cognitive science says that we do not understand the world in terms of logic. We understand the world in terms of images, and a metaphor is a text image. With the metaphors invoked in the Proposition 187 debate still echoing in my mind, I went back to the same six weeks of the *Los Angeles Times* that I had studied earlier and found that all the metaphors—twenty-eight metaphors in sixteen articles—were anti-immigrant. This led me to conduct a study. I gathered every article indexed by an independent measure, such as LexisNexis, over two years. I had different teams of undergraduates look at the same material. I then would ask these teams to get together. If they could come to a consensus, we would keep the data. If they could not, we discarded it. The agreement rate was well over ninety-six percent. As a result there was not any selectional or interpreter bias in the study.

These are the findings. The major metaphor for immigrants during the discussion of Proposition 187 was that immigrants are animals. Such metaphors accounted for thirty-two percent of all metaphors. This is clearly problematic. Latinos are considered immigrants, whether one has been here for only one generation, as on my mother’s side of the family, or for five generations like on my father’s side. Together, we are all seen as immigrants.

Latinos, in general, are portrayed in public discourse as immigrants. According to the rhetoric used leading up to the vote on Proposition 187, immigrants are animals that are drawn into traps. Immigrants were also portrayed as weeds growing on someone’s land and as soldiers invading. Of course, they invade with hoes and with callused hands, but they are nevertheless invaders. We were also described as diseases and as burdens on society, although we build the buildings that others enjoy.

Even pro-immigrant articles ended up indirectly adopting these metaphors, by saying what immigrants are not: immigrants are not animals, not invaders, and not weeds. But cognitive science tells us that this kind of negative metaphor—saying what someone is not—is much less powerful than the direct metaphor. The negative metaphors were used by the *Los Angeles Times*, which was against Proposition 187. The same was true for *La Opinión*, the Spanish language newspaper in Los Angeles—a publication that was vocal and angry in speaking out against Proposition 187. There were no strong positive metaphors in use leading up to the vote. Rather, there was a single discourse on the topic.

During the discussion of Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action measure, I looked at the notion of race. In that case, neo-conservatives subverted Martin Luther King’s metaphor that racism is a disease of our society. Affirmative action was conceived of, in the *Los Angeles Times* and elsewhere, to be the only vector that created racism. As a result, the same electorate that believed in affirmative action was also the electorate

that voted for the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209. In exit polls asking if voters believed in affirmative action, 62 to 64% said they did. The rhetoric leading up to this electoral decision ensured that these were the same 62 to 64% who voted for Proposition 209, the campaign for which had been misleadingly dubbed the California Civil Rights Initiative.

We must understand the power of metaphor and the power of discourse to frame the debate. What I propose is the use of guerilla metaphors. An example of this is neo-conservatives' transformation of states' rights arguments into civil rights argumentation. If you control the metaphor, you can control the message. And if you control the message, you can control the way people understand the world.

Q: It seems that there exists a chicken and egg problem in the discussion of Latinos' access to power. In order to change things, we need power. Yet in order to get power, the status quo must change. We have some economic leverage because of our buying power. We have some leverage with government as well. At the same time none of those sectors alone is the solution. What kind of forum could we use to strategically make changes at the level of collective power? At this point it seems like lobbying government on behalf of social groups is happening only on the individual level. Is there a way to use collective power to strategize amongst different spheres?

RAMOS: We have some very important anchor organizations that create some of the fora we have been talking about and that can be further developed. These organizations have twenty-five, thirty, forty, or fifty years of experience under their belts and can be part of the equation. These groups include organizations like NALEO, NCLR, MALDEF, and other comparable organizations across the country. But we have not yet created a superstructure that brings these groups together. This has been attempted in virtually every decade. I suppose that we have not yet evolved to the point where we can make that happen. It should, however, be a central goal for all of us.

I think it is important that we focus on three to five significant strategic issues around which we can all find consensus. Issues like bilingual education are fundamental to our community because of the nature of our status in education and the importance of education to break through, to gain wealth, and to gain access to political power. Home ownership and voting rights are the types of issues that create added strategic space for us to find political voice. These are the kinds of issues that should be a focus for our Latino and Latina leaders. Our leaders should be coming together, whether Republican or Democrat, to address them. We need to create a Latino agenda that we can all embrace.

Q: My question comes from a personal experience. I currently mentor students from New York City schools. Students from these schools are wonderful, intelligent, and motivated. They want to get ahead. How do we as Latinos get ahead when our children go to schools where, for

instance, there is only one guidance counselor for several thousand students? The students simply do not have the necessary resources. Their cultural experience does not include people who have reached the highest positions in society. What do we do when so many are not starting off on equal footing? How will we ever reach parity within society?

FLORES-HUGHES: I wish that we could save the whole world, but that is not possible. I came from a single parent home. My mother did not have very much. My father abandoned me when I was born. Am I going to stop and say, "Well, everything is working against me?" The school I went to was not the best. Sometimes they would pass Mexicans just to get them out of the school. Many students from my school did not even know how to read when they graduated. You must take the initiative and do the best that you can with the tools that you have. I am not saying that it is a perfect world out there. We have to be realistic.

I once heard about a Harvard student who was in a wheelchair. Her mother had to move into Harvard with her because she could not move. Did that student give up? There are ways to do things. We may not have the best resources and our schools may not be on par with the best prep schools in Manhattan, but we do have brains. The encouragement that you give to the students you mentor is what is really important. You would be surprised how much you have influenced them just by being with them and mentoring them. Give them confidence to go and think for themselves.

RAMOS: One of the things that has always excited me about being involved in the Latino community is that although at times it seems like the group of us trying to break down these barriers is small, we have nevertheless developed a very strong network of people who are willing to help in any way they can. We are good at finding solutions. There are many avenues to pursue in terms of the wonderful networks that we have within our community. We simply need to do a better job going forward of nurturing, building, and otherwise supporting these networks so that we can maximize their collective capacities and impacts.

SANTA ANA: I am very sympathetic to the thrust of your question. We have been living in a culture that for nearly twenty-five years has taken a position that the answers no longer exist in the public sector, that government is really not the solution, and that we need to think more about privatized efforts. I am sympathetic to many of those arguments. But in the situations that you are talking about, there is no doubt that it is in America's self-interest to invest in our public schools and our communities and to create infrastructure that is designed to support families and children. We have to face that reality. We cannot go on cutting budget after budget and expect to have a positive outcome.

Additionally, we need to exercise self-help as a community to make some of those things happen. We have to be involved as organizers in our communities. We have to do some of the heavy lifting that people did fifty years ago when there were no anchor Latino organizations. These move-

ments were built from the ground up, and they forced the system to address our needs. It is not to say that they do not represent us. They are doing heavy lifting for us, but we have to get out in the streets and make a difference. We cannot expect the larger society to do for us what we will not do for ourselves. There has to be give and take at both ends.

Community organizing networks in churches and schools—places that are close to the family—would be a good starting place from which to push elected officials and the civic leadership to think about investing in our children and future. In light of the numbers of people that we represent in society and our current status in the educational equation, it cannot be good for America to avoid making that investment right now. We cannot wait another five or ten years. We all must speak about it. We all need to constructively advocate for our communities. We need to push. We have got to ask for and demand it.

Q: It seems to me that the terms that we use to refer to ourselves as a group are important as we seek to access power. For instance, the terms “Latino” and to an even greater extent “Hispanic”—one imposed on Latinos by the government—are apolitical. It does not have to be this way. The term Chicano, for instance, has a strong ideology behind it. As we become more influential, it seems that a strong unifying identity will be necessary. Do any of the panelists have thoughts on this issue?

SANTA ANA: We used to believe that identity was one thing—identity as a sense of all of one’s components. I like to consider my “self” as being multifaceted. Each individual, as he or she hones skills and interests, develops different facets. I am a husband, a family member, a professor, a son, and so forth. These should not be exclusionary; rather, they are all complimentary. There is no single history that unites us. It is really important that we become comfortable with multiple sorts of communities and self-identifiers and use them as needed.

RAMOS: I do not have a well-formed answer to that question. I believe, however, that it is something that we all need to think carefully about. In the hard reality of contending with issues of power in a larger society that we do not control, we have to find and seize the power and access where we can get them. At the national level, we are talking about trying to have significant influence in politics, the media, and the economy. It is necessary to take shortcuts in language and concepts.

We have argued for decades about whether we are Hispanic, Latino, or something else entirely. Language matters. I do not deny that. We have to self define. However, as a strategic matter and as a matter of dealing with raw power in our times, we have more to gain together as a family of Hispanics or Latinos or whatever you want to call us than we do going our separate ways. So the inclination we see in many communities where we are becoming more numerous is to revert to our respective ethnic designations—for example, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Salvadoran.

In my judgment, this is not a winning strategy, at least not on a national level.

With regard to the larger society, if we are going to have leverage, I believe that we are going to have to find a vernacular we can all live with that also has a compelling currency and meaning to the larger community.

FLORES-HUGHES: It seems to me that having Hispanic input on policy decisions regarding Medicare, secondary education, and SSI is much more important than determining which names should be used for certain groups of people. On that latter issue, I am the person responsible for the government's use of the term "Hispanic." You may be unhappy with it now, but if you understood the situation that I was in back in the 1970s when the decision was made, you would be less quick to judge. Anglos were in the room, and they were going to make the decision. They were throwing around terms such as "Spanish surname" or "Spanish speaking."

Anybody can be a Spanish speaker or have a Spanish surname without having Hispanic roots. I grew up in a very segregated community in south Texas. Mexicans stayed in their neighborhoods, except on Halloween when they were allowed to go across to the Anglo community to trick-or-treat. Other than that, there was no substantive communication between the two groups. Now, these people would be provided services by the federal government. As I sat in that governmental meeting in the early 1970s, I saw that it was going to be non-Hispanics that were going to make the decision about what to call our group. Of course, there is more to it than what I am summarizing. I think that the work that I have been able to do in shaping policy throughout my career is so much more important than what I did in developing the use of the term "Hispanic." Fundamentally, having Hispanic voices at the table when policy decisions that affect our families and communities are being made is what is most important.

Q: From my experience, I have noticed that it is difficult to organize young people. Given the central importance of organizing, what tactics do you suggest to motivate other Latinos?

RAMOS: First, we have to know our community history, as well as the histories of other important American communities. We need examples of people who have made exemplary contributions to the nation's evolution. This is a prerequisite to expanding our understanding as a community of what it means to be an American—to actively participate in public problem solving and to succeed. That sort of participation is the essential, defining ingredient of democracy. Many of our people come from places that increasingly do not benefit from these traditions of democracy, and we have to be mindful of that. We should focus on making stories of our past and present community triumphs relevant to our country's most recent arrivals, who may not have had firsthand experience with democratic traditions or history.

We must especially teach this history to our young people in ways that motivate and excite them, such that they see the possibilities and are not resigned to reinventing the proverbial wheel. Rather, they will see that they are starting from something, not starting from scratch. The problem is that public schools, civic organizations, and mainstream leadership in America have never let our children know about that. Consequently, we ourselves do not know the full extent of our history, and we are passing our ignorance on to our children. Accordingly, our first order of business should be getting in touch with where we have been as a people in the American democratic experience and understanding what we (and others in similar situations) have done to gain power and rights. We must then set out to organize in the same ways that the lessons of history tell us are most likely to have promise going forward.

One of our greatest challenges in this respect is our lack of activism on the ground. For instance, very few of our current national anchor organizations do community organizing. We need people in Washington at the national level effectively tackling policy challenges that affect our communities, but we also need effective organization of our people at the grassroots level. In my judgment, the only people who seem to be taking concerted initiative on behalf of Latinos in the organizing arena today are the labor unions that represent our immigrant service workers in places like the garment and hospitality industries. As I see it, we need to support them more fully and we need to expand upon their efforts.

SANTA ANA: In terms of finding motivation, what has been important for me is the same thing that was important for my father. He became the first Latino councilman in our little town. What got him started was that someone invited him to attend a council meeting. When he realized that incompetent individuals were setting the policy, it made him angry and he never left.

GONZALEZ: From an organizational perspective, there are a number of things that NALEO can do to motivate young people. We try to teach the value of getting involved in their high schools or as poll workers. From a personal standpoint, I try to start with my own family. I come from one of the most apolitical families around. In fact, it is often helpful to bounce things off of them because they are so apolitical. It helps to keep that local perspective of things and remember that the universe does not revolve around Washington, D.C.

Otto Santa Ana just touched on something that is really important: leading by example. I have tried to use that tactic when working on campaigns by providing examples of movements, individuals, ways to get involved, and the importance of such participation. Particularly on a national level, many of us have this idea that we want to save the world. That is a wonderful goal, but you also have to get in touch with reality. Helping one person may be a more realistic goal. I think that all we can do as one person is to try to motivate others.

Q: What are your thoughts about coalition building with other minority groups? How would the dynamics work? Would we have greater power if we worked together?

GONZALEZ: This is an area where NALEO has quite a bit of experience. The theme of trying to bring different groups together was brought to the forefront in the media during the mayoral races in Los Angeles, Houston, and New York.

Los Angeles has a history of tension between African Americans and Latinos. Building a coalition did not work as well as we would have liked. In fact, the father of the non-Hispanic candidate running in Los Angeles had a long history within the black community. In New York City, we were quite successful in the formation of a black-Latino coalition that also included other minority groups. In Houston there was a situation where there was a black mayor and an attempt to form a coalition, but the mayor did not have a history of reaching out to the Latino community. As a result, that coalition did not gel sufficiently. With that said, there are groups out there that are trying to bring people together. I can address the issue of bringing elected officials together. Some believe that coalition building must start from the ground up. However, there is also a school of thought which suggests that advocates should start at the national level in the hope that it will trickle down.

At the end of the day, this is about political power. A multiethnic coalition should continue to look for a common agenda. There is a real eagerness coming from African American leaders to do more of that. For the first time ever on the national level, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus went on a retreat to talk about the issues that we have in common. Hopefully, that dialogue will continue. They have also been trying to support each other's legislation. When there is not agreement on legislation, there is a commitment to keeping communication open. This idea has trickled down. I know of a number of meetings being held between black and Hispanic city council members and state legislators. It is finally happening, but it needs to happen more. I think the chances of this trend spreading are good, but it will depend somewhat on what is happening locally.

The reason why this is particularly important is related to recent press coverage of our growing population numbers, announcing headlines such as "Latinos Overtake African Americans, Sure to Cause Political Tension." The media seems convinced that since Latinos have become the largest minority group in sheer numbers that we will begin fighting other groups. I believe that Latino leaders at the national level fully understand the significance of forming tactical ties.

RAMOS: I would like to leave you with this advice and counsel. It is extremely important that you seek out leadership outside of the Latino community, not just within it. I have increasingly made a point of sitting

on boards of important organizations whose work focuses outside of the Latino community. For example, I sit on the board of the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, which is a legal advocacy forum for Asian Americans. Many people ask me why I serve on that board. The answer is that I am learning. I am developing relationships that will have tremendous strategic value in this country for the next fifteen or twenty years. Latinos and Asians are going to have a lot to say about what America looks like in the future. I want to be in on that conversation. You should want to be there too, as well as in similar conversations with key leaders of other important constituencies that have, or are developing, influence on American public policy and opinion.

I would encourage each and every one of you to find ways to develop those meaningful relationships outside of your community. It is strategic relationships and dialogues among people of diverse interests that ultimately make the world change for the better. Expand your circle and grow your thinking by becoming involved in important work and causes outside—as well as inside—of our Latino family network. You will benefit and so will the other people and institutions whose lives you will touch. We need to model this instinct towards inter-group partnership in ways that help us all, in turn, to build more effective outcomes for our respective communities and our nation. In the long run, I believe that will be the best way for our broader community to gain and exercise influence that will have lasting impact and historic relevance in our increasingly multicultural society.