

Seventh Annual Harvard Latino Law, Business,  
and Public Policy Conference:  
Investing in Our Future\*  
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PANEL 1: LATINO REPRESENTATION AND THE MEDIA

JESUS MENA:<sup>1</sup> This panel has been asked to address several questions: (1) are Latinos being adequately represented in today's newsrooms and media markets?; (2) are media images positive, and why are positive images important?; (3) are the contributions of Latinos known to the general public?; and (4) are Latinos considered mainstream or not?

We have representatives from various sectors of the media here. I recently ran across this press release from the National Association of Hispanic Journalists (NAHJ), issued in December 2003. The evening newscasts of ABC, CBS, CNN, and NBC included approximately 16,000 stories during the course of the year.<sup>2</sup> Only 120 of the stories, less than one percent, were about Latinos. Moreover, the focus was predominantly on crime, terrorism, and illegal immigration.

In this context, I would like to ask people to talk a little bit about themselves and the work they have done in their respective fields. Then, I would like to talk about some of the various issues and open the discussion to the group for questions and answers.

JOAQUIM RIBEIRO:<sup>3</sup> It is a great pleasure to be here. We launched *People en Español* in 1997; it is a pretty young magazine. The business plan and the concept for the magazine have gone through a couple of changes since its launch. The magazine was born with an article that ran in *People Weekly* in 1997 dealing with the death of Selena.<sup>4</sup> We learned that there was a huge appetite for Hispanic content, especially in states like Texas, California, and Florida. We ran a split run, and it sold out on the West Coast.

We went on to put together a business plan. The concept is really a mix of mainstream and Hispanic content. All the content was in Spanish,

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\* The views expressed at the Seventh Annual Harvard Latino Law, Business, and Public Policy Conference are solely those of the panelists and are not necessarily those endorsed by their employers, nor Harvard Latino Law Review.

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<sup>2</sup> American Broadcasting Company, Columbia Broadcasting Station, Cable News Network, and National Broadcasting Company.

<sup>3</sup> Business Manager and Development Director, *People en Español*.

<sup>4</sup> Grammy-nominated Latina singer and performer Selena Perez was murdered by her associate Yolanda Saldivar on March 31, 1995, at the age of twenty-four.

but there was a mix of Hispanic and mainstream celebrities. For example, we would have both Nicole Kidman and Alejandro Fernandez in *People en Español*. We found out pretty quickly that celebrities, in general, do not sell. We also found out that there was a strong grassroots culture really focused on grassroots entertainment. Thus, the model changed, and we became much more devoted to grassroots entertainment, and now the magazine is doing pretty well. It sells 400,000 to 450,000 copies per month in the United States, and we have an audience of about four million.

Other than *People en Español*, I am also a member of the Time Warner U.S. Hispanic Council, which is an initiative put together two years ago to help people in different divisions of the company—Turner, Warner Brothers, Music, etc.—start Hispanic initiatives. What has happened recently in the media world, and more specifically at Time Warner, has really been remarkable. Last year, AOL<sup>5</sup> Latino was launched, which is really the first Spanish language ISP<sup>6</sup> in the United States as well as the first ISP that specifically caters to Hispanic audiences. This year Warner Brothers has a very strong push.

BETTY CORTINA:<sup>7</sup> Let me trace the background behind the founding of *Latina*. I had done work on the launch of *People en Español* and was one of its founding editors. Before that I had a career as a newspaper journalist. Then I moved from Miami to Los Angeles to work for *People Magazine* as a correspondent. I moved to Los Angeles back when the Hispanic market was of no importance to anyone. Two months into my gig there, we learned that a woman named Selena had died, and our news desk at *People* in New York went crazy. It was late at night when the story broke, and there was an experienced journalist there looking at the wires and asking, “What the hell is going on in Texas?” Thousands of people had shown up at the funeral for some girl that he had never heard of. It was late at night, and he called in a nearby Latina cleaning lady who told him that Selena was, indeed, very big.

We did the first split run cover in the history of Time, Inc., which meant that we had one issue distributed nationwide, and another, the one with Selena, distributed to the Southwest. The rest of the country received the issue that featured the cast of “Friends”; “Friends” had just started. Selena outsold the cast of “Friends” in the Southwest. Two weeks later, we realized that this thing had legs, and we put out a special tribute issue. The only other tribute issue at that point had been for Jackie Kennedy. I spent two weeks in Corpus Christi, Texas, with Selena’s family and was on the ground to produce the tribute issue. It not only sold out, but I received a phone call saying that copies were being sold on the street for fifty dollars! We quickly went back and published another 300,000

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<sup>5</sup> America Online.

<sup>6</sup> Internet Service Provider.

<sup>7</sup> Editorial Director, *Latina Magazine*; also helped launch *People en Español*.

issues to flood the market and drive the price back down. I tell that story because it marks the beginning of a serious look at the Hispanic market in media.

I moved to New York, launched *People en Español*, and spent the next few years of my life going in and out of the Hispanic market. At that point I had my own personal and professional identity crisis. “No, I do not want to be Hispanic; yes, I want to be Hispanic; no, I do not want to be Hispanic.” I worked for *People en Español*, went to *Entertainment Weekly*, and helped launch *O*. Then I went to work on *Latina*, which was a little magazine compared to *People en Español*.

I came to *Latina* three years ago, and it has been a remarkable ride. Our circulation will be 400,000 in a few months. When I started it was 225,000. I would love to take all the credit, but I cannot.

One thing that has helped us succeed is the fact that advertisers are much more aware of the Hispanic market. We went through a period of time where a lot of advertisers invested in ethnic magazines, particularly Latino magazines, out of good faith and charity. Every time that I would go on business or sales calls, there would be a tone of altruism in their voices. In the last two years, that has meaningfully changed. What has happened is that they now come to us and say, “Oh, my God, the demographics of this country have changed, and we have no idea how to get there.” It has gone from a social good to a business implication that must be addressed, which is a really good place to start.

Are we being adequately represented? No. Are there enough positive images? Certainly not. We are not there yet; there is still a lot of work to be done, but there has been meaningful change, especially in the last two years. That said, the levels of racial and ethnic diversity at the three top publishers in the world—Hearst Magazines, Conde Nast, and Time, Inc.—are almost embarrassing. Again, there is a lot more to be done.

FRANK GARCIA BERUMEN:<sup>8</sup> I grew up, as most of us did, in a bilingual, bicultural world, watching American films and Mexican films—Cantinflas and John Wayne. There were conflicting images, both positive and negative. During adolescence I went through a lot of changes, which basically marked the genesis of my interest in film.

Just to give you a sense of where we are with regard to film and television, according to the Screen Actors Guild, in primetime television and mainstream films, only 3.5% of actors were Latinos in 1998, and only 3% were Latinos in 2002, even though we are now the largest minority group in the United States. Moreover, most of these roles are minor, incidental roles.

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<sup>8</sup> Author, *THE CHICANO HISPANIC IMAGE IN AMERICAN FILM* (Vantage Press, 1994); *RAMON NAVARRO: THE LIFE AND FILMS OF THE FIRST LATINO HOLLYWOOD SUPERSTAR* (Vantage Press, 2001); and *BROWN CELLULOID: LATINO/A FILM IMAGES AND ICONS IN THE HOLLYWOOD FILM INDUSTRY* (Vantage Press, 2003); also a teacher, Lincoln High School, Los Angeles, Cal.

Typically, the two main negative stereotypes of Latinos are that we cannot control our violence and that we cannot control our sexuality. Of course, that has been documented in thousands of films. I would think that the most important step to remedy this phenomenon is to have Latinos write more of our own stories. Based on some of the comments of other people on the panel, I think that unless we write the stories, we are not going to have Latino and Latina actresses perform them, direct them, and so forth. In addition, we need to start using some of the new technology out there. Independent cinema offers another venue. But I think that the main thing is for us to write our stories. We carry the stories of our history and our people, and I think that unless we do it and do it in an honest way, we are not going to have powerful films about Latinos.

RICHARD CHACON:<sup>9</sup> I guess what I can contribute to this discussion is a perspective on what it is like trying to work for a daily newspaper in a major American city. I would like to discuss the debates and challenges that we face in trying to portray or recognize our own Latino audience, while at the same time maintaining a staff within the newspaper whose ethnic composition is equally representative of the Latino audience in the surrounding area. But before I do, let me give you a quick recap of what I like to call my twisted path to the *Globe*.

I was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, which is right on the border. Like Frank, I had a very bilingual cultural upbringing. The first words I remember learning as a child were “*Mi’jo, dame shoes por favor*”—my grandmother asking me to bring her shoes to her. The verbs were almost always in Spanish and the nouns were almost always in English. I think that this kind of duality has come to typify the rest of my journey here.

I went to a small, Catholic, all-boys high school in El Paso called Cathedral High School, which is all of ten minutes from the border. There were only about 400 or 500 boys in the school, and they were predominantly sons of Mexican immigrants. Many of these parents dreamed that their boys would go to Cathedral High School, get a good Catholic education, and then get a scholarship to attend the University of Notre Dame. Cathedral was a feeder school to Notre Dame. Every year, we would send about five or six boys on full scholarships to Notre Dame. Cathedral had the same school colors as Notre Dame, the green and gold. We were also called the “Fighting Irish.” Our school, however, was too small to have our own band. During football season we used to make the freshmen sit together in a big clump in the stands. Whenever we scored a touchdown, the freshmen would have to stand up. Basically, we had this predominantly Chicano group of boys singing, “Cheer, cheer for the Irish!” Again, it is another example of duality.

In my sophomore year at Boston University, I was very homesick. I had been in Boston for two years, and I found everything to be completely

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<sup>9</sup> Foreign Editor, *Boston Globe*.

different. The food was bland, the weather was terrible, and the people were very different. When I was in Boston, I encountered for the first time the idea of being a minority. Remember, in El Paso the Chicano community is the majority. I was in the minority for the first time here, and there were very painful lessons that went along with that. I did not experience any problems personally, but I was forced to confront the whole dynamic of what it is to be in a minority, and I had a lot of friends and classmates who had troubles.

I went back to El Paso for a year because I was very homesick and I wanted some time off. I happened to land a job at a radio and television station as the mid-day radio news announcer from ten o'clock in the morning to two o'clock in the afternoon. Three weeks into the job, the news director came in as I was finishing my shift. He said, "Richard, can you help us? There's a breaking story going on across the border in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and we need you to cover it for the TV newscast." I had never covered a television story. I said, "I don't know how to do a TV story." He said, "Don't worry; we'll set you up with a good photographer and an editor. Just go."

He asked me to go was because I was the only reporter in a newsroom in El Paso, Texas, ten minutes from the border, who was fluent in Spanish. It was amazing that I was the only reporter there fluent in Spanish, but it provided me with an opportunity, so I did the story. The director liked it so much that I spent the rest of the year doing a radio shift in the morning, and then television stories in the afternoon. My beat was predominantly the northeast corner of Mexico, the state of Chihuahua. In a sense, I had my first chance to be a foreign correspondent while still living at home. Twenty years later, the lack of Spanish speaking reporters is the typical problem that continues to exist in many newsrooms. It is the same whether it is newspapers, television, or radio across this country.

Part of the problem has been the availability of so many different options for Latinos, especially when it comes to Spanish-language media, whether it is television, radio, cable, magazines, or the Internet. There is a tremendous amount of information and images out there. Not all of it is positive, but I think there is much more variety now than we could ever have expected twenty years ago.

On the down side, I think having so many options makes it much more of a challenge for more traditional media, such as print newspapers or the three broadcast networks, to feel obligated or to want to take the initiative to understand the images of Latinos that they are presenting to their audiences. I think that because the primary media feel that there are outlets like Telemundo serving Latinos, many of the news directors, editors, and managers in these more traditional newsrooms do not feel such an obligation. Based on the perspective I have at the *Globe*, it also makes it a lot harder for us to recruit and keep good talent because so many reporters or prospective editors, photographers, and designers know that they

have a lot of options. I think a lot of times these individuals decide that they would rather stay in California or Texas and work for a new Spanish-language daily newspaper, like the one starting up in Dallas, or others we have seen across the country. Many of them would prefer to take those options or at least explore them.

Let me make a plea that if any of you are considering a career in journalism, come and talk to the *Globe*. Think about traditional media, because it is really important. News agendas in major cities are so often shaped by what is available in the daily newspaper. If you listen to the radio in the morning or watch your TV newscasts in the evening, listen closely and try to pick up how many times they cite reports that were published in the newspaper. Because of these frequent references to print media, I think it is essential that Latinos have strong representation. We are such a fast-growing community, and yet we are so seldom heard unless it comes to crime or immigration issues. There are so many stories out there that need to, and should, be covered.

MENA: The reason that our planning committee originally wanted to put this conference together was to respond to Professor Samuel Huntington's recent article, which paints Latinos as outside the mainstream, and as threatening this core Anglo-Protestant identity of the United States.<sup>10</sup> The question is whether articles like that, and this new *Alamo* movie,<sup>11</sup> have the power to paint the larger American public view of Latinos? Is it something that is stuck in our own Latino echo chamber? Or is there a real danger that such media informs the larger American public feeling about Latinos?

CORTINA: Sadly, I think that it does have an incredible influence. I can speak for myself in saying how shocked I was by some of what I consider extremely flawed thinking. I come from Miami, and I am Cuban American. I was born in Chicago. I was raised in Miami. I lived in Los Angeles. I live in New York now. I have lived in every major Hispanic market in America. Having come from Miami, especially, I know that the Hispanic community there is one that has held on to its roots to a large extent. I cannot imagine a more pro-American community, and I would challenge anyone else to find one. I think that sentiments like Huntington's are crazy, but they are certainly out there because he is out there speaking. When people are speaking, people are going to listen.

I want to address the issue of whether Hispanics are in the mainstream. I was listening to Richard talk about Spanish-language television, which I think has been driving the Hispanic market and Hispanic media for a long time; meaningfully changing things. Today, one in five teenagers in America

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<sup>10</sup> See SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, *THE CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS AND THE REMAKING OF WORLD ORDER* (Simon & Schuster 1998); see also SAMUEL P. HUNTINGTON, *WHO ARE WE? THE CHALLENGES TO AMERICA'S NATIONAL IDENTITY* (Simon & Schuster 2004)

<sup>11</sup> *THE ALAMO* (Touchstone Pictures 2004).

is Hispanic. If you fast forward ten or fifteen years, that is significant. Those kids are developing ties to the United States, going to American schools, and speaking English. Many of us have such stories and speak even more English than we do Spanish. We cannot be outside the mainstream—we are a *part of* the mainstream. The stories that are told in the mainstream, and otherwise, have to reflect that duality. When Samuel Huntington is speaking loudly, it has a dangerous effect.

MENA: I second that opinion. I work with the Kennedy School of Government's Communications Office. We get over a thousand calls from press around the world. We go out and generate press for the work we are doing and are well-known within press circles. We received a flood of calls from press around the world regarding Huntington. They wanted to get a hold of him. "Can you set up an interview with him?" they would ask. And of course, Huntington is not even connected to us, so his comments do have an impact. I think it would be foolish to pretend otherwise. I agree with Betty; Latinos are an integral part of America.

It is easy for us to insulate ourselves sometimes because many of us live in areas like Texas or California, where we may not be dominant, but at least have a strong presence. We need to be cognizant that articles like Huntington's have an impact, and we need to find ways to push back and make our own. I agree with Frank that we need to tell our own story and point out that we feed into what America is all about.

BERUMEN: I think that the media is beginning to recognize and acknowledge the Latino presence. It is definitely out there in the form of music, food, newspapers, and television—at least the Spanish-language media. But I think that film is the last reserve. Based on my observations of the film industry, most Latino performers, with the exception of Salma Hayek or Jennifer Lopez, can only audition for Latino or Latina roles. Often, as we know, key roles that are Latino are portrayed by non-Latino performers. From my perspective, there is still a perception, at least in the film industry, that we are foreigners who have just recently arrived.

I went to Disneyland recently. There is a museum there about the so-called contributions of different peoples in the United States. They went over each group until they came to Mexicans. Remember, this is near Los Angeles, which is the largest Mexican city outside of Mexico City. I think that there is still a perception that we just came across the river. From my experiences as a high school teacher, I know that things have not changed much since I went through high school or grammar school. The textbooks still portray us as foreigners. The distortion of history begins in the schools. They do not really address or highlight our achievements and contributions as a people. Even in contemporary times, people continue to associate us solely with immigration, drugs, illegal aliens, and other similar kinds of issues. In summary, I think that, in film, we are basically still perceived as not quite American.

RIBEIRO: I want to make a side note on Huntington's article. I think that there are a number of objectionable aspects to his thesis. Perhaps the most objectionable is that he equates American values with Anglo-Protestant values. If you look at family orientation, drive for social mobility, and pursuit of opportunity, Hispanics are in many ways better representations of American values.

There are two things that I found interesting about his article. First is the fact that a major professor from Harvard University, with his weight and reputation, is taking the time to talk about Hispanics. Obviously, it would be much better if it were a positive discussion, but it is interesting that Huntington is putting the topic on the agenda. At *People en Español*, we got a lot of calls from people within the company and from advertisers asking about his article.

The other interesting fact is that normally in the marketplace we have seen a tendency for people to think that Hispanics are going to assimilate, never speak Spanish again, and totally give up on their values. Huntington brings a different perspective, which I happen to not agree with, but it is a different perspective from what we have seen in previous years. Although I think his argument is flawed, the fact that he is talking about it, engaging the debate, and building a discussion is really positive.

Q: I am a mid-career student at the Kennedy School of Government. I worked here in Boston for a Latino health institute in the early 1990s, focusing specifically on the representation, or lack of representation, of Latinos in media. It seems to me that not much has changed since then. What have you done in your respective fields and what can you do together to address the lack of representation of Latinos and how Latinos are represented in the media? What can we do as individuals? What can we do together to make sure that this problem is addressed in a way that is satisfactory to our particular ethnic group?

CORTINA: You are right. We talk about the same thing over and over again: health care, education, jobs, and the media. Things do not change, which is very depressing to me sometimes. It is about mobilizing the constituency or turning this into a movement. Economics is at the bottom of every movement; it is what moves things. I think we speak with two things: our money and our votes. Everything else comes after that. There are no films because nobody is financing them. There are very few magazines because advertisers are not funding them. Fortunately, or unfortunately, this often boils down to money.

During the past year at *Latina* we had a voter registration campaign to make sure that in 2004 the Latino vote turns out. In the last presidential election, only 30% of registered Hispanic voters showed up at the polls. It is problematic to demand things later if we do not show our influence first, and that has to change.

Then there are really basic things like supporting movies, books, magazines, and stories that do represent Latinos. People and media react to

what people react to, and if we do not react as a people, then the media simply will not react to us. This is a business; it is not about altruism all the time. You get to do good things when you do good business.

The few of us who are in positions of leadership have to figure out ways to exert our influence and get our points across. It is difficult because we are often alone. At *Latina* I work with thirty Latinas on the same floor, but when I have been in newsrooms and at edit meetings, I am often the only one. Unfortunately, I have not been high enough on the totem pole to really have influence and to make decisions. Some of the responsibility falls on us, and a lot of it falls on the people to go out and speak. You speak with your votes and with your money more than anything else.

There is still a great deal of ignorance out there. At *Latina* our number one source of advertising is the cosmetics industry. The major manufacturers will often say, "Look, we're not really sure that we're targeting Hispanics right now." My response is, "Okay, do you sell lipstick in Miami? Yes, right. Okay, you're targeting Hispanics. You're selling lipsticks in Miami, you're selling lipsticks in Los Angeles, and you're selling eyeliner in South Texas. Let me give you a clue, you are targeting Hispanics." We depend on companies that respond to our demands and believe in Hispanics as a market. You, in turn, support this market if you go out and buy their products.

BERUMEN: To continue Betty's comments, economics is definitely a factor, as is the film industry. For example, at the end of the silent period of films between 1930 and 1939, there were 110 films made in Hollywood that were in Spanish. This was during the era when studios basically controlled everything, holding stars and directors on long-term contracts. Then the studio system died in the 1960s. Today, talent agencies essentially run the show. They use the studio soundstages only to film the films. Even in the 1930s there were Mexicans and Latino performers trying to produce their own films, and a few of them did, including Ramon Navarro, the first Mexican film star.

In the 1960s, with the advent of the Chicano movement, organizations formed that, to this day, continue to fight within the Screen Actors Guild and the Directors Guild for more affirmative action for Latino performances and talent. In the process of interviewing a lot of these people, I have seen that Hispanics are not only actors or actresses anymore, but they are diversifying their talent and skills with the hope that when they do a film, they can do many things, not just simply act. I think this is something that will, hopefully, contribute to the future. Again, like Betty was saying, I think that we need to support the films and other works that are being produced, as infrequently as they are, by Latino artists.

CHACON: I do not know what the answer is for a mass movement. From my experience, my contributions are incremental. I try every day. Every time there is a job opening in the newsroom, I will immediately get

on the phone and call friends at other papers across the country to ask if they know somebody who we could hire. Sometimes it works, sometimes it does not. Many of us belong to the NAHJ, which tries to recruit Hispanics, and I think it is getting better. It is an evolving organization in terms of its mission to recruit more Latinos into newsrooms and being more of a gadfly and advocate for Latino images, especially in journalism. Beyond that, I do not know what the magic formula is for increasing representation.

Q: You all have very significant positions in the media, and when something like Huntington's article comes out, there is a coordinated effort among Latino leaders to respond as a unified voice. I think that will attract a lot more attention than just one person even if you have a significant position within an organization. It is a lot less likely that they are going to interview and publish one individual than if there is a whole group of significant Latinos, especially famous Latinos who respond very forcefully, "This is wrong; we do not agree with this and we are not going to stand for this." I think that is what has been effective with some of these other organizations. They mobilize people very quickly and are able to get their message across in an effective manner. I am trying to see if something similar to that exists or can be created within the media because the media is very powerful and can get the message out to help set the agenda. However, we need to work together and not just mobilize the media but also mobilize other sectors where Latinos are involved.

The voter and the individual consumer are very powerful and we need to face the fact that, right now, most Latino communities (with the possible exception of Miami) are not very active politically—they tend not to vote. If we wait until we mobilize the Latino community to react both on an economic level and a political level, it is going to be another twenty years.

CORTINA: I disagree. I do not believe it will take twenty years to mobilize.

Q: How long do you think it will take?

CORTINA: I am not at the helm of the effort to mobilize, but there is absolutely no reason it has to take that long. It did not take the Christian right twenty years to form and mobilize. I think it takes leadership, a message, and people out there. I do not think it takes twenty years, but like Richard, I do not have a magic formula. It just takes something that inspires people or that gets them roused up enough to do something. It is up to us to tell the stories and use our influence, but we need some assistance from the outside as well.

MENA: My main worry is that when Samuel Huntington came up with the "Clash of Civilizations" theory, he started with an article in *Foreign Policy*.<sup>12</sup> This could be the beginning of something bigger getting into the

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<sup>12</sup> See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, 72 FOREIGN AFF., Summer

textbooks in schools everywhere in America. I do think you have a good point. With articles like Huntington's coming out, we need to do a much better job now in the media. We need to build and voice an argument for Latinos and Hispanics to be shown in a much better light. We need to promote debate. That is what happens when somebody like Samuel Huntington enters the debate and says what he believes in, which is obviously not what we believe in. I do think we need to do a much better and quicker job of coordinating a response to articles like Huntington's. There has not been sufficient coordination. I am glad to see folks here building a network so that if these issues evolve, we will be able to respond much more efficiently in the coming years.

Q: I am a senior at MIT,<sup>13</sup> originally from Minnesota. You spent a lot of time talking about how people have options. My question is about Latino representation. I am from the Midwest, not Miami or Los Angeles. I am interested in learning about Latino actors and culture, but it is very difficult for me because I do not have any Spanish language skills. Sometimes I watch Spanish-language programming even though I do not understand what they are saying, hoping to understand the storyline. Do people in the media recognize that there are non-Spanish-speaking Americans who would like access to this sort of information? I do not know if you have ever heard someone talk about that. I want to see Latino representation, but in English, so that it is accessible to me. I will go to a Latino movie if I can understand it.

CORTINA: Latino.com<sup>14</sup> is very English. Listen, we will take anybody, but we have only just begun to explain to the community-at-large that there are Latinos who speak English. This is a tough concept. As difficult as it is to explain that there are non-Hispanic people who want to learn about the culture, I cannot even imagine what it will be like to sell that as a concept. One of the things that I like is that *People en Español*<sup>15</sup> sits here next to me and that I have worked there. I also appreciate the fact that *Latina* exists. When I think of the women's magazine market, there is a woman's magazine for every kind of woman, in every stage of her life, at every age. Within each age group there are subgroups. For example, we have completely segmented the teenager population. They have a million different magazines. In the Hispanic market, there are two: do you speak Spanish or do you speak English? With regard to the English part, we are still working to convince people that we do speak English.

There is a lot more growth possible for the market. I think that we are really in a changing market right now. We have only been around for seven or eight years, and in the life of a market, or a generation, or a

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1993, at 22.

<sup>13</sup> Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.latino.com>.

<sup>15</sup> Joaquim Ribeiro, Business Manager and Development Director, *People en Español*.

demographic, that is a short time. I think if you fast-forward ten to fifteen years from now, it will be very different. If you look at *Teen People*, MTV,<sup>16</sup> or any part of this market, you can see that this young, teenage crowd is really diverse. *Teen People* does not sit around wondering, “Do we have enough African Americans and Hispanics?” They are in there, and that is part of the recipe for their success. MTV does the same thing. They would not have credibility with the teen market if they were not like that.

Something happens when you get out of college. When I left college all of my diverse friends disappeared. I went into a world where I was the only one. I do not know why this is, but it is very scary because you leave college and then everything, everybody goes away and you live in this sort of milky world.

RIBEIRO: It is such a great question, actually. I think the first wave of Hispanic media outlets were probably mostly Spanish. Look at *Univision*, media coming from Mexico, the Spanish International Network, and *People en Español*. They are mostly Spanish-language media. I work with *People en Español*, which is in Spanish, and I think that there is a false notion out there that every Latino in the world speaks Spanish, which is not true. What you are seeing now, especially in the last six months, is an enormous movement in people starting new English-language media for Hispanics. Two of them were just announced recently. One is SiTV, which is a cable network catering to Hispanics in English. The other one is VOY, founded by Fernando Espuelas, who also launched Star Media. There is a lot going on, and there is definitely a need and appetite for English-language Hispanic media. I think that we are just going to see more of that as teenagers, who make up 40% of the Hispanic population and are mostly bilingual and English-dominant, become adult. *People* is not a Hispanic or African American magazine; it is a youth magazine that reflects a lot of African American and Hispanic values and culture. About 15 or 20% of its readership is actually Hispanic. I think you are going to see a lot more in terms of English-language Hispanic media outlets: magazines, television channels, and radio channels. Music is huge as well. We are just beginning.

Q: Betty, you mentioned that in the past few years it has become only somewhat easier to talk to advertisers. What are you telling them? What are your arguments? I know that there are many, but I just want to hear from you and *People* magazine. I do not know what the business model is in terms of getting advertising revenues for *People en Español*, and I am curious as to your response. Of course, I welcome any comments from the other members.

CORTINA: The census helped us the most this year. It said that there are more than thirty-eight million Hispanics, which is a huge fact! You

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<sup>16</sup> Music Television.

have CEOs of companies going, “Oh, my God, there are thirty-eight million of them, what do I do? If I sell toothpaste in this country, what do I do? How do I talk to them? They’re big and they’re getting bigger.” Most of this has been an education of what those thirty-eight million people are about, where they are from, what they speak, and how they live. Marketing and advertising has become much more complex than just putting an ad somewhere. It is really about getting into the mind of the consumer. We spend a lot of time doing that.

We have spent most of our time explaining the differences of the market. I think that, historically, the Hispanic market was *Univision* because it was so Spanish-dominant. In many ways, it still is. It was, “We speak Spanish and we have strong family values.” Many advertisers are not getting anywhere else. The big conundrum in the Spanish-dominant market had always been that there are all these differences among Latinos. We have Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Mexicans, and they all have different words for things. How do you talk to them?

We have spent a lot of time saying, “Yes, that is an important difference,” but let me introduce you to a new generation. Much of the current generation was born here, grew up here, and was educated here. As such, this generation lives in English, watches NBC and a lot of other things on television, and listens to the radio. Still, this generation has one foot in Latino culture, and that also shapes these individuals a great deal. This generation is not going to give up this duality because there are thirty-eight million of us. This is not the Italian immigration. Mexico is right there, and things are different.

We have spent a lot of time this year introducing this generation. It is not really a new generation, but it is to many advertisers. For the first time, the stories about the census focused on the 90% growth of the Hispanic market. According to these statistics, by 2050 Hispanics will be 30% of the entire market. New immigration is not what drives that growth. We have flatlined on immigrants because of stricter immigration laws. All the kids here and the kids of those immigrants are driving the growth. They are holding on to those values and they are speaking English. They live in the duality that we have all lived in, that everybody here has lived in. We are trying to explain that. You have to literally walk people through this phenomenon. Then you see the little light go off in their heads, and they get it. They suddenly realize that part of our culture is their culture.

That is our biggest pitch. We wind up doing less of a sales pitch than making observations about the market and consulting. I am not out there like *Glamour* and *Cosmo* or *Marie Clair*, all vying for the same advertising dollars. We are out there educating people. A lot of it is: “this is who we are”; “this is what our lives are about”; “this is how much money we have,” which is an impressive amount. As much as I love to have a magazine whose mission is to empower and honor Hispanic women, I do like the fact that we are taken seriously as a business. I do not want to be

looked at as anything else. I do not want to be looked at in an altruistic sense; I want to be looked at as a business, and a viable one at that. When you sit across the table from me, you are going to be a business person.

This has been our sales pitch: essentially, if you do business in this country in the next twenty years, you need to sit with us.

RIBEIRO: I would just add that I think the number-one driver for our advertising growth in the last five years has been education through research. That comes from the census, from secondary sources that you see out there, and also from our own proprietary research studies. It is interesting because the Hispanic media industry, specifically the print industry, is unlike many other categories in the media industry. It is almost like *Latina* and *People en Español* are in the same boat. We are building the category. It is not really about stealing market share from each other, although the sales people may think otherwise. Instead, it is about building the category, which is what *Univision* did in the 1980s and why it is enormously successful. That is what print is doing now, and radio as well.

It is really interesting because print is one of the only segments within the media industry that can give folks, both on the advertising and the circulation side, 100% organic growth. There are people who are consuming very little media other than sources such as *Univision* and *Time*. It is almost 100% organic, and that is a huge part of the pitch. The audiences that you are reaching are unduplicated, and research has been so important in educating people about that.

Advertising has really been a huge bright spot. For the past five years, I think the annual growth was 5% overall, and Hispanic audiences grew 14%. *Latina*, in the last year, grew 30%. Those are crazy numbers that you never see! Education through research is so important, especially now that we are beginning to consolidate the category.

#### PANEL 2: BUILDING THE WEALTH OF THE LATINO COMMUNITY

LINDA BILMES:<sup>17</sup> I particularly would like to thank Mina Pacheco, who was telling me she is one of two Latinas at Harvard Business School. There are 800 people in a Harvard Business School class, and there are only two Latinas. This strikes at the core of why we are here this morning when we think about building wealth in our community.

This panel will address an issue that really strikes at the core of our community: building wealth inside the community. Where does wealth come from? If you were trying to start a company, where does that money come from? It comes from banks; banks have capital. It comes from personal connections, family and friends. It comes from the ability to get con-

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<sup>17</sup> Professor of Public Policy and Public Finance, Kennedy School of Government; Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1998–2001.

tracts, grants, and concessions as well as access to the sort of network that enables one to get contracts easily.

At a certain level wealth comes from things like venture capital and other specific investors. It comes from a network of knowing how to get money. For example, in terms of companies that successfully obtain venture capital, I have seen studies showing that in 90% of venture capital investments, there is a personal connection between somebody in the company and somebody in the venture capital firm. Therefore, a combination of all of these things—your access to finance, access to family, access to networks, and access to contracts—is what helps a small company or entrepreneur attract wealth. I would argue that as a community, the Latino community is particularly bad at all these things.

MARTIN CABRERA:<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately, there are not enough Latino businesses out there. I think Cabrera Capital Markets is one of five Latino firms of this type in the country. We are always focusing on getting more Latinos into the financial services industry. It is an area that is near and dear to my heart, and it is an issue of being Latino or Latina in this business, because there are so few of us. If we can get more involved, I think we will see the effect trickle down to our communities.

I also chair a pension fund committee for an organization, New America Alliance, through which we drive the issue across the country about Latino participation in corporate pension funds as well as public pension funds. Pension funds are a \$7.2 trillion market each year—they are how you really create wealth—but Latinos are not taking part in any of it.

DEBORAH GALLEGOS:<sup>19</sup> I will echo what Martin said regarding participation, particularly with the pension funds in a decision-making capacity. There are very few Latinos and even fewer Latinas who are in a decision-making capacity for pension funds. Pension funds are a major driver of where capital goes in this country because they are very large and invest across all assets throughout this country.

I started out my career in the private sector. I have worked for JP Morgan, and I have worked for Morgan Stanley. Part of the reason I took this job, aside from being in my home state of New Mexico, is that it is a way for me to make a difference. It allows me to be in a decision-making role with a major pension fund in the United States and use this position to impact the community.

CABRERA: It is unfortunate that there is no other Latina in the country that has a position like Deborah's. Nevertheless, she is doing the best she can by being aggressive about her role and doing business with other Latinos. It is good to see Latinos and Latinas in those types of positions that actually give back, because we have a lot of our own people that will

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<sup>18</sup> President, Cabrera Capital Markets, a Chicago-based brokerage and investment banking firm.

<sup>19</sup> Deputy State Investment Officer, State of New Mexico.

not help out; they think that they attained these positions through their own efforts exclusively.

BILMES: I neglected to mention the role of institutional investors in terms of access to wealth. I think one of the reasons I neglected to mention it is that the hope of attracting institutional investor funds is such a remote idea for most Latinos. However, institutional investment is the “bread and butter” for big companies in terms of where their financing comes from.

RUTH SANDOVAL:<sup>20</sup> My job is fairly new and rather creative, because I do not think any other corporation in the United States is currently doing something like this: creating collaborative growth strategies. We basically unbundle the contracts that we go after and make sure that we grow with other companies. These other companies may be small businesses, or businesses owned by women, minorities, or the disabled. We bring them into the contracts with us. It is a two-way street. Sometimes they find the contract and we become the subcontractor; sometimes we find the contract, and they become our subcontractor. It is an opportunity to create millionaires.

There are very few Latinos in the business environment in corporate America. If you examine where wealth comes from within the corporate environment, it is usually coming from procurement of contracts and human resources. It also comes from the treasury, where those retirement funds are held, and out of foundations. Take a look at corporate America, and I promise that you are only going to find a handful of Latinos in those positions, and it is all about who we know. If we are not there, then we are not giving back, and we are not in this business environment. The creation of wealth is really not there for us either. We are not going to get those jobs or those contracts, and we are not going to obtain those grants for the nonprofits because the money comes from corporate America.

BILMES: A colleague of mine at the Harvard Business School performed a study of private equity funds showing that 98% of professionals in private equity firms are white males. Ninety-eight percent is a staggering number when you consider what private equity firms represent. This is where people put their money, which means that, first of all, the people who control where money goes form a very closed club even today. We trust that group of people to know where to put their money, but where they are putting their money is probably not into our businesses. The 98% figure really drove home to me the magnitude of this issue.

EPHRAIM GONZALEZ:<sup>21</sup> The Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) and the Native American Business Development Center Pro-

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<sup>20</sup> Vice President, Strategic Partners and Alliances for Sodexo, a multi-billion-dollar U.S.-based global management services company.

<sup>21</sup> Program Manager, Minority and Native American Business Development Center Programs, MBDA, U.S. Department of Commerce.

gram work with minority businesses (Latino businesses included), to help entrepreneurs build, establish, and foster their businesses. Our agency is the only agency under executive order designed to foster the growth of minority businesses nationwide.

BILMES: Tell us about the dimensions of who we are as a community and our wealth.

GONZALEZ: Let me give you some points of reference in terms of the U.S. economy, which I will break down in terms of minorities and then Latinos, as a subset of the minority population. This data was originally taken in 1997, and new data has yet to come out. In 1997, minorities were 27% of the population, and now we are closer to 30%. In 1997, 14% of all U.S. firms were minority firms. Those firms were responsible for 4.4% of all jobs in the United States, and they generated only 3.2% of all the gross receipts in the US economy.

In 1997, we represented 10.9% of the population, while we owned only 6% of all U.S. firms. We generated only 1% of all U.S. jobs. Last but not least, we contributed only 1.3% of all the U.S. receipts. When you look at the dollar value of gross receipts in 1997, all U.S. firms generated \$18.6 trillion, and the Latino community participated by generating only 1.3%, or \$186.3 billion. The average gross receipts for Hispanic businesses totaled \$155,000, which means that we are extremely micro-oriented. People are becoming entrepreneurs. We are not thinking outside of the box. We are not leveraging all the resources that exist.

BILMES: You started a serious financial services business, you have been successful, and you are also giving back by working in a number of nonprofits. How did you accomplish this and how are you advising other people to do the same?

CABRERA: I think that I have been very blessed in the sense that I have a great family and great friends; I was successful because of those individuals. I did not do this on my own, and I could not have done it on my own. The firms or individuals that say that they have done it on their own are lying.

This issue of how to create opportunities for our future can also be titled "wealth and power." As Latinos, we have none. We might have individuals who are very wealthy and do well and own a couple of baseball teams or some McDonald's franchises, but we lack the power to exert in a presidential or gubernatorial election. In addition, we do not vote.

Furthermore, within the Latino community, the desire to create wealth and to make money to do well for ourselves and for our families is negatively perceived, even though these are not bad goals. I almost want you to recite it, to say that you want to do well and create wealth. We know on this panel that as we create wealth and do well financially, we are going to give back to our communities. I am fortunate because I do not have to check with anyone to make a donation to a church or to a not-for-profit organization. I do not have to run it up the flagpole. If I want to do some-

thing, I just do it. There are a lot of causes out there, but you need the business first in order to give back.

BILMES: How many of you are going into business? How many do not want to go into business? Why not?

GALLEGOS: When did you make that decision?

Q: Everyone has different views about how they would be most effective. You may not think business is your thing. Personally, I feel that I can create more change as a lawyer and as a public policy advocate for education.

GALLEGOS: But why do you think business is not your thing? When did you make that decision about your life?

Q: Well, I have always had a passion and drive for education for Latinos. I have never acquired a passion for business, even though I had previously thought about it.

GALLEGOS: Part of the problem today is the exposure to business, or lack thereof, as children. There is a negative connotation with being in business and being successful. When I go and speak with Latino undergrads, the fact that I work for a major investment banking firm is viewed as such a negative. They think that I am taking advantage of people or that I am not helping anybody.

If you ask a Latino tenth grader, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" the answer is "a doctor," or "a lawyer." Never do they say "a stockbroker." We need to change the negative perception of business related occupations early on. This change will help spur other changes that we have talked about, such as helping each other in the community. Whether overtly or discreetly, white males help white males. They are going to hire their buddy. We need to do that, and we need to think about doing that. You hire who you are comfortable with, but in order to effect change, you need to do things intentionally with forethought. I think that those are key points that we need to drive home—about helping the access to capital in our community.

Q: Do you think that there is a lack of successful business role models?

BILMES: There are role models, but we are a very humble community and we do not publicize ourselves well as a Latino business community. We do not think it is important; it is not part of our culture to be out there. In answer to your question; no, I do not think that we have done a very good job. The inverse is what actually happens, and this is what you see in the media. What you see on television and what your children see on television are not necessarily business people or people that are making money. We usually see people that are very poor or having problems, but we do not necessarily see good role models in the media.

Q: I want to ask a question about socialization. When I was growing up, my brother learned to cut hair in order to make extra money. A lot of us as youngsters had entrepreneurial instincts, but I do not think they are

encouraged. We get stuck in this trap where we pressure each other into the idea that the business rap is a sellout rap. How do you overcome that? Why are you personally in pursuit of the private sector route?

BILMES: How many people feel that their family considers the business route as a sellout route? Why is this is such a big hurdle for this community?

SANDOVAL: I strongly believe that it is a very cultural issue for us and that it is very telling of how we are raised as children. We hear it over and over and over again. We are raised to believe that we should not go out and get stuff, and that we should not make a lot of money, because we are going to wait for God to give it to us.

I actually fell into the banking industry by pure accident. I was raising a child and could not work full time. Therefore, I could not keep the management training job that I had in a manufacturing company, and I went into banking because the hours were better. I was working at Bank of America, and I eventually became manager of a \$44 million branch. I later became vice president of community development when Bank of America came to New Mexico. I was working in business, and I was finally able to give back to the community via education and alternative lenders.

This filled two needs for me: the Latino side of me, which wanted to give back, and the entrepreneurial side. As a community, I do not think that we ever look at the business community that way; we look at working within the business realm as “selling out.” It is all about the money. If you get in a position where you can make the money, then you can also impact social change. This is something that you can do within corporate America, and there is tremendous value to that. Previously I never would have thought that I would be given a blank sheet of paper and a CEO with blind faith letting me go find partners. We now have nine strategic partners. Four of them are Latinos, and one is a Latina. They are all between \$20 million and about \$60 million.

Every time we bring a Latino/a into a contract, we are making that company bigger, and we are giving back. There is a way to do both within the business environment. But this is not something we are ever taught. Another challenge that we face is the perception that being a businessperson is not a profession in the same way that, for example, engineering is. Mina, would you explain to everybody what your family said when you told them you were going to business school?

MINA PACHECO NAZEMI:<sup>22</sup> What are you going to learn in business school? It is not a trade like in engineering. To my family, it was fluffy. It was hard for them to really understand what you learn in business school.

SANDOVAL: I agree. I think we find that in a lot of our families. When we say that we want to go to business school, we are told that it is not

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<sup>22</sup> M.B.A., Harvard Business School, 2004; Investment Analyst, International Private Equity Team, GE Asset Management.

such a good idea. Very early on, we get derailed from the entrepreneurial spirit that I think Latinos naturally have.

BILMES: What other community would have its parents say, “Don’t go to Harvard Business School because it’s too fluffy?”

COMMENT: I am vice president of community development at Wells Fargo. We should mention that the community development field, which provides incentives and encourages banks to provide loans, investments, and other services to low- and moderate-income communities, resulted from regulation.

SANDOVAL: Yes, from the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (CRA).<sup>23</sup>

Q: The Community Reinvestment Act only applies to banks. From experience, I believe that the Community Reinvestment Act has a very positive and dramatic impact on communities and that it is a model that could be replicated in other industries. This would create more impact and it would also provide an opportunity for people like me. For example, I want to go into business, but I also want to make a direct difference on a day-to-day basis in the policy arena, where the opportunities are so limited. What chance is there that this kind of regulation might apply some day to other industries in order to provide more opportunities to mix business and philanthropy?

CABRERA: They are looking to implement the CRA in the insurance industry, which is a huge industry. It is important that we, as Latinos, can push the envelope when we are in those types of positions. When they tell you, “Here is five million dollars, go make a difference,” we have the opportunity to say, “You know what? I need ten million dollars.” We need to push it, because when you look at the overall dollars, \$5 million might be a half of one percent, which is nothing. In the pension fund initiative that I mentioned earlier, New America Alliance, government and business go hand in hand. We go out to meet with legislators and give presentations on their specific states. In California the Latinos accounted for about 35% of the public pension fund system. Each year Latinos have \$388 billion in the public pension fund system, which blows people’s minds. In the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS), which is the largest public pension fund in the world, the amount of Latino participation is not equal.

If you look at every public pension fund dollar that Latino employees are contributing to the pension fund, we only receive a tenth of a penny on the dollar. That is money that our people are contributing, but they will not give that back to our money managers, broker dealer firms, and private equity firms. The private equity firms that are Latino private equity firms know their market. A white Anglo male is not going to know where to invest in East Los Angeles, Pilsen, Little Village, South Phoe-

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<sup>23</sup> Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, 12 U.S.C. §§ 2901–2908 (2004).

nix, or the Bronx, but we will, because we grew up there, and we know that there are tremendous opportunities out there.

The bottom line is that it is not just about giving money to Latino firms; it also comes down to performance. Our numbers have grown so much that there is plenty of opportunity in Latino communities. Other investors are coming in and making money off of our community. We can all have change in our own way, whether it is through education, through law, or through business. The bank robber was once asked, “Why do you rob banks?” and he said, “Because that’s where the money is.” When we look at the pension fund system, we see the most critical capital calculation for every state and every corporation. In New York they have \$319 billion. There are a bunch of Latinos there, too. It is the same figure, a tenth of a penny. We see the same thing in Texas. New Mexico is a little bit better, because we have people like Deborah Gallegos there making change. We need people like Deborah making change. You are going to find Latinos who get amnesia. They forget who has helped them get to their positions, and they think that they did it on their own.

Q: What about applying the CRA to pension funds?

CABRERA: We are pushing this issue. There is a big pool of money, and Latinos are not gaining access to it. I know I always go out there and try to hire Latinos, whether they are investment bankers, research analysts, or traders. There are very few of us in this industry, and it is difficult to do so, but we always try. I jump up and down when we do find someone who is in the business.

They are currently reviewing the application of the CRA for pension funds. We have pitched this idea of giving. With respect to community reinvestment, minority individuals would deposit their money into checking and savings accounts, but the money did not stay there in the community—the bank would lend the money to people who do not really need it. Banks were not lending money in the minority community. With the CRA, banks have a certain commitment, and they have to give back. If they do not loan money to minorities, they give it back to the community in donations or other allocations, but they have to meet a certain threshold.

Q: Regarding the banking industry, the Federal Reserve has Regulation B,<sup>24</sup> which prohibits banks from considering race when making the decision to grant credit. If they give a loan to a minority, they cannot keep the data. They cannot track the data unless it is for internal qualitative processes. If they do track that data, it is all done on a volunteer basis and it is never reported. In contrast, under the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act,<sup>25</sup> once the mortgage industry started to track this information, mortgages suddenly became available to the minority communities

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<sup>24</sup> Equal Credit Opportunity, 12 C.F.R. § 202 (2003).

<sup>25</sup> Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975, 12 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2810 (2004).

throughout the nation. Therefore, the tracking of data can be very helpful and is extremely powerful.

BILMES: Deborah, you have \$12 billion in your pocket, and you are trying to reconcile the fact that you get a good return on that money for your employees. How do you do it? What do you look for when you are investing? What is special about New Mexico?

GALLEGOS: A lot of pension funds have goals or proclamations stating that they will target investing  $X$  amount or  $X$  percentage of their fund in emerging managers (meaning minority managers), which is great, but it does not mean anything unless they do it. A lot of these funds do not invest for fear of headline risk: if something goes wrong, they risk generating excessive negative publicity.

Our philosophy is to look for the return, period. If it happens that we can find a minority manager to fill that role and get the good return, we are going to put the money there. Ten or twenty million dollars is nothing to CalPERS but a daily fluctuation in their treasury bonds or cash business. However, the same capital can mean a world of difference to a minority manager who is just starting out and trying to raise money. Consultants do not like to recommend minority managers. They like to recommend their stable pools of JP Morgans and Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley because they know those funds; there is safety there. But you know what? You do not make money by being safe. You make money by taking well-calculated risks and by doing your research, and if we are given the choice between two, we are going to put the money with minority managers. We have placed \$1.5 billion with minority managers: \$750 million with Latino firms, about \$200 million with Native American firms, and the rest with African American firms.

BILMES: Tell us about New Mexico governor Bill Richardson. What difference does it make having a Latino governor?

GALLEGOS: Trading with minority firms is one of his initiatives. Even though we encounter a lot of internal resistance, he, like us, is willing to step out there and say: "We are going to do this, we are going to do it well, and we are going to set the example." You have to be willing to step out there and say, "You know what, there's a risk here, and I'm going to be criticized for it, and you're not going to like it, but I'm going to do it anyway." But you have to be comfortable, and you have to be willing and able to defend your position. I know I have his support in doing that. It does make a world of difference having somebody at that level supporting your implementation.

CABRERA: In the financial services industry, we have to deal with a range of elected officials. There are a lot of Latino-elected officials that will not go to bat for our own people, but Governor Richardson does. He has power and influence, and he uses it, because it is the only way that we are going to effectuate change that builds our communities. We have to explain to elected officials how that money comes back to our commu-

nity and really get them focused on this issue so that they do ask the questions that move capital into the Latino community.

This is not about making a lot of Latino businesses rich; the money actually comes back to the community. You build or help build a company by exuding the influence that earns them the contracts. That money can then flow directly to fundraising efforts, which are key to electing qualified Latino officials. If he cannot fundraise for an election, he is not going to win.

The money also flows to the community when businesses give back to education through scholarships. We are appointed to boards by elected officials for immigration, for job training, for social services, and that, in turn, helps out the community. Some big firms do not know where to put the money, because they do not know the community like we do. We know what works in terms of which organizations are good and which ones are unreliable. This actually affects our community, because it is money that we need for our children's education.

Principals and teachers are trying to raise money for schools when they should be focusing on teaching kids. The whole idea is that if an elected official says to me, "Martin, I need to raise \$10 million to build this school because we have an overcrowding problem in our system and it's going to take ten years to pass the legislation," I want to be able to call up five of my friends and say, "You know, I need you to write a \$2 million check, and we need to get that over to this elected official so that we build that school tomorrow, not ten years from now." We are not in that position right now, but we need to be.

BILMES: Ruth, you are in a large company where you are making investments in small companies. MBDA data shows that there are many small Latino businesses, but the problem is growing them. For a small Latino company without existing networks, the question is often how to grow the business. These businesses collapse because they cannot grow. What are your observations on this?

SANDOVAL: It is challenging to get a small company out of the garage into an office building, and then move from that level to the \$10 million mark and beyond, because every small business has different hurdles that they have to overcome. When they reach that mark, it requires a significant change in the company. One of the challenges that the Latino small business community faces is that we do not necessarily ask. We are not willing to have the dialogue or the conversation with others about what it will take to get to that next place. Sometimes we fail, because we have not asked and because we do not know.

Companies that I am working with right now are growing, but we are also being very careful in terms of how we grow them. If our 225 salespeople were given the opportunity to contact every one of these businesses, it would drive them crazy. They would have them running after every piece of business that we have, and the companies would never

make it. We therefore pursue a very careful and very managed growth. In evaluating the companies, we are very careful to watch what they are doing, how they are doing it, and where they are. We have companies that need to be restructured. They are at that mark where they need to have a CFO or a procurement officer because the owner of the company should not be buying product anymore. Often those small companies do not know. We have tried to work with these companies individually to get them over those hurdles so that they can get to that point.

The right leadership is very important. How did Bill Richardson get to be governor? If we are not voting and involved in the process and if we are not putting the people in the positions necessary for access, we are not going to get there. It goes back to having access to the right people. My opportunities to work with the small business community and get them over those hurdles would never have happened either if I did not have the right person sitting at the head of that company.

COMMENT: It is refreshing to hear that it is okay to go into business. I have the same tension between doing public service and starting my own company. I actually did start my own company, and I did so because I was a counselor, and instead of making the money for someone else, it was time for me to make it for myself. It is important for people to realize that if you are going to be an attorney, you can be an attorney for your own firm. Why should we wait to become the partners? This is applicable to whatever we do, whether it is public service or anything else.

GONZALEZ: Our programs work with entrepreneurs throughout the United States, and we grapple with these hurdles quite often.

BILMES: Who walks into your centers and what are they asking?

GONZALEZ: Companies run the gamut in terms of sales, wage, and experience. We meet engineers who are tired of working in corporate America and develop something on their own. We see people who want to grow their business but do not know how. We also meet business students who come to our centers, because business school teaches them how to manage a business but not how to be the entrepreneur (unless you get into an entrepreneurial program, which is unique). Being able to become a leader in a very dynamic, ever-changing global environment is important, because when you go into business these days, many of the minorities are not only competing within local communities; they are also competing with China and Mexico.

The majority of entrepreneurs who walk through the centers are micro firms. Eighty percent of all minority businesses in the United States are micro firms; they generate less than \$100,000 in annual sales. Only 3% of all the minority firms generate more than a million dollars. If you are going to build wealth in the communities, what does wealth mean to you? Is it money in the bank or is it your name? Is it having control of your firm or sharing in the process of developing your firm into an initial public offering? Can you take on partners? These are the types of cultural

barriers that especially affect Latino firms, in terms of creating the right growth trajectory to have the infrastructure that enables you to work with companies like Sodexo. Without that level of infrastructure, the small business is going to fail, and Sodexo is not about failing.

Many entrepreneurs are worried about cash flow. Can I pay my bills tomorrow? Do I have enough to cover the electricity? These are the types of ongoing entrepreneurial problems that many people do not understand. You will find similar problems in the nonprofit world as well. You will find that you need to pay the bills and that you need to figure out your cash flow. A lot of these environments exist both in the for-profit and the not-for-profit worlds.

Q: If I want to enter the private sector, but I have never worked in the private sector, what coursework should I be taking? What skills should I be honing? What are good entry-level jobs? What books should I read?

GALLEGOS: If you are thinking about getting an MBA, the Toigo Foundation<sup>26</sup> provides fellowships to minority students who want to pursue financial services. You would be getting your M.B.A. with a financial services focus. They provide mentors, training, and an industry overview, so that you can figure out what you want to do.

As for courses, part of it is a discovery process. Take a bunch of different courses. Take an accounting course. Maybe you are good at it, maybe you are not. Take an investing course. Take as many different courses as you can to find out what is interesting to you and what you are good at, and then pursue it that way. I have pursued my career in that fashion; I migrate to what I am good at, and I migrate to where I am learning. There is not a prescription that one can give you for pursuing that field. You have to find where you fit in well, and part of that is the discovery process.

SANDOVAL: I would also recommend that you intern in corporate America; you need to have job experience. When we look for people, we look for people who have already had experiences within the environment, and there is nothing better than learning on the job. I am an anomaly in the sense that I have neither a B.A. nor an M.B.A. and have progressed in a corporate environment solely by experience. It is very critical in the American entrepreneurial and corporate world that you have that kind of experience on your resume.

CABRERA: If you combined the IQ's in this room, they would total in the thousands. You might want to say, "Hey, I could go and start my own company just with the people here." But Ephraim hit it on the head: you need infrastructure and you need experience. You need to go and make mistakes at those companies with other people's money first, and then take that experience back. Even for the people who work for me now, I do not want to see them here for the rest of their lives. I want them to do

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<sup>26</sup> See <http://www.toigofoundation.org/>.

well and retire early or start up their own company. I want them to succeed and do what they want to do.

I cannot stress this enough: Latinos and Latinas, please be aggressive! Go out there and do not take “no” for an answer, even though it is in our culture. If you get rejected from a company, whether it is Goldman Sachs or Mayer Brown, go back and tell them, “I think you made a mistake; you’d better reconsider your decision.” Do not let anything or anyone stand in the way of your goals and your success. Success is different for everyone. Some people just measure success by how much money they make or the brand of their car, but success is truly about what you can do when you are in a position to give back to the community.

SANDOVAL: You mentioned role models earlier, and someone also mentioned lawyers and law school. I do not know how many of you know Manny Sanchez from the Chicago-based law firm Sanchez & Daniels. It is the largest minority-owned law firm in the country. If any of you want to intern and see what he has done, it is phenomenal. He gives a lot back to the community for education.

With regard to experience and pushing back, when I went to work as a branch manager for a bank, I had a very nice white male tell me that I could not be branch manager because I did not have the experience. I was moving from First Interstate Bank to another bank, and I said, “You know what, I will take the job. I will be your customer service person. If in ninety days I have not proven to you that I am supposed to be the branch manager at that bank, I am leaving.” In sixty days I had brought \$2 million into a previously zero deposit branch. The woman who ran the retail banking system for that company decided that she wanted to find out who was out there and who had brought in \$2 million into a zero deposit bank. She gave me the job as branch manager.

The lesson is if you are not willing to have the guts to push for what you want, nobody is going to do it for you. If you do not push, they will not even know you are there. You are just another human being who happens to be working there. You must stand out, and the only way to stand out is to be vocal. You do not have to be aggressive about it, but you do have to be vocal and say, “It can be done, and I can do it.”

BILMES: Another very practical thing you can all do is take classes with numbers in them, such as finance, budget, and accounting, not only because I teach them, but because I receive so many letters from students saying, “You know, I really didn’t like your class that much when I was in it, but I’m using it every single day.” You can tell that the panel consists of people obviously familiar with finance. Within the Latino community we do not have enough people who even know the lingo; we must be able to understand what is going on. Here at Harvard, people are so frightened of taking classes in which they are not going to get an A, but if you take a finance class and get a B-minus, it will pay dividends for the rest of your life because you will understand some of these things. The

B-minus is not going to matter, but the fact that you actually understand a leveraged buyout will make a big difference. Whatever you are doing—whether you are working for a nonprofit, in a law firm, in a business, or starting a company—having a quantitative understanding of the industry is very powerful tool.

CABRERA: Education is equally important for elected officials and their staff working in public policy. For example, when they are trying to push bills in session, the people who know how to make things happen know where the money is going. If they want the money to come back to their communities, and they can understand the numbers, they will hold the bill and make sure that a certain state representative will know that they are not going to push this through until they get what they want. It might be for one school to be built, or it might be for ten schools to be built. If you understand numbers, how the budget works, and how it can work in your favor, then you can get a lot accomplished.

GALLEGOS: Regarding grades, people stopped asking me about them two years after I graduated; the education means a lot more than the grade.

SANDOVAL: Although I did not formally study finance, I was fortunate to learn finance through the banking industry. The knowledge was very valuable when I started working in corporate America and later on when I worked in government. Returning to the point about policymakers and making finance decisions, if your policy does not account for a budget, there is no policy. You have to know the numbers and be able to advocate for those numbers.

Q: I agree that more Latinos need to get into the business community, but my question concerns the challenge of a hostile business community. I was a finance major in undergrad, I have five years of work experience, and now I am a second-year student in the business school. I spent seven months trying to get into mainstream private equity, and they just do not want to hire me. I have asked, “Are you sure, are you sure?” What else can we do to get into these places?

CABRERA: Success is not really about how you achieve things but how many times you fall off that horse and get back on. It is very difficult because they are going to say, “You’re a woman, you’re a Latina, and you’re young.” I told a Latina who came to my office that even as minorities we cannot do the same job that Merrill Lynch is doing and perform the same way. I have to do a better job. I have to make sure that I stand out above them. It is really about determination. You will see that when you do find the firm that is going hire you, they will realize how much of an asset you are and how much knowledge and wealth you bring to the table.

You have to use your influences, networks, and maybe call someone who might not know you. I do not have an uncle or an aunt in this business, because we did not grow up in this business. It might take calling somebody like me or Deborah to make the phone call to that company

and say, "I think you should strongly consider this person for an interview and not pay her a minimum wage, because she's well worth what she's asking for." You might not realize this, but every internship you have as an undergrad or an MBA should add another thousand dollars to your salary.

BILMES: The long answer is that Sandra Day O'Connor could not get a job when she graduated from Stanford Law School and instead was hired as a secretary. The short answer is that you have four people down here that can help you. All of you should come and see these panelists and get help because you are in a situation with people who can help you.

SANDOVAL: You are going to come across the Bill Richardsons or people like my boss, Michel Landel. They are out there but there are just not enough of them right now. You can all use the influence of others. You should be calling on the leadership that is out there to help you facilitate the contacts, because it is all about who you know. You can get the degree, but somebody in that human resource office can still close the door. So you need to use the influence of other people to help you open those doors.

Q: I want to express concern over globalization. It has not hit the Latino community that in the future we are going to compete against China and India, and it is going to get much harder for everyone. You can especially see that a lot of minority businesses are being bought out by dominant minorities. For example, Asian and South Asian businesses buy out these small businesses. Then we are put in the lower subclass. Do you see this trend and how do you feel the community is reacting to this sort of competition and so forth?

GONZALEZ: I tend to find that when I talk to entrepreneurs who are looking for capital to grow their business, they would rather own 100% of a fund that generates less than a million dollars than to be a 20% owner of a \$50 million business. It does not make sense. You can make money not only by making money, but also by having your money make money. When you look at it from a different perspective, in our society, jobs are not valued that much. You can get fired and then get rehired for less pay than what you generated previously, but at the end of the day, if you invested wisely, then you generated more money and worked with other investors. Perhaps you can actually make some type of economic societal change because now you have leverage.

I think that we are in a really fascinating environment in terms of globalization, primarily because we want to immediately protect what we have. There is a huge contingency of people in the United States who want to do this. There is another group that says, "No, we need to continue with the expansion of globalization." I do not know what the answer is. But this is what I do understand in terms of my life: I have lived through three riots in my lifetime. I was born in East Los Angeles. When I was a child, we lived next to Watts, and we experienced the Watts riots. We

then moved to East Los Angeles right next to Garfield High School, near the epicenter of the next set of riots. I was working for the University of Southern California, and my neighborhood store went up in smoke. It was traumatic to watch a local priest tell his parishioners not to loot, but it happened. When people do not feel any economic opportunities, people rebel. I think that it is human nature. Again, there is no data behind this; it is just my personal life experience.

The issue of globalization merits discussion. Moving into the future, Latinos actually have an advantage because we are not only bilingual, we are bicultural. If you can understand two languages, it is easier to understand a third. I speak a little German. I found it easy to understand German because I knew English and Spanish. If I can understand two cultures, perhaps I can understand a third, and so on and so forth. We need to embrace the uniqueness that we have as a culture, and as a society, and determine what we can actually do to help the globalizing economies, because globalization is happening and cannot be stopped.

SANDOVAL: Look at what is happening in South America, Central America, and Mexico: the way people believe that they are being perceived in those countries will be how we are perceived as Latinos in the United States. If we can change the public image spin and our leaders are vocal about who we are and what we can do, we can help facilitate that change. We should be doing the same through political spheres. Otherwise, we will continue to face the perception that we are sitting on the patio with a “sombbrero”: we do not work; we do not know technology; we do not know business; we do not know finance; we are not attorneys; and we cannot be elected officials. The more that you allow those perceptions to develop, the more they impact our economic growth and wealth and the well-being of all our families.

Q: When did you start to feel confident? When did you feel confident in what you were doing and in facing rejection?

GALLEGOS: I think for women, in particular, being assertive and having confidence in yourself is a learned trait. I experienced a turning point while working at Morgan Stanley when I had a horrible boss. It did not matter how sure I was with my numbers, because when I would go to him and say, “Here’s the answer to your question,” he would look at me and say, “Are you sure?” That little bit of doubt in his voice made me question myself. I eventually learned that if I just came back to him and said, “Yes, absolutely,” he would leave me alone. It was learning to deal with somebody who wanted to question me. He wanted to create doubt in my mind, because the more doubt he could create in my mind, the more control he had over me, my success, and my confidence.

After that experience I learned to have confidence in myself. I knew I was right, but because he questioned me I thought I was wrong. I had to change that about myself. It is not that I am always right; I am wrong, but at least I do not second-guess myself. I am hired to do a job, and what-

ever that is, I know I do it well. Occasionally, I make mistakes, but if you approach something thinking that you are wrong, it will come across to people. You have to go in with self-confidence first, and then other people will see that.

It is the same in dealing with people in private equity. I used to cover electric utilities, and I would have to meet with a bunch of men from Houston, Texas, every day. If you have confidence the fact that you know what you are talking about comes across because you can defend your positions. The conversation goes smoothly from there. You have to get over the initial “Everybody is going to doubt me” phase.

GONZALEZ: I have undergone a similar series, which I refer to as my “growth phase.” I will politely refer to those kinds of challenges as creative tension—when your peers challenge the things you say, and you begin to doubt yourself. It is important to have an open dialogue when people disagree over issues and to prevent any disagreement from becoming personal. Once you can distinguish the person from the issue, you may analyze the situation and make any appropriate changes in your work.

In terms of attempting to get jobs, I, too, was turned down many times. I graduated from the University of Southern California with a bachelor’s degree in business. I applied to the major consulting firms, which all turned me down. I had entrepreneurial experience because my family had a business, but we experienced a lot of trauma and eventually lost the business. I promised myself that I would try to do something to educate other entrepreneurs who were facing the challenges of running a business. When you are out there doing business, every decision you make costs money—you can either make it the right way or the wrong way. The wrong way is not having information before you make the decision.

I did not leverage any relationships. I tried to do it all on my own, because I come from a family of firsts. How many of you are first? First ones to go to college? First ones to move away from home? We are the firsts—the first to actually leave our communities. The sooner you can learn to embrace that, the faster you are going to be able to accept who you are and how you need to grow.

SANDOVAL: This is a phenomenal question, because everything that you learn, everything that you experience, is a reflection of you personally and what you can accomplish. The most important thing is to not take it personally. There are a lot of things going on out of your control.

I was your typical young Latina woman who was supposed to grow up, get married, have children, and not go to college. Guess what I did? I got married and had children. My awakening happened on the day I got divorced. I started doing things differently. I had spent all of my time listening to people in the business environment telling me, “You’re not good enough; you can’t do that; you can’t be that; you don’t know what you’re talking about.” And if you believe it, that is pretty bad. After my divorce I started saying, “Wait a minute, I’m not stupid; I really can do

this; I really do know what I'm doing. Stop taking these things personally and go do what I thought I was going to do with my life." And I went out and did it.

I live in a corporate environment, and we all have a paradigm that we exist in. Some think Latinos are supposed to be a certain way: meek, mild, just do as told and do not argue. Here I am in these executive offices, and a president of one of our divisions asked me one day, "Why are you different? How come you're not like the rest of the Latinos?" I said, "Oh, that's pretty good, because I'm a New Yorker." I was born there and then moved to New Mexico when I was fourteen. I think you have to have an assertive attitude, and you cannot take anything personally.

CABRERA: When I was growing up, I was always into sports, boxing, baseball, football, and basketball. I knew the only way that I would get better and build my confidence—and I do it now even with business—was to play with people who were better than me so that I would lose often. The same can apply in business. If you measure yourself with people around you that are not doing a good job, you are not going to do a good job either, but if you align yourself with people who are doing a great job, stand out, work hard, and go that extra mile, then your performance is going to be elevated as well.

A friend of mine was a salesperson, and he wanted to sell Milagro tequila to a huge chain of stores. The owner of the chain told him, "You know what, why don't you come and cut my grass on Saturday morning and trim my bushes, and then if you do that, you can put your products on the shelf." My friend went over there and cut the grass and trimmed his bushes, and it killed me. Part of me wanted to cry, and the other part wanted me to punch him. He said, "I wanted to do business."

Do not belittle yourself to anyone for anything. Know your worth and know what you have to offer and be willing to step away. If you cannot step away from power, then you have no power.

BELMIS: Light a candle.

CABRERA: Yes, or a couple of dozen.

BELMIS: There goes our faith again.

CABRERA: I would strongly encourage you to have mentors. I have been in this business for fifteen years, and what I love about it is that I am still learning. If you can align yourself with people who give you competition, it elevates your game.

BILMES: How many people find this issue of confidence an issue?

CABRERA: I thought my first job at a firm was going to be a party. None of my family had been in the office setting. I wore some pointed shoes, and my pants were tight at the ankles. I was fortunate to have this man pull me aside and tell me how to dress. I remember one time I hired a student, and she came in on the first day with a low-cut shirt and a short skirt. I told my assistant, "Go talk to her, please, and be professional about it." Latinas—the way you come across, the way you act, the way you

dress—make sure when you are dealing with somebody that they are looking in your eyes and not elsewhere.

Q: Are there resources to locate venture capitalists that have Hispanic start-up biotech companies?

GONZALEZ: I love your vision. You want to start to build the various efforts that exist. There are very structured programs that actually help to mentor you, your husband, and your business, about how to seek venture capital. It is one of the hardest networks to break into. MBDA actually has a program. We call it the MBDA Equity Capital Access Program. If it is a woman-owned business, there is another track to go into that does very similar things where we teach you how to package yourself, and how to present, and then we try to expand your networks. One of the gentlemen who was here yesterday is a lawyer here in Boston and doing similar things: Antonio Gomez at Testa, Hurwitz & Thibeault.

BILMES: Venture capital usually works with a pack mentality, similar to pack journalism; as soon as one newspaper thinks something is a story, then everyone thinks it is a story. Venture capital is really about getting that first investment. Once you have one, everybody else wants a piece of you. I would urge you to use the resources of MBDA because sometimes there are resources out there and people do not know where they are or how to get them.

Q: You also have to learn how to leverage. You have people at the business school and all the other graduate schools. These people are already networked, and I think it is important to network among ourselves, because only by getting to know each other will we be able to help each other.

GONZALEZ: Is there anybody familiar here with the New America Alliance? Everybody here should get to know that organization because they do more than just business; they are about the empowerment of the Latino community.

### PANEL 3: FROM LAW TO POLITICS: OPENING THE DOORS OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR LATINOS

ANGELO ANCHETA:<sup>27</sup> Our panelist, Antonia Hernandez, is currently the president and CEO of the California Community Foundation, a position that she recently took earlier this year. Previously, for nearly twenty years she was the president and general counsel of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a leading, if not *the* leading civil rights organization directly addressing the rights of Latinos in the United States. As such, Antonia Hernandez is, and will continue to be, one of the leading spokespersons and advocates for Latino civil rights.

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<sup>27</sup> Director, Legal and Advocacy Programs, Civil Rights Project at Harvard University; Lecturer on Law, Harvard Law School.

As a practicing attorney at the helm of MALDEF, Antonia gained substantial exposure to the various issues affecting Latinos. Education, in particular, has certainly been a primary focus of MALDEF since its founding, and, of course, it is an area that MALDEF will continue to address as one of the key issues affecting Latinos today.

I have asked Antonia if she would be willing to share a little bit more of her personal history before we begin asking questions and discussing education policy. When we talk about equal opportunity and the various barriers to equal opportunity in the K–12 system and higher education, I think it is important to personalize this discussion. We can discuss the unfortunate statistics showing high dropout rates, low graduation rates, and various other educational disparities where Latinos are often at the bottom of the ladder, but we must recognize that individuals form the greater population of Latinos in America. Antonia is an example of someone who has overcome some disadvantages; she made the most of the opportunities given to her and has advanced professionally in her life as a result.

ANTONIA HERNANDEZ:<sup>28</sup> I have had one hell of a life. You will not hear a lot of negatives about my life, but you are going to hear about obstacles. My philosophy is that those obstacles and challenges have made me who I am. Therefore, I would not change a darn thing.

I am an immigrant; I was born in the northern part of Mexico. I came to Los Angeles in 1956 when I was eight years old. My father was born in Texas, but his family was sent back during the Depression when there was a massive deportation of Mexicanos out of the Southwest. He eventually met my mother there.

If any of you know the history of Mexico, you know that Mexico is really three countries: the North, the middle, and the South. These three areas are extraordinarily different in the sense that the North is the most prosperous. I grew up on a communal ranch, a part of the land that Cardenas distributed. My grandfather was given a piece of the ranch that everyone in the commune owned, yet at the same time, nobody owned individually. I was poor, but I did not know that I was poor. I had food and I was surrounded by my family (half of those living on the ranch were my relatives). It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child. I was raised in one of those villages. I had *primos* and *primas*, cousins to about the tenth degree. As my mother would say, “That is the son of your *primo*, and he is still your first cousin, he is still blood.”

I was raised in a very healthy way; we lived off of the ranch. If we wanted to have chicken, then we would throw it in the pot and have chicken. When I was seven my dad decided to move to the United States. He believed that the four of us girls would have a better chance at more equal

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<sup>28</sup> President and CEO, California Community Foundation; former President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

opportunity and education in the United States. However, I tend to disagree with my dad, and I believe that I would have been a professional either here or there. I still visit Mexico frequently, and I have many cousins who I am still very close with who are doctors, teachers, engineers, and principals. If you consider stereotypes based on sex, however, I probably would have been a nurse, a teacher, or a principal if I had stayed in Mexico.

When I arrived in the United States, I settled in East Los Angeles. I am an East Los girl and I am very proud of being an East Los girl. I grew up in East L.A. and graduated from Garfield High School. I had the opportunity in 1966 to go to UCLA, but we could not afford it. Instead, I went to East Los Angeles College, graduated with an Associate degree in the arts and transferred to UCLA. I was one of the very, very few Latinas and Mexicanas at UCLA in 1969. I had attended school in Mexico through the third grade, and I knew how to read, write, and speak proper Spanish. I also learned to be doubly respectful and proper because my parents demanded it. Therefore, when I arrived at UCLA, all of the students thought I was a rich Mexicana from Mexico because wealthy Mexicans from Mexico attended UCLA at that time.

I wanted to be a teacher at the time—what else does a girl want to be in 1969? You could either be a teacher or a nurse. My family was an important part of my motivation and education at this time. I am the oldest of seven children, and the first four are female. We are a group of “pushy broads,” while my two brothers are the most “laidback fellows.” My father and my mother knew that the only way out of our economic condition was through education. They knew that we could do anything that we wanted to, but we were going to get an education. At the same time, my father is a funny fellow: while he is very left-wing and progressive, we still had to follow the social norms expected of females. In the end, however, they were not too hard to follow; with my mother’s help, we learned to play the game so that we could do the things that we wanted.

After receiving my bachelor’s degree, I pursued graduate studies at the School of Education and History at UCLA because my goal was to get a Ph.D. in either the history of philosophy, or the philosophy of history. I am passionate about both. At the time there were walkouts and unrest throughout the Southwest concerning educational opportunities for Mexicanos and Latinas.

I was working as a coordinator for Project Upward Bound, a program that exposed underprivileged students to opportunities at the college level. One day in January or February, all of my kids were arrested. When they did not show up on that Saturday, I decided at that very moment that I was going to be a lawyer who was going to change the law to ensure that kids had access to school and an education. I made this decision without modeling or mentoring. I had not known a single lawyer in my whole

life, but I had learned enough from my history and political science classes to know that American law was the vehicle for change.

The very next Monday I learned that if I wanted to be in law school that coming August, I would have to take that awful test, the LSAT, and that I would have to apply within a week. By August I was attending the UCLA School of Law, where I was one of very few Latinas and one of very few women in general. I soon decided that I wanted to be the greatest criminal lawyer the world had ever seen and that I would release all the kids from jail, giving them the chance to be happy.

To pay for law school, I taught English as a Second Language (ESL) at Linwood High School in Linwood, California. My history with MALDEF began in 1972 when I clerked there. In 1973 I clerked for the California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), working on behalf of farm workers.

I then decided that I wanted to be a legal aid lawyer, and I returned to East L.A. My first office job was at Model Cities. Having litigated what was to become a historical sterilization case, by 1975 I was deeply involved in the women's movement and the issues of choice and the status of women and Latina women in the civil rights movement. I worked at Model Cities until 1977, when I left to head the Lincoln Heights Legal Aid office.

In 1976, a very good friend of mine, Gloria Molina, was working for the Jimmy Carter campaign. I had gone to Gloria in 1975 just after she and a group of other Latinas formed Comision Femenina. She was the national president of Comision Femenina at the time. I asked Gloria to ask Comision Femenina if they would be willing to serve as class plaintiffs in the sterilization case. Gloria and Comision Femenina agreed to become parties to the case, and we later became best friends.

When Jimmy Carter was elected, Gloria began working in White House Personnel. During that time, she would call me every other week asking me to accept a different position. For a long time, I refused because, despite being a political animal, I had no interest in partisan politics. One day, however, Gloria called with an offer to interview with Ted Kennedy, who had just taken over as chair of the Judiciary Committee in the Senate and was looking for a Latina to join the Committee. I interviewed and I was hired. When I was hired in late 1978, I became the first Latina to work as counsel to the U.S. Senate in the Judiciary Committee. As counsel to the Senate Judiciary, I was involved in a lot of major legislation. My areas of expertise were civil rights and immigration law. One of the most important pieces of legislation that I worked on, which is still on the books, is the Refugee Act of 1980.<sup>29</sup>

The Democrats lost control of the Senate, and I lost my job. However, when Ted Kennedy decided to run for president, I became the southwest

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<sup>29</sup> Refugee Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-212, 94 Stat. 102 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 8 U.S.C.).

coordinator of the Ted Kennedy for President Campaign. I did not know a thing about organizing, but I learned. After losing my job at the Senate, Vilma Martinez, another good friend of mine and head of MALDEF at the time, asked me to stay in Washington to run MALDEF's D.C. office, where I worked from 1981 to 1983. At that point in time, I had had three kids in five years, and I decided to move back to L.A. because I wanted to raise my kids at home. In 1985, I became president and general counsel of MALDEF.

I am getting older, but I do not see myself as that old, and it is fascinating to look back at my story and see myself as very much a part of the Latina Movement. One of the reasons I accept invitations to colleges and universities is to see part of the fruit of my labor—the people gathered here today. We have a long way to go, but we have certainly made a lot of progress since I started at East Los Angeles College (ELAC) in 1966.

ANCHETA: That is tremendously inspiring. Let us try to connect some of the things that you have mentioned, including those from your own life history, with some of the issues that we are here to discuss. In many ways, you have been a pioneer. For example, you are the first woman and first Latina to head the California Community Foundation.

There is still a lot of progress to be made in a lot of sectors. A lot of attention was focused and continues to focus on the Michigan affirmative action decisions, *Grutter v. Bollinger*<sup>30</sup> and *Gratz v. Bollinger*.<sup>31</sup> There was not too much of a legal change; we saw the *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*<sup>32</sup> decision all over again. A lot of conservative groups wanted to undermine Justice Powell's opinion in *Bakke*, but the Supreme Court upheld the basic principle that diversity is a compelling interest and as long as it is a plus factor and used flexibly, a policy is constitutional. The opinion is not too different doctrinally, but Justice O'Connor, in *Grutter* and *Gratz*, expresses some very powerful messages about the value of integration and the value of diversity in training leaders.

If we look at the actual numbers, the Latino community is further along, at least in the higher education arena, than it was in the late 1960s or early 1970s when you were at UCLA. How do you see things progressing? We had seen many setbacks prior to the Michigan decisions in the affirmative action arena. Given the fact that we are still probably not seeing the representation of Latinos that we ought to see in higher education, how do you see things going forward?

HERNANDEZ: The greatest challenge to the Latino community is the education of our youth. Everything else, such as the issue of creating wealth and assets, rests upon that. Although there are a few wealthy Latinos, by and large, we are a poor community. In this country's economic

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<sup>30</sup> See *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306 (2003).

<sup>31</sup> See *Gratz v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 244 (2003).

<sup>32</sup> See *Regents of University of California v. Bakke*, 428 U.S. 265 (1978).

system, the one key to upward mobility is intellectual asset development, and education is where we are falling behind.

The income gap is getting larger, and the ability of poor parents to help their children going to school is diminishing. My father and my mother were migrant workers, but at that time two working parents in poor families had enough discretionary income to build up and save up for a house and/or to send a kid to a community college. When I was on the California Community College Board, it was free. When I first attended UCLA, my fees were twenty-seven dollars. A parent could afford that, but it is much harder today. It is very sad to deal with the reality that kids are not graduating.

We need more intellectual asset development. Yes, we have to grow businesses, but businesses require intellectual asset development. Because I sold and picked fruit, I am very partial to street vendors selling fruit; they are entrepreneurs. Whatever they are selling, whether I need it or not, I will buy it. You can go from selling with a little cart, to having a small store, to having two small stores, but you need to know how to be a business person, which takes asset development. Education is one of the ways for our community to gain; it is the key to our community's survival. Latinos constitute 30% of the population in California, but if we are poor and underprivileged, what good does it do to be the third largest minority? Numbers do not mean anything unless there is something behind those numbers. The education of our youth is the greatest challenge to the Latino community and society at large. It is incumbent upon us to really focus on their education.

In California, you know, we talk about the University of California system (the UCs); but the UCs are irrelevant to me, because the vast majority of the Latinos who go to colleges in California go to community colleges and to the state college system. Yes, we need those few at Harvard and everywhere else, but the state schools are the ones that are educating our children, and we need to stay focused on the schools where most of our children are studying.

Regarding the Michigan decision, from a legal perspective, the door has been left ajar. The impact of the Michigan decision is psychological. It has slowed down the effort of those that want to kill affirmative action altogether, and that is all it does. It continues to give lawyers a mechanism to continue fighting, and keep those doors open, predominantly to premier institutions like Harvard, the University of Michigan, UCLA, and Berkeley. *Grutter* and *Gratz* have given us a breather, some time to continue to haggle in the courts about what is added by diversity and the value of diversity. They are not going to stop fighting affirmative action, but we will have more time to work with it. From a lawyer's perspective, it is a great victory because they left affirmative action intact, but what they left intact was still very little—because it had already been eaten away tremendously.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown v. Board of Education*,<sup>33</sup> it is incumbent upon civil rights lawyers working in this field to think of different ways and different alternatives to keep the door open. I am a product of affirmative action; I know I am. They did not have a program in 1969, but they wanted a little Brownie there like me from East L.A. I know that, and I am very proud to be a part of affirmative action; I have no shame whatsoever.

Latinos need to have an attitude. We have much to offer, and we need to discard this feeling that we do not belong or that they did us a favor. It is all about attitude and how we feel about ourselves and our contributions. I make no excuses for where I have been; I am just as comfortable on the corner selling oranges as I would be on the Federal Reserve Board, on a corporate board, or at the Institute of Politics at Harvard. I belong there. I earned it; nobody gave it to me. They gave me an opportunity, but that is all, and that is what we need to do to our kids.

ANCHETA: One of the very recent controversies in California is one of state law, because Proposition 209 prohibits using race as a criterion in university admissions and in government employment and contracting.<sup>34</sup> Recently, the chair of the Board of Regents of the University of California, John Moores, began his own investigation into the admissions policy at Berkeley, which is race neutral on its face but does require that individuals be evaluated through what is called a “comprehensive review policy.” In a “comprehensive review,” you carefully examine various elements of their biographies, not simply grades and test scores, but the whole person. Economic and socioeconomic disadvantages are very often part of the equation.

Yet Moores, having delved deeper, is accusing the school of using racial preferences because a little over 300 students who fall in the lower end of the test score range are coming into the school and he feels they are drawing down the quality of the school. As one would guess, a large percentage of the individuals with the lower test scores are racial minorities. He is a powerful person, and even though the Regents have essentially rebuked him recently for publicly airing some of these things, it is clearly a threat to an admissions policy that is even less of an opportunity-granting program than what was approved in the Michigan cases. What do you think of that?

HERNANDEZ: It is a conflict. You have to peel away at what is going on. First and foremost, Moores is trying to turn this into racial politics to promote his perspectives. We must not fall for his race politics because education is very important. Three hundred students did not get in. The implication is that they are mostly Black and Latino. In fact, of those three

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<sup>33</sup> See *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

<sup>34</sup> CAL. CONST. art. I, § 31 (2005) (adopted by votes as Proposition 209, effective Nov. 6, 1996).

hundred, over one hundred were poor Asians. You have to first put out the facts and say, “If you want to use this issue, let us play with it.”

In 1984, MALDEF wrote an op-ed piece that stated that we could ascertain who was going to be admitted to the class of UCLA by the zip code. The question is, “What measures intellect?” Do you want a bunch of 1600 SAT-score nerds with nothing else to offer a school? An education is a lot more than just your SAT score and your grades. It is a combination of the whole person. At the end of the day, Harvard can choose to have its entire student body average a 4.7 GPA and 1600 SAT because they are a private university. As a resident of the state of California, I do not agree with paying taxes to support a system that does not allow students from diverse backgrounds to enter the UC system. And this is, in fact, what is happening.

Look at UCLA and at Berkeley, which admit very few Latinos and African Americans. You are UC-eligible if you meet a floor. The meeting of the floor itself is not the issue; if you apply to UC Riverside or some of the other UCs like UC Santa Cruz, and you are UC-eligible, you are likely to get into a UC. Berkeley and UCLA, two premier schools, are the point of contention because they are so competitive. Many qualified applicants do not get in, and the question is: how do you create a policy, an educational policy, a societal policy that says we have to give a fair opportunity to every one and we have to recognize that it is not a level playing field?

These are difficult and unpleasant things to talk about, but we have to talk about them. It is about a fair playing field. There is a tremendous difference between graduating from Garfield High School and graduating from Harvard Westlake, one of the best private schools in westside L.A. Even if you earned all A’s at Garfield, we are still talking about two entirely different students. It has nothing to do with the intellectual ability of that student; it is much more complex. Moores is not allowing the conversation about these complexities to take place and is thereby preventing us from coming to an understanding. It is always very polarized. People talk about merit and about “the best and the brightest.” Well, I have news for you: I have been with the “best and the brightest,” and they are not all that great.

ANCHETA: You mentioned earlier the fiftieth anniversary of *Brown*, to be commemorated in about thirty days. One of the dilemmas we face in the twenty-first century is that despite the basic mandate of *Brown*, which was to dismantle segregated schools, we still see incredibly high levels of segregation in our public schools. If we look at recent data, we see that Latino segregation in education is often the highest. However, while law suits to desegregate the schools have been filed in places like Texas and California, many school districts have not actually had to deal with litigation, and have not been compelled to take the steps necessary to integrate their schools. Moreover, because of setbacks in the law since

*Brown*, the kind of legal environment does not exist to challenge many segregated policies.

How can we try to reach the ideal of integrated educational opportunities for K–12 students when we still have many legal barriers and still have de facto segregation in the schools?

HERNANDEZ: First and foremost, we need to address the issue of housing. We all share the principle that the best education is a local education received in your neighborhood; this is a valid principle. What parent does not want his or her child to attend the neighborhood school? A parent would prefer that his or her child not ride a bus unless it is to get a much better education. Latinos are the most segregated community in the United States, and housing patterns are partly to blame. The bottom line is that people are not bad; people are not evil. Black, white, blue, or polka dot, we all tend to want to live with the people with whom we feel most comfortable and to whom we are most similar.

This returns us to the topic of asset development. One of the biggest areas where Latinos are falling behind is that of homeownership, an area that comprises the greatest asset owned by most Americans. When we first bought our house, we were in Matta Mia Projects, and we thought we had made it. We moved up to First and Townsend. Boy, we thought we were making it big. We had our own little house, and we were middle-class America.

We eventually decided to move away because we were a rather large clan. We moved to the part of Pasadena in 1975 that whites were fleeing because of desegregation in the Pasadena school districts, a part of town where my parents were able to buy a house for cheap. The neighborhood and the neighbors were nice. They would come and knock on our door and say, “You’re the second Mexican family in the neighborhood,” which was our first claim to fame. Our second claim to fame was that we were the only Democrats back then, and we therefore had a voting booth all to ourselves. There was the Hernandez booth, and everybody else waited in line.

Segregation is a large part of the problems Latinos face with education. A second part of the problem is the funding of public education. Public education is generally funded by property taxes. Poor people pay a higher proportion of property taxes than rich people do, but wealthy communities have more money to spend on public education than poorer communities do. MALDEF, which has been in the vanguard of litigating equity, has financed equity cases since 1968. The issue has gone back and forth every which way. For example, in the case of *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*,<sup>35</sup> after thirty years of federal courts having rejected the federal claims, the Texas Supreme Court found the public school financing system inequitable under the state constitution. The court

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<sup>35</sup> *Edgewood Independent School District v. Kirby*, 777 S.W. 2d 391, (Tex. 1989).

based its holding not on equal protection but upon the efficiency clause of the Texas Constitution. In other words the public school financing system was not unequal, but it was inefficient. Ever since then, they have been trying to kill *Edgewood*. The governor even plans to propose a total elimination of the progress made since. One step forward, one step back.

The issues that we need to deal with, therefore, are public support and financing for public education. Namely, we must ask ourselves the question: what are the means of public financing and support that will provide a quality education? In Los Angeles, we have now been in litigation on this precise issue for thirty years. We have at least four suits against the Los Angeles Unified School District. We are currently engaged in major litigation over the filthy bathrooms in the public schools. If you went to public school, you know the conditions. No books, no classrooms, overcrowding, and kids being bused two or three hours each day. The issue is funding: how do you fund to create quality education in the local schools so that the children can receive a good education?

Funding and desegregation—those are the two main issues for a civil rights lawyer. As a practical matter, when you are fighting and using the law, you pick the theory that makes sense, but it does not necessarily make it the correct theory or the best one. The theory is simply the best one available under the given circumstances. Some of the theories that we came up with as civil rights lawyers in the 1970s and 1980s might not be relevant or applicable for today.

For instance, Norma Cantu, a former MALDEF lawyer, graduate of Harvard Law School, and current professor of law at the University of Texas at Austin, was my education director when we were litigating a lot of these cases. On desegregation Norma said that MALDEF is firmly, totally, and absolutely in the middle. Historically, the Latino community has not supported desegregation and busing, and has always been very ambivalent. The Latino community wants its children to go to its neighborhood schools. Nevertheless, here we were at MALDEF proposing the remedy that we thought would be best for the community, notwithstanding that the community was really not in favor of busing. In Los Angeles right now, we have busing because we have no choice. There is no room at the inn. The Los Angeles Union School District could be building one school a week and we would still have overcrowding.

You have to go beyond the public policy issues that most of you at Harvard Law School and the Kennedy School of Government are grappling with. As someone who has fought like hell for the civil rights theories that I have advocated throughout the years, I will be the first one to tell you to question theories and sometimes think of new theories, because perhaps the ones we have used have outlived their usefulness. When I was growing up, we faced different circumstances. Now we need to be able to adapt to where we are and to where we think we are going.

Yes, we have to fight for affirmative action. You know the amount of money and the cost, but we have no choice.

Returning to *Grueter* and *Gratz*, it was important to save affirmative action and give you the opportunity to have a breather and think of new possible solutions because affirmative action is not going to be around forever. In *Grutter* Justice O'Connor made it very clear that we should not need affirmative action twenty-five years from now.<sup>36</sup> As you know, twenty-five years goes in a flash. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to come up with remedies that improve and better fund public education and ensure that there is public support from the electorate for public education. Over 90% of our children go there, and we would be damned fools not to support it. I sent my children to Catholic school, but I am no fool; I know that the future of the Latino community rests on improving the quality of public education in this country.

ANCHETA: One of the big battlegrounds these days in the K-12 arena is centered around language-minority students, essentially limited English-speaking students and English language learners. We have seen a number of controversial ballot initiatives passed in California, Arizona, and here in Massachusetts, and defeated in Colorado. The primary point of these initiatives is to choose the right way to acquire English and, in this vein, whether bilingual education is the best way to go. Clearly, bilingual education is becoming quite a political battle these days and is getting much more attention than it did in the 1970s and 1980s when things were implemented without much of a challenge.

What are you thinking about the way that things are moving forward? The organizers of these initiatives clearly want to extend the in-structive processes to other states. How do you see the response to it?

HERNANDEZ: The question as I see it is: how do you teach English to immigrants? It is a major challenge and major issue, but it is a must. If I could not speak English, I would not have made it to where I am today. The issue is not that immigrant parents do not want their kids to learn English. Every single parent of an immigrant child will tell you that learning English is the key for their child to be well educated.

The question becomes: how do you teach an immigrant child English in such a way that the child can hopefully maintain his or her native language, while simultaneously conferring upon that child a better education? Any linguist will tell you that once a child learns his or her native language, you have to work within that native language in order to improve his or her ability to learn a second language. However, people do not care about that, because the issue is mired in politics, not linguistics. The relevant politics surround three gut issues: religion, immigrant status, and language. When discussing those issues, rationality goes out the window. The Germans, the Italians, and the French came here, learned Eng-

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<sup>36</sup> See *Grutter v. Bollinger*, 539 U.S. 306, 322 (2003).

lish, forgot their language, and became wonderful Americans. So people ask, “Why can you Mexicans not do the same?” They do not consider the many other factors involved in assimilation.

I tell people, “Learning a language is a difficult thing. The issues surrounding learning English are only going to grow more difficult, because the percentage of immigrants in this country is growing and becoming much more diverse. Remember that I paid my way through law school by teaching ESL, so I know about teaching English to immigrants. Those are just the facts. However, people reply, “Well, Antonia, here you are, you learned English.” It is true, but you do not count success by the few who make it. The vast majority of the kids who went to Garfield High School did not make it. I came to California in 1956, when there were few immigrants. I remember the Mexicans at Reagan Elementary School would call me “*mojada*” and pull my braids. They would not speak Spanish to me because they grew up at a time when their parents were slapped for speaking Spanish. As Latinos, we should not make fun of those Latinos from Colorado and other parts who do not speak Spanish, because if we do, we do not understand the significance of what the civil rights movement gave us.

As for constructing an adequate system of bilingual education, I want a system where this country and its schools of education concentrate on exploring methods of teaching poor kids how to speak a language other than the one they learned first. It is very hard, as you probably already know.

I want to make the point that these issues are difficult and complex; they do not lend themselves to simple explanations. It is incumbent upon you, the cream of the crop, to really peel the onion, explore these issues, and deal with their complexities rather than trying to put them in a corner or in a box.

ANCHETA: A little over a year ago, the No Child Left Behind Act<sup>37</sup> was passed into law with pretty strong bipartisan support. Since its passage however, support for the law, particularly with respect to financing its major provisions, has broken down in the Legislature. In general, the No Child Left Behind Act enshrines many aspects of what has been called the Accountability Movement, reflected in high stakes testing at various grade levels where graduation or promotion to the next grade level is conditioned on passage of a standardized test.

What are your comments on this subject? For example, we have seen that Senator Kennedy, who was a strong supporter of the Act, has become quite a critic of the Bush Administration’s implementation of the law.

HERNANDEZ: To adequately educate a poor child takes a great deal more money than to educate a child from a higher socioeconomic background. Senator Kennedy believed that there would be adequate new con-

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<sup>37</sup> No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. No. 107-110, 115 Stat. 1425 (2002).

gressional funding to explore the new educational theories mandated by the Accountability Movement. Unfortunately, additional financing for the Act has not been provided for by Congress, and the major promise of the Act has been shortchanged as a result.

MALDEF is dedicated to improving accountability in public schools. We need to hold school districts accountable because they have done an awful, awful job in educating our children. Within MALDEF we have a program called the Parent Leadership Training Program. Officially the program is designed to train participants from low socioeconomic backgrounds to become better advocates for their children. The practical result of the program is to turn parents into troublemakers. What we seek through this program is to combat the complacency sometimes seen in low socioeconomic environments, converting Latino parents into obnoxious, pushy, middle-class parents, just like your parents and my parents. In this way the parents are trained to hold the schools accountable for their children's education. If little Juanito cannot read by the second grade, the parents are asking the administration, "Why can't my Juanito read?" Having recognized the importance of accountability, it is important to note once again that adequate education of a poor child costs a lot more money than the commensurate education of a middle-class child. Education does not just happen in the schools.

One of the things that we are pushing in the reform is a concept known as the Student Weight Formula, which would make an assessment of how much it will take to educate a particular child. The designated amount of money would then follow that child to whatever school he or she attends in the future. This is being explored and experimented in various school districts throughout the country, in cities such as Houston and Seattle, and we are trying to push it in Los Angeles.

The bottom line of the No Child Left Behind Act, however, is that it is political rhetoric. The worst thing that can happen to any child is to test them. Every single child is different and unique. While they generally fall within certain bands, children learn with their own timetables. If you do not provide them with the resources to learn early in life, it will not matter how many bills are passed with the moniker, "No Child Left Behind"; every child *will* be left behind.

Ultimately, the real concern is generating resources and public support for educating children. Accountability is a secondary concern. The problem with accountability is that when a child cannot read, the punishment and consequences fall not on the system, the school, or the teachers, but on the child. We must be careful, then, to carefully consider these decisions; this is why education must remain a local issue. Of course, the federal government can be there, supporting local systems with resources and general parameters. But there is a problem when you have Washington, D.C., Sacramento, Austin, or Springfield dictating what happens in small school districts out in the middle of nowhere.

Flexibility is very important. I believe there will be significant amounts of litigation on this subject in the coming years, with new approaches emerging in the future. Right now New York is under a court order to devise an improved financing system for its public schools. For people interested in this field, take statistics and take finance, and understand how education is funded. Then deal with the theory. Without appropriate funding, theories will not make a difference.

Q: The race dialogue in the United States is largely considered in terms of black and white, and it dictates the national agenda when people speak of race. This issue and how it relates to the U.S. Latino community is something omitted from previous comments. In addition to language and immigration, we, too, face issues like police brutality and other things. When you were in D.C., was there a coalition between the Latino community and the African American community, and how effective was it?

HERNANDEZ: You are right to some degree. In response to your question, I will start with a story. I have an excellent working relationship with the civil rights leadership. At the time I was basically the only woman serving as the head of a major national civil rights organization, other than those who were leading women's organizations. The sector was predominantly led by African American men, such as Julius Chambers from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and Ben Hooks, with whom I have excellent working relationships.

When I was hired by Vilma in January 1981, she gave me one instruction: take the lead in reviewing the Voting Rights Act of 1983<sup>38</sup> that was due to expire, which included the language rights provisions of the Act. In the course of our review, we had a strategy meeting in which the African Americans did not want to have a holistic approach because they wanted to sever the language provisions. Vilma was very angry because she had been burned in 1975 when the bilingual provisions were first included. There was a big fight between the African American community and the Latino community.

When it was time for renewal in 1989, I was very direct on the point that we were either a coalition or we were not. If a holistic approach was unacceptable to the members of the coalition, I was prepared to go off on my own to fight for the bilingual provisions. It was a big fight and a close fight, but we eventually decided to fight together. Coalition work is hard, and finding common ground can be difficult, but there is no other way to do it. You have to work together, because the majority will do everything they can to divide.

A major challenge is that all communities are becoming very diverse; blacks, whites, Latinos, and Asians. Latinos, particularly immigrant Latinos, have an obligation not just to understand the mainstream commu-

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<sup>38</sup> See Voting Rights Act Amendments of 1982, Pub. L. 97-205, 96 Stat. 131 (codified as amended in scattered sections of 42 U.S.C.).

nity, but also an obligation to understand the racial history of the United States and the struggles of other people so that we can relate. My philosophy is a collaborative one, and as a consequence, I would say that approximately half of the litigation in our docket is with other communities of interest, such as other minority group legal defense funds.

It is frustrating that conversations about discrimination in America are about black and white, but getting angry about the situation will not solve anything. I have to get over it and deal with reality. The reality is that the United States is controlled and dominated intellectually by the northeast corridor—Boston, New York, and Washington, D.C. We, as Latinos, need to be part of the intellectual debate that originates out of that corridor. I went to California because it is comfortable and it is home to me, but I spend half of my time in Washington and New York. As Latino activists, we have to be willing to engage in the debate on its terms, because it is not going to come to us.

**Q:** You discussed funding as a key lever for educational reform. It is, but I also think that there are a lot of other issues that are important for policymakers, lawyers, and others in a position to make a change to know. My experience as a teacher in two large urban school districts has convinced me that there are a lot of issues to consider. These issues include the quality of school leaders and principals and the preparation of teachers to teach students of color in low-income areas, both in pedagogy and curriculum. In addition, troubled neighborhoods tend to raise troubled students, and the state of some of our neighborhoods really affects the quality of the education that happens there.

I do not want people to limit their thinking to the idea that funding is the key lever, or the only lever, to bringing about school reform. I am focusing my work on community-based education efforts where parents, community leaders, politicians, policymakers, and school leaders work together to get on the same page with regard to where they want to take their densely populated neighborhoods and schools. They are coming together to discuss how they can really leverage and marshal resources to bring about change there because schools do not operate in a vacuum. The kids are very much affected by what happens around them. If they see neighborhoods falling apart, it affects the quality of their education, whether it is directly addressed or not.

**HERNANDEZ:** You are absolutely right. It is very complex. I have four sisters who are teachers. Their daily complaints center on the same issues you noted and on the lack of resources. The country's best teachers do not want to work in urban inner cities. Instead, our youngest, most inexperienced teachers with high expectations, are thrust into the experience of working in an inner-city school, which is an extraordinarily tough experience. How do you deal with the fact that the kids with the greatest need have the least experienced and least effective teachers? If kids do not feel safe going to school because there is gang-banging and killing,

and the parents are unemployed, it is going to be very, very difficult. You are absolutely right that a holistic approach is critical and that it has to be a neighborhood school.

There are, however, some things that a public education to some degree cannot control, speaking from a lawyer's perspective. People come to lawyers for the resolution of the most difficult societal issues, but these should not be decided by the courts; they should be decided by society. Lawyers come up with artificial ways of dealing with very complex issues. From a legal perspective, we are in a box. From a community organizing perspective, which is the perspective you addressed, it is a much more holistic approach.

In closing, I do not want you to believe that "they" cause all of the problems. We, as Latinos, have to deal with a lot of issues and a lot of problems within our community. We cannot act and behave like victims. The moment you behave like a victim, you have lost control of your destiny. We have obstacles and problems to overcome, but we are not victims, neither individually, nor as a community. That is a very important psychological point I want to make. More and more recent graduates are focusing on community organizing and addressing problems with a holistic approach where the legal component of the solution is just one element of that approach, but not the totality.



