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TODAY WE MARCH, TOMORROW WE VOTE:

Latino Migrant Civic Engagement in L.A.



LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Series on **LATINO IMMIGRANT CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**



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Cover image: A man waves a U.S. flag while other marchers look on at a “Day without Immigrants” rally in Los Angeles on May 1, 2006 (Photo by Lucas Jackson/Reuters/Corbis)

**TODAY WE MARCH,
TOMORROW WE VOTE:**
Latino Migrant Civic Engagement in L.A.

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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is part of a series on Latin American immigrant civic and political participation that looks at nine cities around the United States: Charlotte, NC; Chicago, IL; Fresno, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Los Angeles, CA; Omaha, NE; Tucson, AZ; San Jose, CA; and Washington, DC.

This series, funded by a grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, is part of an initiative, based at the Woodrow Wilson Center, on Latin American immigrant civic and political participation, led by Xóchitl Bada of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Jonathan Fox of the University of California, Santa Cruz, and Andrew Selee at the Woodrow Wilson Center's Mexico Institute. Robert Donnelly is the coordinator of the project, and Kate Brick served as coordinator previously. The reports on each city describe the opportunities and barriers that Latino immigrants face in participating as civic and political actors in

cities around the United States. This collection explores recent trends in Latino immigrant integration in the aftermath of the 2006 immigrant civic mobilizations, highlighting both similarities and differences across diverse cities and sectors.

This report about Latino immigrant participation in Los Angeles and the meeting that preceded it were made possible by the generous support of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment (IRLE) and the Center for Labor Research and Education, both based at the University of California, Los Angeles. The co-authors of this report, Gaspar Rivera-Salgado and Verónica Wilson, would like to thank the support of the participants of the May 27, 2008, meeting, which brought together a select group of civic leaders and advisors to share their experiences and to discuss main trends in the process of Latin American immigrant integration into U.S. society.

INTRODUCTION

Migrants in Los Angeles have long been at the forefront of immigrant civic and political engagement in the U.S. Mass mobilizations in 2006 further redefined the role of immigrants as audible political actors in broader U.S. society. Still, some ask if the shouts and slogans like “Today we march, tomorrow we vote!” that rang out from the Wilshire Corridor and echoed on Capitol Hill have since become a murmur in our memories.

The UCLA Labor Center hosted a one-day convening Today We March, Tomorrow We Vote: Latino Migrant Civic Engagement in LA in late May of 2008. This meeting brought together a select group of civic leaders and advisors to share experiences and discuss main trends in the process of Latin American immigrant integration to U.S. society. An overarching objective was to identify trends that encourage and factors that slow or block immigrants’ direct political participation and engagement in civic life.

Prior to the meeting, in-depth interviews with leaders and advisors of migrant-led organizations, labor organizations and neighborhood groups shaped main issue areas for discussion. Interviews considered the current

landscape of migrant organizing, underscored elements that pave the way or present obstacles to the naturalization process, and cast a spotlight on binational civic engagement. This two-step approach of interviews and a meeting was designed to address the challenge of disentangling which factors weigh most heavily in the decision-making process and how that reflection can guide targeted action and educational strategies.

Moreover, the convening was an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned from the challenges of working to translate the extraordinary civic energy experienced in the marches into the nitty-gritty of building representative organizations with staying power, and exercising the right to vote.

The convening in Los Angeles is part of a larger and broader study of immigrant civic participation based at the Woodrow Wilson Center’s Mexico Institute. This larger research project entitled “Latin American Migrants: Civic and Political Participation in a Binational Context” aims to shed some light on the general trend of Latino immigrant integration into U.S. society. Researchers analyzed civic and political experience of Latino immigrants in cities

such as Charlotte, NC; Omaha, NE; Fresno, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Chicago, IL; Washington, DC; and Los Angeles, CA.

Rather than a strict comparative national study, this project has focused on a detailed view of places that can serve as base-line references such as Chicago, DC and LA, where the experience of Latino immigrants has been consistently documented for some time now. Other cities selected for the study provide paradigmatic cases where regions of the country have experienced deep transformation due to the unprecedented influx of Latino immigrants during the last decade. These are areas where no new immigration had been experienced for many decades—such as the cases of Charlotte and Omaha. In contrast, cities like Las Vegas and Fresno are cities where there has been demographic shift to a large immigrant population but with no accompanying political adjustment of more Latino representation exists yet in the local political power structure.

In this context, the civic and political experience of Latino immigrants in Los Angeles cannot be easily generalized. Even for the most seasoned organizers of local political contests, Los Angeles political inner-workings remain a mystery. Some see an ever-changing political environment where others draw on fixed political references (the political weight of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor on local and state races, for example). Leading into the presidential elections of 2008, civic leaders advocating for Latino immigrants have had their plates full—opposing factory raids and mass deportations, creating new partnerships to urge immigrants to become citizens, setting up voter registration booths at naturalization ceremonies, developing voter guides and tools for between cycle electoral organizing, providing political education and ESL classes, and dispelling stereotypes of who votes and for whom,

not to say the least for advocating comprehensive immigration reform.

The following pages are summaries and excerpts from the Los Angeles meeting and from pre- and post-meeting interviews with civic leaders (see appendix A for biographical summaries of panelists and moderators and appendix B for a list of interviews). Scholars from the University of California, Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount University, and the University of California, Santa Cruz moderated meeting proceedings and structured discussions around four main panel presentations: citizenship campaigns, getting out the vote, binational civic engagement, and a final session that underscored takeaway messages from the day's discussions (see appendix C for complete agenda). After listening to participants' presentations, comments and questions, the most logical way to understand recent political history of Los Angeles involving the rising aspirations of Latino immigrants was to dedicate extended space in this report to descriptions and explanations by organizers, activists, and migrants themselves.

Instead of abstract analysis, here the idea is to spotlight core activists' inside views, wisdom, and wish-lists regarding immigrant civic engagement in LA. Contributions from panelists and participants illustrate the depth and breadth of experience in LA's community of immigrant civic leaders in Los Angeles. For example, principal players from Univision and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) share behind-the-scenes strategies of an award-winning media campaign of *Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* (Now's the Time for Citizenship!). Veterans of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Industrial Areas Foundation (AIF) tell stories of political organizing that give historical context to this election season's

get out the vote efforts. Advocates from the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) and Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV) put in plain view tools and techniques they use to address challenges of multi-ethnic coalition building and continuing the struggle for social change and ultimately, for power.

Power and change are not new objectives for activists and organizers, but new lessons and innovative problem-solving emerged from the meeting's discussions about channeling energy of mobilized and still disenfranchised Latino migrants who face layer after layer of discrimination and social exclusion. For this and other reasons, onlookers can also aim to understand the balancing act of binational and international activism. Trilingual indigenous

activists of the Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB) and model remittance investors from the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California (FCZSC) explain the logic of managing programs both here and abroad. Not least significant, the wisdom of leaders from the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (NALACC) emphasizes the worth of standing to mind international policy that affects migratory patterns and lives of counterparts south of the border. Mainly in their words, this report highlights experiences of civic leaders whose strategies, tools, sweat, and determination make Los Angeles a strong-horse in Latino migrant civic engagement today, and a likely bell-weather city of Latino voting tomorrow.

CITIZENSHIP CAMPAIGNS:

Back-stories and Behind the Scenes of *Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* / Now's the Time, Citizenship!

Moderator David Ayón, Senior Research Associate at the Center for the Study of Los Angeles of Loyola Marymount University focused the Citizenship Campaigns panel on the popular media campaign *Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* [Now's the Time, Citizenship!].

Ayón was interested to learn about the “hardware and the software” of this successful citizenship campaign. He asked the panel to describe factors behind effective coalition work, the types of relationships, and the sorts of tactics they used to make it work. His questions highlighted not only antecedents to *Ya Es Hora*, but the difference between previous media campaigns and this action-oriented broadcast call to LA's Latino immigrant community to make change in their lives and in their city's future.

Panel presenters from **Univisión**, the **National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund** were principal players behind the *Ya Es Hora* campaign and had worked with **University of Southern California** scholars to analyze its role in naturalization rates among Latino migrants. But before turning to the panel presenters, Ayón gave a brief historical overview of citizenship campaigns in Los Angeles.

Based on a framework he likens to the Big Bang theory, Ayón set the direction of the presentations and discussion with the idea that major transformation of the Latino community in Los Angeles had a beginning—in this case it was IRCA, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) that allowed for over 3 million people to apply to be legalized. Of the 3.1 million applications filed, 2.7 million people were successfully legalized; 1 million of those were in Los Angeles. Coalitions formed around IRCA and a Census campaign in the late 80s encouraging Latinos to be counted as part of the population in the US. Ayón described these as major drivers of fundamental transformation of Los Angeles and of the larger Latino community at the city, state, and national levels. He pointed out that in both the legalization and census campaigns, familiar organizations such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), the Church, and the media played significant roles.

By the mid-90s, organizations and immigrant communities and Latino officials were participating in an effort to oppose Proposition 187, a ballot initiative designed to deny undocumented immigrants access to social services, healthcare, and public education. Ayón

underscored a cooperative effort by media outlets including Channel 34 and Channel 52 that synchronized public service announcements. Spanish-language television viewers watched the same PSA opposing Proposition 187 at the exact same time, which set a precedent for the media's role downstream.

Ayón highlighted that a key difference from today's coalitions around immigration issues is that government took some responsibility. He noted that twenty years ago, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) was a strong promoter of the legalization process. Moreover, he explained that these were antecedents to an infrastructure of organizations that is now able to respond to anti-immigrant initiatives and public policy issues that affected the lives and livelihoods of immigrants and Latinos in Los Angeles and beyond.

Picking up on Ayón's comments about Spanish-language media coalitions, **Christina Sanchez-Camino, Director of Public Affairs at Univisión** reviewed her experience in 1994, when Telemundo, Univisión, and KWHY, an independent station, were running synchronized spots to oppose Proposition 187. She noted there were three Spanish language stations in the coalition at the time, and today there are seven—evidence of the rapid growth of Spanish language television. Continuing on, Sanchez-Camino centered her presentation on the motives that drove the *Ya Es Hora* Citizenship campaign and Univisión's role in the *Ya Es Hora* coalition (see appendix D). Pointing to the main objective—to urge viewers to take action now—of the *Ya Es Hora* [Now's the Time!] campaign, Sanchez-Camino outlined the logic, partnerships, and strategies that made campaign that won the prestigious Peabody Award for Univisión's work in 2007 to inform and educate viewers about the naturalization process.

Christina Sanchez-Camino, Director of Public Affairs, Univision

Creating a Sense of Urgency: What I see is throughout the years is a sense of urgency that just had not been there. We realize apathy is big in the sense that there's no sense of urgency in getting [Latinos] to do anything. We [Univision] really need to step up and always do a count down. And it isn't unusual for Univision or any other Spanish-language outlet to do civic engagement.

The catchy slogans [of *Ya Es Hora* (Now's the time!)] is what makes it successful, and gives it that sense of urgency. And that sense of urgency is always very, very important to get people to the polls and actually take the necessary step to change their communities in so many ways. *¡Ya es hora!* Now's the time!. Now's the time that we're going to continue to make history in so, so many ways—in the polls, in the number of people who become citizens.

The pilots that we had been doing [since January 2008], again with many of the [non-profit] organizations, we said, January is the time people are thinking commitment. Citizenship is not an easy process, it's not accessible, nobody is promoting it. [We decided to] have a citizenship fair. To our surprise, during the citizenship fair at Olvera Street, for example, we were ready to service about 200 people, and we would get a line of about 5,000 people. We were not prepared to deal with all of them. We would give away coupons for them to come back to the non-profits. But nobody was really focusing on the issue of citizenship or had that sense of urgency.

Innovative Partnerships: Being the media, we are the messenger. It's the NALEOs of the world, and many of [the organizations]

that are part of the coalition that really made it happen for the *Ya Es Hora* coalition, which consisted of 140 different organizations. It's important to know that this collaboration between radio, NALEO, SEIU, and lots of other organizations that were key to helping us basically be the messenger of *Ya Es Hora*.

Apart from the much needed combined effort to inform immigrants with mass media outlets and provide services to guide them through the application process, a looming fee increase motivated many eligible permanent residents to wait no longer. In March of 2007, Val Zavala introduced a segment on "Life and Times", a local news program on LA's Public Television station KCET saying, "America prides itself on being a free country. Free press, free speech, and yet becoming a citizen paying for all the paperwork is anything but free and now the cost is sky-rocketing."¹ Reporting for this "Life and Times" segment, Toni Guinyard observed that "hundreds of would-be citizens are scrambling to get in line before being priced out." At that point, the Los Angeles district, which has seven counties, the number of naturalization applications had jumped from roughly 7,000 in early 2006 to more than 18,000 at the beginning of 2007, which many attributed to permanent residents racing to file before the fee increase. (May be a better place to insert figure on increased apps.)

Sanchez-Camino mentioned that the district director of the USCIS, Jane Arellano was another essential ally. USCIS was planning to deploy 30 people outside of their USCIS naturalization processing center until Univision asked her to consider their proposal for this citizenship campaign. Arellano kept employees here in Los Angeles, and continues to

advocate in Washington for accommodating large numbers of new applicants.

At the heart of Univision's activities for *Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* is the message the television stations produce for its viewers. Sanchez-Camino described the strategy behind this information-rich campaign.

Driving Home *Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!* [Now's the Time, Citizenship!]: In 2006, we [decided] we're going to use our half hours, we're going to do our How To, every newscast is going to tell you why you need to become a citizen. Every single story is going to drive back to why it's important to become a citizen, why it's important to become active.

So whether it was we were talking about the lack of books in a particular school and/or a murder that just happened, it all drove back to, well it's because you didn't become a citizen. If you were a citizen, you vote, and to vote, you hold your elected officials accountable. And you become more active and engaged. And you have to give them a reason so that in every story you drove home the [message]; *Ya es hora! ¡Ya es hora!* [Now's the time! Now's the time!]

Using the newscasts to go out five o'clock in the morning through five counties to tell people come in, fill out your paperwork to become a citizen. Again, Santa Ana, 3000 in one day. They could only service about 500. Every Friday we were out. Every single personality in our news department [became] versed in *Ya Es Hora*, and giving it a catchy timeline, Now's the Time. And a countdown, We want to make it a million. A million new citizen applications nationwide was our goal.

Univisión also broke linguistic barriers by partnering with KSCI, an Asian-

language television station, which has programming in Mandarin, Vietnamese, Korean, among others. Univision's spots included one with an anchor speaking some Tagalog and other languages, saying the *Ya Es Hora* slogan, [which seemed to resonate with various immigrant communities].

Univision's emphasis on US citizenship may in part have to do with the degree that immigrants are excluded from voting on national and state level initiatives but also from participating in decisions about local issues. For example, only citizens are eligible to vote in the Los Angeles Unified School District school board elections.

In Sanchez-Camino's view, Spanish-language media is different from mainstream media in that there is a greater focus on public service. As Director of Community Affairs, Sanchez-Camino sees Univision's role as a source of information for people who want to make their communities better, who look for reliable information that they can use in their daily lives.

Sanchez-Camino recognized Univision's business interests and noted that they are not counter to providing useful information to empower viewers as citizens, and hopefully as voters in the future.

Spanish Language Media's Role: The role that we have played, I think, is to really develop a sense of urgency. *Ya Es Hora* takes life when our news becomes obviously more community-centric, realizing that it has to go beyond headlines, beyond the leads. When news has a philosophy of being community centric, it makes my job a lot easier.

Nonetheless, Spanish language, both radio and television have a primary focus to

be catalysts of change, to provide resources, [and] tools. Some of you are familiar with our call center that we have at the station that we activate with the various non-profits on several issues to provide people during primetime when they're home, watching a *novela* [soap opera]. [We give them] the opportunity to speak with somebody at the DMV [Department of Motor Vehicles], the IRS [Internal Revenue Service], or domestic violence counselor, or be able to adopt a child. So again, it's that community-centric approach that television and particularly Univision has taken that has made this successful.

Spanish language television takes this role very differently than most general market, or all other media coverage for the most part. And we've seen success with that. That success gives us more viewers, more viewers leads to more ratings, more ratings leads to revenue. And that can go on and on and on. Univision is a for-profit company.

***Ya Es Hora* into the Future:** We're still in *Ya Es Hora* mode. It's *Ya Es Hora*; *¡Ve y Vota!* [Now's the time, Go and vote!] And I was actually commenting to my colleagues that *YA ES HORA, ¡Hazte Contar!* [Now's the time, make yourself count!], make sure we go into Census mode for the next Census cycle. So *Ya Es Hora*, since it's catchy and people know it and it really obviously mobilizes a lot of people, we're going to continue to use it for many other campaigns.

To find out more about Spanish language media's reach **Victor Griego, Principal, Diverse Strategies for Organizing (DSO)** encouraged Ms. Sanchez-Camino to discuss political advertising. Mr. Griego mentioned that political campaigns tend not to ad-

vertise with Spanish-language television, and proposed that a determining factor is rates that Univision charges, for instance. He noted that Univision's rates are calculated with all of their viewers in mind, but in reality only approximately 30% of Spanish-language television viewers are voters. In a cost-benefit analysis, he views English-language television as more attractive for political campaigns. He also noted that it is more cost effective to use direct mailing with the Spanish-language voter, or radio, which is generally less expensive and more cost effective as opposed to television.

In response, Sanchez-Camino agreed that political campaigns are generally reluctant to advertise on Spanish-language television, mainly because there is a perception that Latinos do not vote. She recognized that despite those perceptions, there has been progress, evidenced by the political campaigns of this election producing more messages and press conferences in Spanish and hiring Spanish-language spokes persons.

Following Sanchez-Camino's in-depth description of Univision's role in *Ya Es Hora*, **Erica Bernal, Senior Director of Civic Engagement at the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund** continued exploring the genesis of this innovative media campaign. Erica focused on how *Ya Es Hora* helped address the main barriers such as limited English-language skills and lack of information Latinos face in applying for citizenship. She agreed with panelists that some of the success of the program is due to a combination of a sense of urgency and a strengthened coalition of strategic partners of community-based organizations, labor, and national civic organizations. Bernal further explained the major features of the program NALEO created as part of the *Ya Es Hora* cam-

paign such as memorable media message, ready-made information packages, citizenship centers, and more.

Erica Bernal, Senior Director of Civic Engagement, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund

Pioneering the Citizenship Fair:

NALEO has been doing citizenship work since the mid 1980s. Congressman Edward Roybal [D-CA, 1963-1992] saw it as a key strategic method and a way to get our people to become empowered, and that was the vision with which he founded NALEO. We pioneered the workshop model which was the basis from which to process multiple, large groups of people in one day, and in a matter of four hours be able to walk out the door and have the process basically completed.

Three major barriers Latinos currently face when applying for citizenship:

1) The first barrier Latinos face when applying for citizenship is English skills—people fear the English part of the civics exam. [From focus groups, we heard] there was a great deal of fear and intimidation. They had heard horror stories from their *compadre* of how difficult [the exam] was and how mean the immigrant officials were. They just feared getting in there and feeling that they didn't have the English language skills or the ability to prepare adequately to apply.

2) The second barrier was lack of information. People felt that they didn't know enough about the process, that it was intimidating. [But] they felt the most credible source of information was the USCIS [United States Citizenship and Immigration Service], or back then it was

the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Services]. [The INS was] the most trusted source of information about citizenship and immigration processes, however, the least user friendly—very mean, very intimidating. They were aware that straight from the horses mouth was the best source, but it was not a user friendly system.

3) And the third, of course, was the cost. At that point the cost was I believe already at \$400. It's now \$675. People [had] to make difficult decisions: Do I buy gas and food or do I save \$400 [for the citizenship application]? When we dug deeper, [we found] people valued citizenship a great deal. They had these perceptions that somehow their life was going to be better, that they'd be treated with more dignity and respect. [But] it was still too expensive. So that particular piece of knowledge actually helped to inform the [*YA ES HORA*] campaign and its messaging.

Missing Link: What lacked was urgency. We were at a point in our community, in early 2005, where people were fairly comfortable. A lot of folks had forgotten about 187 and all those nasty propositions in the 90s. We were about to elect a Latino mayor in LA. We were excited at the possibility of doing that. So there was a lack of urgency.

Fast-forward to late 2006, early 2007, when these conversations with Univision and some of the other partners began to take place, and things had dramatically changed. We had just had the marches, there was a very nasty immigration debate nationally that had begun to develop and people were really beginning to react to that. And we were on the cusp of a significant fee increase.

Bernal felt that this combined set of factors—a sense of empowerment after mass mobilizations, the vicious immigration debate at the national level, and the pending fee increase was the necessary mix to push eligible Latino permanent residents to begin to want to take action. Still, she noted that NALEO alone did not have the capacity to help the large number of eligible applicants, and they would need help from the media and from other non-profit organizations working with immigrants in order to offer a variety of resources to the community.

Strategic Partners: I think up until that point [2005] NALEO had on its own done maybe 110,000 applications in the last ten years. And we said there's no way that we can help with almost 1 million potentially eligible legal residents in California; this has to be a larger effort. So this idea of building this broad coalition that could involve many sectors of the community to do this work came to life. (See a list of organizations in the *Ya Es Hora* coalition in Appendix C).

The strategy behind *Ya Es Hora* really involved marrying the media campaign [to the organizational infrastructure] which allowed us to send a very urgent, in-depth, information-rich message to the community en masse with expanding the pool of organizations that were doing the work.

Shaping the Message: The messaging strategy behind *Ya Es Hora* was to address all of those barriers. First and foremost, the *Ya Es Hora* timeline had the intention of highlighting and addressing what lacked, [which in part was] people had no reason to become a citizen. [We spelled out] reasons: a nasty debate about immigration, a fee increase that's about to take place, and our

community is getting attacked. And [we said] here are the tools for you to do it.

I think the other opportunity that *Ya Es Hora* presented is [the idea of] trusted messengers. While USCIS was seen as the most qualified or the best source of information, we were able to leverage the trust that people had in Univision. [Latino migrants' perception was] if Univision is saying it, then it's got to be true.

We addressed the education and language by creating some tools and mechanisms that were going to connect people with resources in their community on what they needed to do. And of course if you look at the *Ya Es Hora* campaign from the media perspective, it is very information rich. I think looking back to what we had done in the past, it was strictly a motivational message and lacked real depth. What *Ya Es Hora* changed was [step-by-step information] 30 minutes dedicated to walking through this application; 30 minutes to walk through what an interview is going to be like and provide in-depth information on the process.

Variety of Tools and Resources: We developed a system where a private business could simply provide an information packet to the community where they could just pick it up, or do some basic training for the front desk or hostess about citizenship all the way to some of the expert organizations who had capacity, who had legal expertise, who could actually take on applicants and walk them through the process. So we developed a spectrum of participation for the various partners that came on board for the campaign.

Citizenship Centers: *Centros de Ciudadania* [Citizenship Centers] are information centers that vary in capacity and vary in

what services they could provide to the community. In Los Angeles we had almost 200 and nationally almost 400 at the various *Ya Es Hora* communities across the country.

Hotline: In 2004, NALEO had developed a voter information hotline, and we decided, We have to send these people somewhere. There really isn't a national hotline or information hotline where Latinos can call and get a live operator, someone who speaks English or Spanish that can answer their questions and guide them through the process. We decided to expand the use of the hotline and make the 888-VEYVOTA number a civic participation hotline for the community, not only in Los Angeles but nationally. So that was a place where people were driven to to get information or to be referred to one of our partner organizations on getting assistance.

FIGURE 1: Information about the naturalization process is on the *Ya Es Hora* Web site, source: www.yaeshora.info



Web site: We have a Web site, because we had a lot of folks that were becoming online users. We have Latinos in mixed households, we have the son or daughter who has access to the internet where they can download the application, get the information for those who felt that perhaps didn't need as much hands-on information from the process.

Bernal gave a point by point description of the media campaign, highlighting the main message: citizenship gives individuals the ability to make improvements in their own community, and listed the tools used to narrow the information gap and energize the public.

Components of an Information-rich Media Campaign:

Integrating the message into news stories: For example, if there was a news story on someone losing their home or getting evicted or some many tragic things that happen on the daily news, and at the end of the news story, the anchor would say—This is one of the reasons why it's important for you to become a US citizen. Because these things wouldn't happen in our community if you had the chance to vote, if you held our elected officials accountable. For one year, they basically drove citizenship messaging into a large amount of their casts and made connections to all the various aspects of people's lives.

Public affairs programming: On Telefutera they filmed a series of 30 minute programs. One was the requirements. So experts talked about what you need to know, what paperwork you should have.

Walking people through the application:

Another was, Get your application, sit in front of the TV, let's fill it out together,—on a Saturday morning.

Mock interview: One that showed people what to expect at the interview, which had never been done before. The USCIS let us into a mock interview, so people knew what to expect.

Weekend workshops: Univision went out to citizenship workshops on the weekends and filmed with the message—Oh, we got 300 people here applying for citizenship, *Ya Es Hora ¡Cuidadania!* Your turn to do it.

Hotline 888 VEYVOTA became a citizenship hotline: As a result of the YA ES HORA campaign, we started running the hotline: 888 VEYVOTA year-round and it became not only a voter information hotline, but a citizenship information hotline as well.

To compliment the media campaign, NALEO produced a naturalization guide with take-home study questions and a tool-kit. Bernal explained that individuals could share information easily with family and friends with a take-home guide, and the tool-kit facilitated cooperation from non-profits and other organizations.

Naturalization guide: We developed a naturalization guide, which is part of this information packet that people can use to study the questions at home, understand the process, and have it in their hands as a tool to take with them and also to share with their families and friends on the process.

Tool-kit: And finally, we developed a tool-kit so that other organizations could

do similar work. A commissioned study with Jeff Passel at the Urban Institute [showed] that there were roughly 5.1 million legal permanent residents nationally who were potentially eligible, with 1 million of those in California. We said there's no way one organization could do this. So we developed a tool-kit that we could hand to another group or another organization so they could begin embarking on and doing that work.

As broad-scale citizenship campaigns go, NALEO seemed to cover all the bases and had great success, reaching 1 million applicants in January of 2008. Still, the program is not free of challenges, which Bernal pointed out include sustaining the citizenship movement, a shortage of citizenship preparation classes, and maintaining a sense of urgency for eligible immigrants to take action.

Challenges to NALEO's Commitment to Citizenship Campaigns

Sustainability: The challenge before us is: What happens after the election when life kind of goes back to normal? When people no longer feel threatened? Or no longer feel offended at the rhetoric around immigrants? The commitment from the national partners is that we can continue this movement, that the citizenship piece never ever die. And this year we'll be doing a lot of the work around the VE Y VOTA phase, encouraging electoral participation.

Lack of resources: There has to be financial resources to support this work on the ground; Univision can play a hundred PSAs on citizenship but if there's nowhere for that

person to go to get assistance, then what good does it do? There needs to be a commitment from the philanthropic community. There is no support at the state level. [California State Assembly Member] Hector de la Torre's (D-Southgate) bill was slashed in the budget crisis. Catching the attention of mainstream organizations who are now interested in this work and I think looking at the future impact of what all this work means is that naturalized citizens are really going to change the political landscape.

USCIS overload: The USCIS director left. Senator Schumer, Ted Kennedy, Ken Salazar, gave him a really hard time [about] denying people the opportunity to vote, and that's the day he announced he was leaving.

Maintaining the sense of urgency. How do we maintain that sense of urgency constantly? How do we keep that match lit in [immigrants'] minds, in their lives, when they're dealing with everyday life?—two jobs, kids at school, financial difficulties. A focus group here in LA showed Latino voters are feeling the pinch of the economy and they're trying to survive, and they're making difficult choices about gas or food. So given all that, how do we keep the match lit? And we're experimenting with that. We don't necessarily have the answer.

Lack of exam prep opportunities. The challenge is there not being enough classes, or not enough teachers. English classes are glutted, long lines of people waiting to sign up. The opportunity to prepare through a curriculum or a class greatly increases the chance of passing the test the first time.

Flexibility for coalition work: Looking at different markets and different circumstances, for example, things in New York

seem to cost a lot more, that's a different ball game. Houston, I think their cap fee was lower than Los Angeles. But what we found with *Ya Es Hora* work and in coalition work is that you have to adapt it to what works locally.

Ayón returned to his theory that *Ya Es Hora* owed some of its success to building on prior experiences like post IRCA legalization and the Census coalition. He added that urgency was driven by external factors and communicated by the message, most importantly by a trusted messenger. He explained that if the Catholic Church played a significant role as a trusted promoter of legalization in 1987, then over time other organizations and Spanish language media is earning more credibility and trust.

Given questions about which factors were more significant in making a decision to become a US citizen, **Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Southern California**

took the floor for some analysis on measuring *Ya Es Hora's* success and tracking immigrants through the legalization process. He encouraged the group to consider factors such as population concentration of Latinos, and the political context that immigrants face once they are eligible to apply.

Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Southern California (USC)

Concentration of Latinos—A Blessing

and a Curse: The concentration of Latinos as a population has been both a curse and a blessing. Why is it a curse? Well, first of all, we've seen it on the exogenous factors that impact Latinos. We've seen that in places like California or Arizona, where we've seen anti-immigrant legislation, that's what they target. Because Latinos are concentrated, those are the states that they focus on.

On the flip side, they are also easier to ignore. So when it comes to political campaigns, where are Latinos concentrated?

FIGURE 2: *Persons Becoming Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) By State Of Residence*

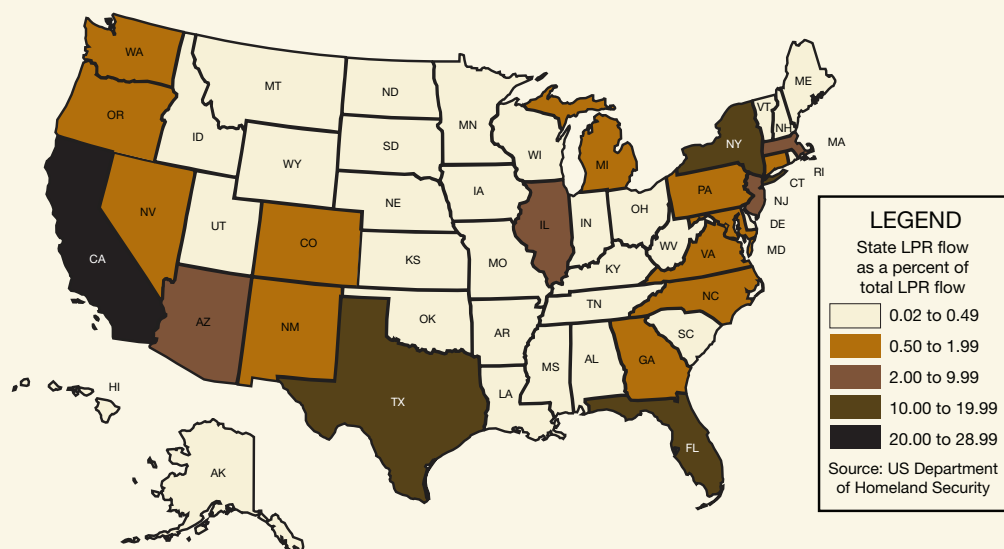
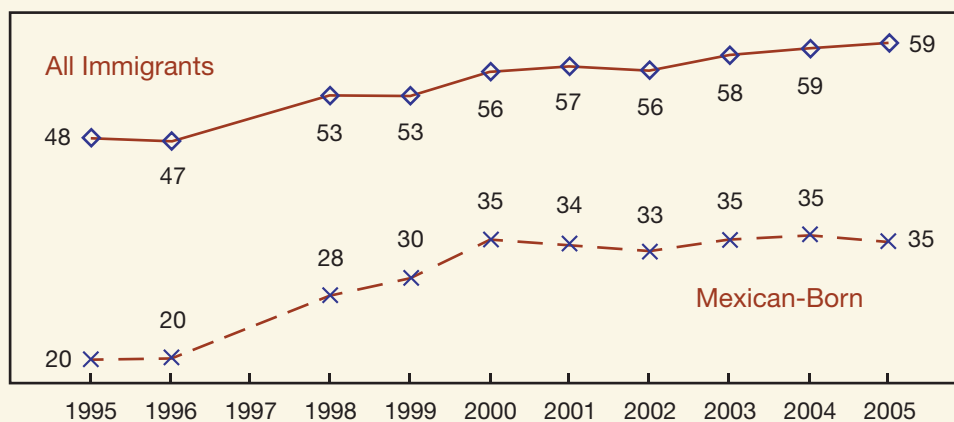


FIGURE 3: Percent Naturalized of Eligible Immigrants: All Immigrants and Mexican-Born Immigrants, 1995–2005



They tend to be concentrated in states that are not very competitive. So they're easier to target, with anti-immigrant or anti-Latino legislation, they're also easier to ignore because they live in non-competitive states.

Now we see that same curse has been turned into a blessing by NALEO and the other organizations and Univisión, where that concentration has allowed them to target their efforts to shepherd the community into naturalization. They have the message and have built up the capacity over years working with all these organizations while initially they didn't have that capacity in the 1980s, they continually kept building on it.

Trusted Messenger: Over time, because of the concentration, it has allowed these organizations and Spanish language media to become a trusted messenger. In Southern California, *Treinta y Cuatro, A Su Lado* [Channel 34, At Your Side] all these things they built up over time not necessarily related to this campaign but building that relationship that English language media has not developed. The fact that NALEO for other moments has been there, has built that trust.

Motives to Apply for Citizenship:

We did a pilot study in late 2006 to determine how people found out about these workshops, whether there was the political context, the external threat, that mobilized more people to want to become citizens.

In addition to doing those surveys, NALEO input the information from the applications. [This was] the characteristics and the dynamics of those who are going to the workshop and comparing them to [previous applicants]. One of the things I found interesting is that of those people who went through some of the biggest workshops that NALEO had in September and October of '06, and this gets at the issue of lack of urgency, you had a huge percent of people who were first eligible to naturalize back in 1994. And these are the people that didn't. There was a sense of urgency we saw a big push among those who were mobilized by that context but ended up not, there was a segment that were not mobilized enough. You saw the lack of urgency.

Then all of the sudden, I guess it took a second push, the new threat on immigrants to finally get them out. So just look-

ing at the years that they have been legal permanent residents, of those people who applied then, there's 38.5% of people going to their workshops became legal permanent residents in 1989 or '90. They should have gone through it the first time, '94, '95, '96, when we saw that other push, but they didn't. So that was the big segment.

The other segment was also among those who were most recently eligible to naturalize. So 24% were eligible to naturalize within the last six years. [Many in this group] are likely spouses because in order to be eligible for the first six years of residency you have to have a spouse or a parent who would be becoming a citizen or who already is a citizen.

Ramirez pointed out that there were people who were eligible and should have been mobilizing in '94 through '96 but didn't go through that process at the time. He associated efforts by organizations and the media with an increase in applications. He also clarified that initiating the process is not the same as

completing the process, and explained the next step of inquiry his study team is to find out the percentage of applicants that are successful and factors that are most helpful.

Seeing Applicants Through the Process:

One thing is motivating people to initiate the process. The next stage is actually seeing them through the process. We don't know at this point we don't know the percent of the people going through the naturalization process now are actually going to be successful.

Some people that will get kicked out [of the application process] for fingerprint issues. Others won't pass the test. There's going to be a lot of reasons. We don't know what those reasons are. That's the next stage, determining the levels of success. We would do a survey of those people that [complete] one of these workshops, and see if they become a citizen on the very first try. We need to know what aspiring applicants find most useful about what these organizations were doing, and what the media was doing.

TABLE 1: *Legal Permanent Resident Flow by State of Residence*

State of Residence	2007		2006		2005	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,052,415	100.0	1,266,129	100.0	1,122,257	100.0
California	228,941	21.8	264,667	20.9	232,014	20.7
New York	136,739	13.0	180,157	14.2	136,815	12.2
Florida	126,277	12.0	155,986	12.3	122,915	11.0
Texas	77,278	7.3	89,027	7.0	95,951	8.5
New Jersey	55,834	5.3	65,931	5.2	56,176	5.0
Illinois	41,971	4.0	52,453	4.1	52,415	4.7
Massachusetts	30,555	2.9	35,559	2.8	34,232	3.1
Virginia	29,682	2.8	38,483	3.0	27,095	2.4
Georgia	27,353	2.6	32,202	2.5	31,527	2.8
Maryland	24,255	2.3	30,199	2.4	22,868	2.0
Other	273,530	26.0	321,467	25.4	310,249	27.6

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS), Legal Immigrant Data, Fiscal Years 2005 to 2007.

Ramirez came back to the issue of geographic concentrations of Latinos, and opened the discussion to how this might affect not only naturalization rates but also implications for future voting patterns.

Latinos are not equally spread among all the states. Where are most of the legal permanent residents that are eligible to naturalize located? The top eight states where Latinos are concentrated constitute 70.1% of all legal permanent residents and 72% of those who are eligible to naturalize.

Just of those who are eligible to naturalize, only about half of them will become citizens in the next 5, 10 years, that's still 648,000. Because we know that once they become citizens, Latinos do actually register to vote. Half a million people could come to the poll just of those who are eligible to naturalize right now, just in California. That's where the concentration can be used to the advantage of Latinos, especially with all the efforts of the media and the organizations.

Ramirez's observations of changes in rates of naturalization rates among Mexicans, was summarized in his estimates the average time period for a legal permanent resident to gain citizenship status is roughly ten years. He predicted that there will be a general trend that

shortens that timeframe, partly because of the fee structure, but that it would then return to longer periods and be based mostly on socioeconomic status.

With respect to mechanisms to follow up to see if the people are actually becoming citizens **Martha Jimenez of FCZSC** reminded the group that NALEO works in conjunction with the Legal Aids Foundation of Los Angeles and various law firms, including, APAC, the Asian American Pacific Legal Center, and Los Angeles Neighborhood Legal Services Center, and with the Mexican Hometown Associations. The Zacatecan Federation asks the participants who apply to make sure they provide the Federation with a photocopy of their certificate of naturalization. Noting challenges because of privacy protections, the Federation cannot relay the legal status of individuals without a good relationship with the applicants, who can volunteer information.

In sum, citizenship campaigns operate most effectively with a broad coalition and thoughtful media campaign behind them. From the *Ya Es Hora* experience, it is clear that no single moment or strategy can be isolated as a defining factor in motivating legal residents to become citizens. At the same time, many of the components of this campaign and notably, the day-in, day-out work of organizations working with immigrants have contributed new citizens among Latino migrants in Los Angeles.

GETTING OUT THE VOTE:

Making the Right to Vote an Empowerment Tool for Latino Migrants

Moderator **Janna Shadduck-Hernandez, Professor of Cultural Studies** at the **University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)** framed the conversation on Getting Out the Vote with some general questions: How are various sectors both labor, community and faith-based groups creating unique models around Getting Out the Vote? What is the immigrant vote? Who is the immigrant Vote? These questions and the group's discussions centered on thinking about the immigrant vote in general, and more specifically about the power of the immigrant vote.

On the panel, veteran immigrant organizers from the **Service Employees International Union (SEIU)** and **Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)** gave historical context to discussions from their experience organizing immigrants in Los Angeles in the 60s and 70s. To address the moderators questions, panelists not only reviewed lessons they learned from historical figures and stand-out union leaders like Cesar Chavez, Miguel Contreras, Eliseo Medina, and Maria Elena Durazo, but also gave step-by-step outlines of mechanisms to pave pathways for immigrants into the political system, even as non-voters. Their approaches to maximize efforts to engage Latino immigrants in civic affairs echoed some of

the year-round activities of **Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV)**, **Strengthening Our Lives (SOL)** and the **Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)**. **Leaders of these organizations** described their campaigns to educate immigrants about their rights and oust politicians who use anti-immigrant rhetoric to win votes, for example. Several pointed out that voting is not necessarily the only avenue for immigrants to participate politically. Direct participation in elections is one way to make change but the process of learning how to do that often creates change along the way.

Roberto de la Cruz, Senior Community Organizer, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Lessons from the United Farm Workers Union: Translating Trash into Tools for Organizing

To be able to put it in context, we need to look at how it all started, at least we did at SEIU [Service Employees International Union] back before, well before 1996, before the [State Senator Gil] Cedillo elections, and how we had an impact on [organizing] at that time. When we used to come to the cities, we would come with

Spanish speaking farm workers from all over Mexico. And we would come to these campaigns and [the organizers] would have us make the lunches, and the burritos, because [there was no] material [in Spanish]. It was all in English. The precincts and the packets were not conducive to doing campaigns for us.

So we used to do our own. I remember the campaign used to put us in the back where the trash was. So we used to clean the offices [and use materials as a template for our own]. And by the time the campaign was finished, we would take them over because we would know how to run those campaigns, especially the east side of LA, or wherever there were Spanish speaking voters.

My first campaign here was with Kennedy in '68. I came to Los Angeles and I was fortunate enough to work with a good friend out of the Farm Workers [Union], Eliseo Medina. When we came in '96, the first campaign where we put together Labor, Unite Here and SEIU, was for [Gil] Cedillo's [California State Assembly] campaign. And then later on the big impact was in '98 on the east side of LA, that coalition plus the county. We went to Miguel and said, we can't bring in our people and give them English material again. We need to put our own thing together [in Spanish]. And eventually [we] did.

De la Cruz remembered that only a handful of Latinos were in positions of power in the 50s, when he began working with the United Farm Workers. Congressman Edward Roybal (D-CA) was one. He reflected that now there are many more and they should be held accountable for the service and values of the Latino community. His long-time involvement

in getting out the vote puts in perspective elements of civic engagement such as accountability of representatives and alliances, with the Catholic Church, for instance, that have existed in the past and cannot be taken for granted today.

Accountability: We have to make sure we keep [Latinos in power]. And the best way is to set up in the neighborhoods, the union halls and [work with them] to get out the vote. It's important to target those areas where people don't believe residents go out and vote. We went and talked to them with the right messages, which is the key. It's how do you get them out to vote. Why is it that you're asking them to go out.

We Are America Alliance: We now have developed a national alliance, which is We Are America, which some of our partners are in here. There are 14 groups that are national, regional, and state. Those came out I think right out of the marches. We said, you know, everybody was talking, *Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos*, [Today we march, tomorrow we vote] but nobody was. We felt, at least in Labor, there would be somebody to take a hold and set up those programs. So we set up an alliance.

We knew there were 9.8 million legal permanent residents and the program we would work with some of the groups. And one of them was obviously, *Ya Es Hora*. I was privileged to be able to do a lot of those citizenship projects in Bakersfield, the whole San Joaquin Valley, Oxnard, San Bernardino, and different places. I ran some of those workshops and got people involved. And again some of the [organizations] here helped us put together the citizenship [workshops].

Las Cinco Patitas [The Five Pillars]:

The campaigns that we have run has always been with what we called *las cinco patitas*—Labor, faith-based, community groups, the ethnic media, and also the sending countries, *las Federaciones*, that we could work together to get out the vote, especially the immigrant vote.

Working with the Federations: Well my experience when I came here I think the first time in 2000, 2002, when we set up a coalition for immigration reform was we were working with the zacatecanos. First we met with the consulates of the different countries, we wanted them to understand how important it was and what kind of role they could play encouraging the legal permanent residents to become citizens, and when they became citizens to go out and vote. And we would meet with the consulates and we met with obviously a lot of the michoacanos and the zacatecanos from Mexico all the different Federaciones were members of SEIU. SEIU is one of the largest immigrant unions in the country so we had a lot of members that would introduce us to them. So we started building that coalition. And that's how that came about. We would also meet with Central Americans. We would meet with the Consulate from Guatemala, from Honduras, Nicaragua and El Salvador to educate them about how important the vote was of the immigrant and why they should encourage it. Obviously it was non-partisan when we were doing it. And we continue to do this work as non-partisan for We Are America and *Ya Es Hora*.

So now we have the [We Are America Alliance] as a national group, we had a goal of a million new citizens. I think there were 13 states, 23 cities. We actually went over our goal of a million plus, we're still going

through the process. And we're now in that stage of setting up the GOTV for those people and these states.

How to GOTV: I was involved in the different offices that SEIU had, in the East Side and Commerce City. Where we would bring in 1,000 people or 500 people, assign precincts, and have the trainings in Spanish so they could be going out and talking in Spanish and English. It was basically immigrant workers coming in from the Janitors, from H.E.R.E., from UNITE, at that time when they were separated. But we all worked together to be able to assign and have leads that would go out and knock on doors and literally deliver the vote. Not just ID them first, but we would go after what we call the low propensity voter, because nobody believed that the Latinos would come out to vote. The Democratic Party never went after them. So we started going after them. And low and behold, we see the affects, not just here in LA or in California.

Now we're concentrating on 13 states. California, to me, is already done. All we have to do is get out there and do the work. But there are certain states, Nevada, Nuevo Mexico, Arizona, Illinois, certain states that haven't been in this program. Because California was first, and we're taking this program and duplicating it everywhere else. And so SEIU is a big partner in that, and Labor. And I can only speak for Labor, but there are groups that help us in Chicago and other places. But Labor itself were targeting 13 states, 26 cities to try to implement this program on immigrants and how to get them out to vote.

De la Cruz pointed to challenges in his work today. In the main, difficulties are not related to motivating new citizens to vote, but rather

finding common agendas among foreign-born and US-born Latinos.

The Challenge of Minding the Identity Politics Gap: When I'm out in the barrios, talking to old friends from the 60s, 70s, Chicanos that don't speak Spanish that do support immigrants. But they don't want to be identified with, you know, the undocumented or the legal permanent. They're not part of that, you know what I mean? And so we need to figure that one out.

The new immigrant, the one that becomes a new citizen and gets out to vote, they have no problem. They want to help. They know what this is about. So how do we get a message, and coin a message so that we can do both [new immigrant and Chicano/a communities] at the same time? And I think with our partnerships, and with NALEO and with Univisión, and obviously SEIU and National Council of the Raza, we're trying to figure out one of those messages. How do we do that? So that we can really bring out not just the immigrant vote but the Latino vote in general all over this country.

Similar to De la Cruz's significant time spent organizing immigrants, long-time organizer **Kenneth Fujimoto of One-LA, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)** honored leaders in the United Farm Workers Union and explained that he owed them his get out the vote education. He noted the specific role of the Catholic Church in the 70s and recounted the history of the organization he works with today, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF).

Kenneth Fujimoto, Senior Organizer, One-LA, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)

The Forefathers of Organizing in LA: I learned a lot from Bobby [Roberto

de la Cruz] and the United Farm Workers movement. And I owe a lot of debt and gratitude to the United Farm Workers and people like Eliseo Medina and people like Jim Drake and people like Gilbert Padilla and Dolores [Huerta] and Cesar [Chavez]. But whatever I've done in organizing I owe a lot to that foundation that I got from the United Farm Workers. It was an education on the seat of our pants. You were just thrown into a situation and you had to learn how to deal with it.

In 1973 we were meeting in the basement of the Soledad Church in East Los Angeles. Every morning we would get our assignments of which Safeway we were going to picket that day. And we'd take our assignments, go to the stores and picket. That's a long time ago but there was a lot of learning that went on through that process.

History and Work of the IAF: The Industrial Areas Foundation has about a thirty year history in Los Angeles County, with the IAF's main, what we call "broad-based" organizations. So there are now about 60 "broad-based" organizations across the country like One-LA. "Broad-based" is not what was referred to earlier as faith-based. Churches and congregations, synagogues are the foundation of the IAF membership and base. But we like be considered much broader than that because there are also school constituencies, there are unions, there civic groups and organizations, there are social service agencies. So it is what we call "broad-based" and the work that we do we like to refer to as broad-based organizing.

Into the 1990s, there were four separate IAF organizations here in Los Angeles County. During that period of time, there was UNO [United Neighborhoods

Organization] in East Los Angeles, SCOC [Southern California Organizing Committee] in South Central, EVO [East Valleys Organization] out in the East Valley, the San Gabriel Valley and Voice in San Fernando Valley. There was an effort on the part of the IAF to naturalize over 50,000 residents at that point in time.

In 1999, I returned to Los Angeles and began to organize a drive to create what is now One-LA. By July of 2004, we had a convention of 12,000 people at the Convention Center, which launched what is now One-LA. Among that constituency, it was probably 85% immigrant. If you remember during that period of time, there was a lot of agitation, there was a lot of politics, not unlike now, around the immigrant voting and the immigrant constituencies.

In 2000, 20,000 immigrants came together, the IAF organizations produced a lot of people for that as well as CHIRLA, SEIU and others. So we have a long history in terms of engagement in immigrant communities.

Fujimoto gave a breakdown of the objectives of the IAF. In his view, getting out the vote is important but not the only purpose of political organizing. He named two or three examples of immigrant-specific issues like the *matrícula consular*, [an identification card issued by the Mexican government through its consulate offices] that add to the political learning it takes to build a constituency with power at the local level, and is a support mechanism for immigrants and workers to organize themselves.

More than GOTV: From the perspective of the IAF organizations, getting out the vote is important, voting is very, very important and significant. But frankly it's

the least important part of politics. Ok? Let me explain that.

Right now we have a presidential election for the contending parties if either side who is elected may or may not do something about immigration in the next administration. We don't know. It looks like there may be a possibility at some time, but it won't be soon. Now from the perspective of the IAF and One-LA, to be effective when there is an opening in that next administration, we need to build a powerful constituency at the local level to make that happen. That's why we engage people around the *matrícula consular*, that's why we support people getting their passports, that's why we support citizenship efforts. That's why working with Bobby at nursing homes in East Los Angeles, through parishes like Our Lady of Victory in East Los Angeles, and other parishes in Los Angeles, to identify workers that are trying to organize themselves in these nursing homes.

The Role of Local Politics in Long-term Mobilizing: My point is all politics is local. All politics is local. And we don't have the depth, the breadth, the smarts, or the power to impact a national election like maybe the SEIU can, maybe NALEO can, even Univisión can do. But what we can do, and what we are going to continue to do is build a base at the local level.

One example is in the City of Maywood back a couple of years ago, when there was a rash of *retenes* [towing and impounding vehicles] in the City of Maywood. And after investigating what was going on in the City of Maywood, we found out that the towing company that got those cars towed away at those *retenes* were contributing handily to the city council members on the Maywood City Council. So, through Rosa Lima

church, which is a One-LA member institution, we organized a non-partisan get out the vote drive, voter registration/get out the vote. Everybody knew who the bad council people were and who needed to be in there. And so through that effort, we tripled the voter turn out from the previous city council election. Threw out the bad guys. Got a new administration in there. And now there is beginning to be some peace, and a, some light at the end of the tunnel in terms of immigrants in the City of Maywood.

We think those kinds of efforts build the constituency on a local basis, that in the long term help fuel the campaigns at SEIU, CHIRLA, and NALEO. We're not at that place where we can have that kind of reach. But what we like to do is continue to build those constituencies locally, organize locally, through local institutions like parishes, like congregations, like schools, and like local unions. And by doing that, we hope we can be more effective in the long haul in terms of mobilizing the immigrant vote and supporting immigrants in their struggle to participate here in this country.

No panelists at the meeting were representatives of faith-based groups, however, official representatives of Catholic Charities, an organization that has been an active advocate for immigrant rights in the Los Angeles area did participate in the meeting. Recognizing that the Church is an invaluable player historically in protecting immigrants from abuses, **Jose Luis Gutierrez** of **Catholic Charities** noted the Church has been a leading organization in advocating for immigrant rights and has encouraged immigrant integration and civic participation in their host country.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

José Luis Gutierrez, Catholic Charities:

The Church has been very vocal in standing up for immigrants. There is a Justice for Immigrants campaign, which is a US conference of Catholic bishops. You can go to www.justiceforimmigrants.org. The bishops have been very outspoken and vocal. The archdiocese, they have the Office of Peace and Justice. I mean, I agree with you. I think the Church can do more, and I think the Church is doing. Mahoney has been very outspoken. The Pope, when he came he came to the US was outspoken about immigrants and how families need to be kept together. So I'm glad to talk with you afterwards, to anyone for that matter.

Fujimoto agreed, repeating that the Church has always been very engaged, and involved through One-LA. He explained that a large part of IAF's base is through the Catholic Churches, and listed places like Holy Rosary, Rosa Lima, La Placita, Saint Thomas and others in South Los Angeles. He noted that the clergy are supportive, including the local bishop, and the archbishop.

Angelica Salas of CHIRLA added that there has been a Faithful Citizenship campaign and credited the Church with the ability to open a dialogue with immigrants about citizenship. To which Robert de la Cruz seconded, pointing to Labor Day mass incorporating topics such as immigration, get-out-the-vote, and civic participation. He noted that the Church can deliver a message and remain non-partisan, and people understand it. De la Cruz reminded the group that alliances were not always explicit but always necessary.

De la Cruz concurred and noted a Cesar Chavez mass that is a collaboration of labor

unions and faith-based groups among others. He discussed leaflets with messages that immigrants often receive as they enter or exit such a mass, and explained he learned from the Farm Workers Union that it is difficult to separate the Church, Labor, and community organizations. The work they did together in the 60s may not have been called coalition work, but there was always some degree of interdependence.

Local grassroots organizing is also useful for state-wide coalitions like **Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV) for which Nancy Berlin is Executive Committee Chair**. Berlin gave some background on this relatively new coalition, which is not solely focused on the Latino immigrant population but emphasizes a multi-ethnic approach. MIV builds on existing family and community bonds, and as Berlin describes, reaches into the “nooks and crannies” of grassroots groups and uses political educational tools to empower immigrants.

Nancy Berlin, Executive Committee Chair,
Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV)

Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote:

Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, California is a collaborative project. It is a multi-ethnic coalition of immigrant organizations and antipoverty groups working to mobilize the immigrant vote. We started in 2002 in San Francisco and then by 2004 we had gone state-wide. And our collaborative is composed of six organizations state-wide who form the backbone of Mobilize the Immigrant Vote and who form the infrastructure to make it work. Because a very, very large part of the work that we do is done through our collaborative partners almost as volunteers who serve as most of our staff. It's in northern California, the Bay

Area Immigrant Rights Coalition, PILA, which is Partnership for Immigration and Leadership and Action, SIREN in San Jose. And then here is CHIRLA, the Korean Resource Center and my organization the California Partnership.

Reaching the Grassroots Nooks and Crannies: One of the things that I think we add to the mix when you listen to the other groups that we've just heard from, is the focus on the immigrant vote has been on the smaller grassroots community groups that we find in all of our communities, who are reaching really into the grassroots, into the nooks and crannies of our communities to make sure that our immigrant communities are not only registered to vote and mobilized for elections but that we do the kinds of political education that will enable communities to be better informed voters and more motivated to actually get out and vote.

Multi-ethnic Emphasis: Our emphasis on being a multiethnic coalition is a very important piece of what we do. I think it's pretty obvious in Los Angeles, but our effort at being multiethnic is so that we don't live in isolation, not one of our communities. If you go into our neighborhoods, if you go into our schools, we really are a state of immigrants. And the kinds of issues that our immigrant communities face, there are more commonalities in our communities than not. There is the commonality of oppression and alienation that we find in communities, but I think there's also a commonality in the kinds of community and mutuality that we find. It's the idea that, especially for new immigrants, the bonds of family, community, and church are really important. And we want Mobilize the Immigrant Vote to build on the infra-

structure that is already there in the communities but also make sure we're reaching out to anybody that would count.

In this spirit of inclusion, MIV also makes sure to take into account opinions and influence of immigrants that are not eligible to vote. Berlin explained that this approach widens the net for beneficiaries of MIV's political education and creates opportunities for building skills and leadership beyond election season.

The Value of Non-voters: We want to engage all of the stakeholders in elections and this has been mentioned a little, but I want to talk about it more explicitly. So we are not only reaching out to likely voters. And we're not only reaching out to unlikely voters. But we're actually reaching out to non-voters as well—people who are not eligible to vote at all. Why do we do that? Because often times those people are the trusted members in their communities or in their families. So even though they can't vote, if they are motivated and they get the information, they will pass it on within their families and their churches and their communities. So those people are just as important to us as the likely or the maybe voters.

Political Education: We spend a lot of time on political education. We want to make sure that our communities know why their voting, what their voting for, that they are informed on the issues, that are critical in their communities, so their votes really count and make a difference in their communities. We don't think it's responsible or very good organizing to just get people out to vote.

Between-cycle electoral organizing: What we're interested in is what we call a

movement building electoral organizing. Yes, we want our communities to register to vote. Yes, we want them to get out and vote. But we want to go beyond that. We want to make sure that the work that we do is linked to the broader missions of our community organizations and fosters the work that they are already doing. As a result of that, our program runs year-round every year, election or no election. In the in-between cycles, as we did in 2007, we keep our programs going to make sure that our communities are building their skills and building leadership. So that in important election years, folks are ready to go and they have already put together the committees and infrastructure they need to carry out their election work.

[In 2007] we ran our first ever between-cycle electoral organizing training program. We recruited community groups to work with us. I think we had 28 community groups across the state who worked with us in these six regions. We did the hard-skills kind of training, like, how you do a precinct walk, or the science of numbers.

Including all stakeholders would appear to be an ideal approach, but it is not free of challenges. Berlin discussed techniques to keep communities united, which means rather than avoiding difficult issues, take them head-on and prioritize fostering informed and educated voters.

Facing Wedge Issues: We talked about how [to] talk about the issues that divide our community, those wedge issues, not just immigration but some really difficult ones for us like reproductive rights, same-sex marriage. We wanted to provide safe space to talk about controversial issues be-

cause they're important in our communities, but they sometimes get ignored in an effort to keep us all united. Our thinking was you can't really be united and you can't really be informed and educated voters in our community if we can talk about those issues and how we feel and how we're going to vote. So we tackled them straight on.

Why Our Communities Don't Vote: What keeps us from getting out there in the first place? The kind of fear in our communities, especially right now keeps people away from the poles. The lack of information, about the voting process itself for first-time voters but also feeling not informed enough about the issues or confident enough to feel like you could go into the voting booth and vote correctly.

[There is] disillusionment and malice that a lot of our communities feel, like it doesn't make a difference, Why would I go vote anyway? Our community organizations talk about that so when they go into the communities, they find ways to overcome the kind of disillusionment that exists in all of our communities.

Berlin listed resources to battle social and political factors that discourage immigrant communities from voting, such as electoral material in various languages, references to immigrant rights that fit in the palm of your hand, and a voter guide that reflects platform issues of the communities of immigrant voters in California. These and other tools address inadequacies of official political campaign material and are among MIV's efforts to incorporate immigrant voices and votes in decisions that directly affect them.

Multi-lingual Materials: We have made an effort to provide materials in as

many languages as we have the capacity to do. Which in the last [election] cycle, and I think this is true of this cycle, too, is English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. And so this reaches most of the communities that we work in. There are a couple exceptions. My organization, for example, works with the Hmong community in Fresno, and it doesn't really reach them, but we're trying.

Rights in the Palm of Your Hand: We have voter rights palm cards, small cards that go over your basic rights as voters so people can take these to the polls with them and feel like they know what to do if they're encountering a problem. It also includes the voting days and has a hotline number on it.

Voter Tool-kit: We produce a fairly detailed voter tool-kit that has all the kinds of information that you would need to run a get-out-the-vote or voter registration campaign in your communities, all of which are available on our Web site.

Voter Driven Voter Guide: The way we produce our voter guide is really unique. Our six collaborative groups could just get together and write it and that would be it. But we really want to be sure that we hear from the communities that we're working in and make sure that it reflects what's important to them and how they feel about these issues.

The collaborative groups look, for instance, at measures that are going to be going to be on the ballot. They pick the four or five that look like they're going to be key for immigrant communities. We produce pros and cons information and then we take that out to the communities. We do these issue analysis forums. At the forums we invite everybody, all of

our groups, all of our neighbors. The community debates it, what do we think, back and forth. We take a straw-poll vote, how do you feel about this. We do them in our six regions. We bring it back. We compile all that information and go, Ok, what do we want to put in the voter guide? And we use what the people told us out in these forums as the basis of the pros and cons that we write up. Sometimes we take positions, sometimes we don't.

Developing a Platform: For the first time this year [we decided to] develop a platform. What our groups also told us is they didn't want to just go out and be part of MIV for informational purpose but they wanted us to say what we stood for. So we took a draft platform with our six regions. We hashed it out with people. We sent it to our ally organizations. And we wrote up a platform that covers everything from immigration, worker justice, healthcare, worker rights, and more. To really try to give more of a base to who we are.

Turning to a straight-line assessment of main objectives of organizing, **Angélica Salas, Executive Director** of the **Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)** asked the group about a recent raid on a large meatpacking plant of mostly Guatemalan workers in Iowa. The Iowa raid was different from previous raids in that the workers were sent to jail on federal identity theft and fraud charges for fraudulent documents. Furthermore, it was a voluntary arbitration in exchange for not jailing them for the full two years. Her remarks focused on lessons learned as a civic leader of her organization and in partnership with social justice organizations. Starting with the example of the Iowa raid, Salas noted and how that and other ex-

amples reaffirm the reasons we fight for immigrant rights.

Angélica Salas, Executive Director,
Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)

Power is the Bottom Line: I feel like it is so important for us to understand why are we doing this, and really to understand that we have been fighting for many, many years, and I think it has been decades in terms of the fight for immigration reform and what Roberto has been talking about with Ken and Nancy, many people who have fought for immigrant rights, for worker justice for many, many years. So the question is why haven't we won yet? Why are we still dealing with criminal charges for people who were just working in a plant that was actually mistreating them? They are the ones going to jail while the owner of the plant is scott-free and in fact is collaborating to get information to put them in jail.

The question is it is about power. That's what I learned from One-LA. It's about power. It's about we have not yet had the power to actually change these conditions. And from our perspective as an organization, the immigrant rights organizations don't have the power yet. They have not been able to move, and I would say there's a lot of power within the community, but we haven't been able to organize that power in order to make a difference so those kinds of situations or situations here locally in Los Angeles don't continue to happen.

To emphasize her point that it all comes down to power, Salas described a key lesson from her experience organizing around the driver's license bill in California about five years ago. She underscored that without elec-

toral power and the ability to hold representatives accountable, immigrant organizing has its limits.

Lessons: A lesson that I learned very well as part of the 2003 loss with the driver's license here in California. When one week we were celebrating the signature of a driver's license bill, which we all worked, and basically, in less than three weeks we had lost that campaign. And we had lost a driver's license bill. There are a lot of people around this room that were part of this. It was a very difficult loss, but it was also a lesson learned.

It was that immigrant organizations needed to get engaged in electoral work. We needed to do the organizing, we needed to do the electoral work, the community education, we needed to do all of the rest of the things we were doing, every single piece. But without including electoral power in the mix, then we didn't have, we weren't able to engage the elected officials that were making decisions about people's lives in the same way.

And we learned a lot as CHIRLA. We learned a lot from our friends in the unions, who at that point participated in *Mi Familia Vota* so we were working with them. We also learned a lot from ALERT, from SCOPE AGENDA. We participated in their campaign, which is a community-based organization saying, look we too can be involved in this process, so we engaged in that effort as well as many of the with One-LA.

Immigrant rights organizations have very low capacity around electoral organizing. It doesn't mean that they don't have talented organizers. This is just a piece where there is a decline in the learning curve on this

piece. And we're good community organizers but this is a piece that we need to learn. And it wasn't enough for SEIU to have the power. It wasn't enough for ACORN, these are all organizations that are part of We Are America Alliance, ACORN, NALEO to have the power. These organizations that are the rest of the 14 organizations of the We Are America Alliance at the national level needed to have that capacity.

Lacking sufficient resources to compete with established organizations in GOTV campaigns, Salas has managed to contribute to the effort by encouraging newly naturalized citizens to make the best of their citizenship rights as they walk out of the naturalization ceremonies. CHIRLA works with other immigrant rights organizations to take voter registration opportunities to the same location as naturalization ceremonies, and make sure that immigrants and organizations work with immigrants learn that a precinct walk and phone banking to get out the vote is as important as mass mobilizations.

Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies:

Our program as CHIRLA in 2004 focused on was voter registration. We worked with the LA County registrar, and we lobbied and worked really hard to allow us to go into the naturalization ceremonies and actually partner up with their volunteers in order to register the new citizens. Because if they registered to vote, it is very likely that they are going to participate. Since 2004, we've registered over 50,000 new citizens. And then on Thursday the 22nd, they had the largest naturalization campaign, they had 18,000 who were being sworn in as citizens. We were able to register close to 8,000 people, just on one day.

We worked with the Center for the Study of Los Angeles, CARECEN, and NAKASEC, the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium, and CHIRLA to do a survey of the 2006 LA elections. We found that 31% of the people who voted in the 2006 local election, 31% either marched in 2006 or have a family member who participated in those marches. It was illuminated in saying that people do care. And we need to make sure that we continue to engage them.

From Picket Signs to Precinct Packets: We do a lot of direct organizing with immigrant communities. So our coalition is both immigrant rights organizations and we also do individual membership. And so we have committees in what we call the core, the LA core, the San Fernando Valley. And we said to ourselves, how is it that our members, who were working on issues that day laborers or household workers, and immigrant youth, how can they be involved in this part of the work? And how do they see it as connected to all the rest of the organizing that we do every single year? That they see the march, the protest just as important as the knocking on the door. And that they all learn how to do this. What we have been able to do through our committees is teach all our leaders to be what you call precinct captains. They know how to do phone banking. And for this election, for example, in the San Fernando Valley, we've incorporated the micro-solutions workers who were victims of these raids. And now they're doing door knocking.

Door knocking and precinct walking are sworn-by strategies of one of LA's most effective Latino immigrant electoral organizers, **Javier González, Director of Strengthening Our Lives (SOL)**. Gonzalez's approach to

electoral organizing is unique, however, in that he runs a disciplined program and at the same time makes it fun. He pays close attention to every detail including the philosophy behind the work, maximizing the skills of people on his team, and the atmosphere in the workplace and refuses to throw away hard work after an election. This and more are the necessary ingredients not just for successful campaigns, but also to sustain large-scale organizing year-round. His expertise in getting out the vote comes from experience working with unions and from his understanding of rural Mexico.

In an interview prior to the LA meeting, González recalled his days as a political director at SEIU 1877 for Janitors, when they asked him to work on elections. He explained that Labor had begun to move away from the strategy giving contributions to campaigns or to the party apparatus. He pointed out that after the Civil Rights Act and after the White backlash got thick, the Democratic Party became disconnected with civic leaders. Mail and TV and radio became the campaign tool of choice, and González believes that it was taken for granted that anyone organizing was going to be doing it for the Democratic Party. This, among other factors, charged up a new approach to organizing.

Javier Gonzalez, Director, Strengthening Our Lives (SOL)

Organizer Mentality: The coalition and the smoke-filled rooms where everybody fought and got everything hammered out and worked out stopped happening. Along with the growth of the Latino and the Chicano movement and the immigrant rights movement, I think a more organizer mentality started to get involved. And as Latinos post-[Proposition] 187 were regis-

tering to vote and becoming citizens, Labor started reinvesting its money in its own get-out-the-vote apparatus. This is Eliseo Medina, and Miguel Contreras, and Ma Elena Durazo, and Mike Garcia, and other folks getting janitors and hotel workers and stuff like that.

Office Organizing: My whole thing was to build an office that was fun. And I always joke around, you got to be fun, you have to work hard, it's got to be disciplined, it's got to be structured. It's got to be strategic. People don't need to know the strategy, they need to know what their role in the strategy is. We'd always have *pan dulce* [sweet bread] and coffee in the morning, we would have lunch. We would have a surprise at least once a month, you know, we would have *pastel* and cake. We would do funny things, like if people were late, we would lock the door and ridicule them for five minutes. But we would have sort of a popular way of dealing with things. It really came from things that I had seen in the organization, but also my background in sort of rural, Central Mexico, just the way people used humor. People would love it.

They love it because they're using their skills that they developed in Latin America. And it's valued. It's not pushing a broom, or parking a car, or making a bed, which is all honorable work. But if you did two years of accounting school and you've been mopping the lobby of a hotel for fifteen years, and I come to you and say, hey bro, can you do me a favor? We have like 300 paychecks to cut, can you help me calculate some checks? And their eyes light up. They're doing their trade that they haven't done in fifteen years.

Year-round Model: I started telling the people at the people at SEIU, we shouldn't

just put these campaigns away. I started to stay to people, Why do we shut this down? Why do you spend so many hundreds of thousands of dollars to win an election and build an organization and an infrastructure, buy coffee pots and post-its and butcher paper and chairs and tables and then give it all away or throw it all away, which is literally what we would do. I said we could find things to do between elections like voter registration. Actually, and I would push public campaigns to change immigration, perceptions of immigrants. Because it doesn't matter how many voters you are, if everybody else hates you, you have a problem.

Winning Program: You have to have a disciplined program. You have to have a winning program. Otherwise you won't get funding and you'll never do campaigns again. And the people are with you on it. Before, I would work campaigns and nobody would get fired. And I would be like, Dude, that dude's not even working. He's just driving around, screwing around, picking up his kits and taking them home. And everybody knows it so they're going to start doing the same thing. And so we would do all this stuff.

And then we started promoting the people themselves. Whereas it used to be the staff from the unions that would be sort of the managers of the campaigns, eventually, now I try not to use anybody like that because they always want to sneak away and feel a little privileged. But we actually promote the people from within, and we train them on how to use computers, how to do the reporting, how to tabulate the results, how to implement strategy and understand the strategy a little bit because you, and how to do a check-in, how to manage

people, how to set daily goals, how to discipline yourself, how to track your time, how to set goals over a period, how reach benchmarks, how to make a daily plan. And we teach them how to do that stuff.

And that's why people really like SOL because they can walk in an office, and honestly, it looks like it should be raided by the INS. But these people are beating any number of people. You know we just did, we won the race for Kevin de Leon, Jose Solorio. We took out four school board members in Fresno, two council members in Maywood. We did an assembly race in Orange County and Senate race in Orange, we won all these races.

Winning elections is not only dependent on the way the get-out-the-vote campaign is organized but also on the commitment from the people doing the footwork. González recognizes that without a strong work-ethic and dedication from the people that work for him, he would not have the success that he does.

Translating Immigrant Work Ethic into Political Passion: We take all the vibrant, spirited immigrant work ethic, with all its passion and compassion and dedication and commitment, and put it into politics. And just like every other industry, you take it over. Because there's nobody that's going to work fifteen hours a day to elect a school board candidate and go home and be proud about it. These guys just want a good victory party, a Thank You, and a pat on the back and maybe meet the candidate.

We tell everybody: Knock on the door, say, Hi, my name's Javier. I'm a janitor. I work in that building downtown. And I'm here to talk to you about who I'm support-

ing for City Council. And you got 'em. Because most of us get our information from our friends, our family, and our co-workers—that is, people we trust. So your job at the door is to win over their trust. And then their appearances; you have these women from Oaxaca to El Salvador to Colombia to some Chicanos, you know? We try to inspire them and talk to them and train them. We spend a good amount of time training them and we say be natural. Tell them why you're there. Yes, we're paying you, this is a job. But if this job means a little bit more to you, then explain that to people. Explain why you're doing it. And if they say, Oh, but you're getting paid. Say, Look, I could be flipping burgers, making money, but I'm working ten hours a day, walking four miles trying to get people elected because we need to change something in our communities and we need your support to do it. That's what we teach people to say. And so we have an approach, we have a philosophy.

In sum, the philosophy behind SOL's get-out-the-vote campaigns is to value the people who are working to make change, and hold representatives accountable. The power to make change resides in the hard work of getting people elected that will work for the community.

WHERE DOES THE SLEEPING GIANT SLEEP?

Coming full circle to discuss a theme that welled up during the marches of 2006, Rigoberto Rodriguez, Assistant Professor at California State University, Long Beach asked where the sleeping giant sleeps. He referred to his own experience having tried to organize

Mexican immigrant communities since 1988 in what he described as “the Deep South—Orange County.” Noting that one out of every two new immigrants are moving into suburban areas and rapidly urbanizing the suburban areas across the country, he was curious about strategies that organizers use that may be differentiated by the space and mobilization.

Rodriguez further noted that decentralized cities don’t have an 800 pound LA gorilla or Chicago or New York; are politically conservative, and aggressively politically conservative spaces, where even the faith-based organizations are the site of the anti-immigrant discourse. This, he emphasized, is in a context of weak unions in those areas, that there is a lack in the level of influence in mobilization compared to LA or in more traditional urban areas; and a very weak advocacy infrastructure—there are no CHIRLAs to speak of in Orange County, and those that have tried to play that role tend to fluctuate over time. He went on to note that these areas use local cities as a site for a new set of policy initiatives that are anti-immigrant—zoning out day labor sites, and resource centers; prohibiting landowners from renting to undocumented immigrants, etc.; deputizing INS agents as city officials. And even Latino elected officials being at the forefront of this very politically conservative discourse, and who are actively organizing immigrant communities but not through a political consciousness that builds a long term constituency. These are folks that may end up

voting for Prop 187 in the future if there were to be another one.

Roberto de la Cruz answered that the sleeping giant is in California, Nevada, Arizona, and that he and members of the Ya Es Hora coalition and other allies are targeting now, also including New Mexico, all around Texas, Illinois, and then New York, New Jersey, Florida, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. These are states where the Latino population is most significant, percentages are the highest, and where there is a sense that organizers can turn out the vote.

An important objective of organizing or waking the sleeping giant is to address a perception about power and inability to break through. **Angelica Salas** explained the idea, that in Orange County or in San Bernardino County, Latinos are never going to be able to achieve anything politically. However, she pointed out that municipal races seem more accessible, whether it was the school board or maybe it was the city council member. Generally, the race is won literally by very few votes, perhaps 200. With that in mind, the psychology that there’s no way that one person can have a say in this government begins to fall apart. She emphasized that organizers can tell constituents that it is a myth that decisions take thousands and thousands of votes. She suggested showing voters demographics and examples like San Bernardino where city council seats have been won by 300 votes and they will begin to believe.

BINATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: Balancing Acts of Diaspora Politics

Gaspar Rivera-Salgado moderated panel presentations and discussions on binational civic engagement. He first made a note that as immigrants, activists in diaspora politics are often misunderstood political actors because they have to work in various contexts. He underscored that they work not only in different political contexts in the United States, but also in the context of the culture of origin. Rivera-Salgado encouraged panelists shared their views on civic participation from a binational perspective.

Rivera introduced four organizers working in diaspora politics. As a way to begin to understand the complexities that binational political actors face, panelists shared experiences and strategies for simultaneously addressing issues that affect their community members here and abroad. In brief, leaders from the **Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB)**, the **National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (NALACC)** and the **Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California (FZCSC)** pointed out that one main objective is to improve the lives of people no matter where they are. Much of their organizing addresses the root causes of migration like U.S. and international

policies that perpetuate the displacement of people and undermine development in poor regions around the world. In addition, a former representative from the Mexican state of **Michoacan's Migrant Affairs Office** shared his experience as the first "Migrant Congressional Representative" and the dilemmas Mexican politicians face with large portions of the country's population living abroad. Excerpts from these panel presentations and discussions underscore binational activism's invaluable role in Latino migrant civic engagement.

Odilia Romero the Women's Coordinator for the **Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations (FIOB)** shared her experience, citing multiple factors that determine indigenous migrants' approach to fighting for human rights, worker rights, social and cultural equality for communities living in Los Angeles, California and those in Oaxaca, Mexico.

Odilia Romero, Women's Coordinator,
Indigenous Front of Binational Organizations
(FIOB)

Binational Mobilizing to Beat Barriers of Indigenous Migrants: FIOB promotes civic participation in many different ways

because we deal with a population that is not the regular Mexican citizen you find every day or the regular Latino. We usually come into the US without speaking Spanish or English. We have very limited access. We often face discrimination as indigenous people by the own Mexican community or by the own Latino community when we migrant either to Pico-Union, Fresno, Santa Maria. It doesn't matter where we go, there is discrimination and the language barrier.

In the sixteen years of existence in the *Frente* [Front], we have attacked all these problems in many different ways, and that's why we are creating leaders within our community and by allowing them to access this information by providing workshops, to access health services, to have interpreting rights in the courts, and different places you have to deal with when you come to the US.

We have an interpreters program that has been very successful, to the point that the Mexican Consulate calls us if they don't have one in the Mexican Consulates nation wide. We have Mixteco from Guerrero, Puebla and Oaxaca, Purepecha from Michoacán. We have variations of Zapoteco and Triqui.

Alliances: The FIOB has a good relationship with the American Friends Service Committee. With the *Federación Zacatecana* [Zacatecan Federation], and Angelica has been very supportive at CHIRLA. We have worked with other organizations and the FIOB has allies be it CARECEN, be it CHIRLA, be it, the American Friends Service Committee.

Ms. Romero continued to explain binational activism, and gave examples of pro-

testing anti-immigrant initiatives emanating from Washington and a tyrannical autocrat in Oaxaca. She noted that her community organizes for political rights and economic stability on both sides of the border. She not only listed activities such binational protests and remittance-funded development programs, but also underscored that allies both sides of the border is essential, particularly in the context of violently oppressive regimes.

Being Binational Makes for a Bigger

Challenge. One of the things we do, for example, during the Sensenbrenner bill, the FIOB went to rallies and marches, informed communities here about what was going on and the policies they were trying to implement. The FIOB in Oaxaca also had rallies and informed the communities there about what was going on with the Sensenbrenner bill. We take binational action every time there is something going on.

Another example is during the repression of Ulises Ruiz Ortiz the Governor of Oaxaca when the violence started, FIOB-California immediately responded with the support of many organizations here in Los Angeles and state-wide, which is the case of Angela. She was at one of the FIOB rallies when she was with CARECEN because of the alliance that was created in the immediate response to support the teachers and human rights advocates in Oaxaca. And that happened from San Diego to the San Joaquin Valley.

The FIOB also has economic development programs through what's called micro-credit unions within the communities that are being taught how best to use remittances that they get from the US, but also through the arts and crafts project that now we sell here in LA or in California.

Contrary to mainstream opinions that economically strapped migrants are a drag on the US economy, Romero made sure to point out that her community has made significant cultural and economic contributions to the US.

Oaxacan's Contribution to the US:

We contribute politically. We encourage the vote. We've had *campañas de ciudadanía* [citizenship campaigns] up in the San Joaquin Valley. We encourage people to be politically active. We also see immigration as part of our lives here. There is something else besides us wanting to come to the U.S. When we come, we don't come with the idea of getting all these benefits that people promise. We have to have residency to obtain these benefits. A lot of Oaxacans don't go to a doctor, they go to a traditional medicine man. We don't have access to all these benefits that people talk about.

And I think we have to be actively involved in both places. In the case of Oaxaca, the repression that is happening right now is going to cause more migration. NAFTA, and other things, cause us to come to the U.S. But when we do come, there are a lot of barriers, the language barrier, the cultural barrier.

What we do contribute [economically and culturally], for example, when you go to Pico Boulevard, you see all these Zapotec restaurants. [They contribute] to our financial system here in the US. We just had another Oaxacan organization host a *guelaguetza* for two days at the Sports Arena. It costs a lot of money to rent the Sports Arena. We're not talking \$10,000, we're talking over \$40,000. And that's an economic contribution that we make.

Reiterating the role of migrants in the fight for rights in their home countries and

in the US, **Ángela Sanbrano**, of the **National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (NALACC)** explained that advocacy from immigrants themselves are necessary building blocks for binational institutions. She outlined various policies such as decriminalizing immigrants in Mexico, NAFTA, and others that NALACC addresses by working with advocacy groups in Mexico and Central America. Sanbrano further discussed how NALACC works not only works with allies but maximizes migrants' increased economic and political influence from remittance money to educate legislators about short-sighted proposals like the Merida Initiative.

Building Binational Institutions:

All of these institutions that are being formed right now is a direct result of the advocacy of the immigrants, of the *mexicanos* [Mexicans] advocating and pushing for policies for their government to look at the issues that effect migrant families both within Mexico, but also in the United States.

As NALACC, we're working with civic organizations in Guatemala, Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Brazil on policies dealing with human rights and economic, labor, and environmental justice, and trade policies. And as I said, we've been working on this issues of decriminalizing immigrants in Mexico. We also are working to try to impact to try to have the government review NAFTA and what is the impact that NAFTA is having on migration because we know that a lot of the *campesinos* [farmers] have been displaced as a result of the agriculture being basically decimated in Mexico as a result of NAFTA. So we're asking for analysis and a review of the impact that NAFTA is having on the commu-

nities that are sending a lot of the migrants to the United States.

Migrant Economic Influence: Immigrants have a tremendous amount of influence if we are, just like we do here in the United States, if we are really able to understand the potential political power that we have, given our economic contributions and economic power that we have the same power vis-à-vis our countries of origin. In many of our countries of origin the *remesas* [remittances] are the second largest GPA income that a lot of the countries of origin have. Immigrants send over \$40 billion just to Mexico and Central America last year. In terms of the GPA in Honduras *remesas* [remittances] that Hondurans send are 25.6% of the budget. In El Salvador it's 18.2% of the budget, Nicaragua 12.2%, Guatemala 10.3%. Mexico is smaller because Mexico's budget is larger, but the *mexicanos* [Mexicans] send over \$23 billion dollars. Imagine, that's a lot of money.

Advocating for Policy Change: One of the things we found out in this last NALACC delegation is that the immigration reform legislation that is being debated in Mexico is to decriminalize the immigrants that are undocumented. Because it's a crime to be in Mexico without legal status. So they are actually debating the bill in Mexico. And it looks like it may pass. But of course we have to continue to work on that.

We're also concerned about the Plan Merida (see commentary in the Washington Post)² because it's not clear as to what level Mexico and the border with Mexico and United States is going to be militarized even more because of the policies that the Plan Merida includes. And a lot of what is in the Plan Merida our own Congress here in the

United States, they don't even know what is included in the Plan Merida and much less the Mexican legislation. So we analyze the proposals and then we make sure that we meet with legislators in Mexico to bring up these issues.

Sanbrano noted that her experience with binational organizing was not without its challenges. She pointed out that there is a dearth of resources to support the type of work that NALACC spearheads and other factors such as party politics that can be a roadblock rather than an avenue for transnational civic organizing. On a positive note, she encouraged more education and understanding so that US allies will accept binational and transnational advocacy as a reality in the global context that exists today.

Obstacles to Binational Organizing:

Some of the obstacles we face in binational civic engagement work is obviously lack of resources. There are not a lot of resources for working on transnational and binational kind of work. There's just not too much interest in terms of the foundations and the funding sources.

The other is, which I think we all know, party politics. The different parties in Mexico, sometimes they get in the way of organizing what is more of an independent transnational civic movement. We seem to have difficulty separating civic engagement from party politics. And I think it's an art and it's not easy to do, but it's possible to do and it's something we have to work on to be very effective in our advocacy work.

I believe that in United States there is still a lack of understanding among our allies of the importance of binational and transnational advocacy and civic engage-

ment. And the sooner we understand that we live in a globalized transnational world, the easier it is going to be for us to be more effective in stopping the forced migration to the United States.

To further clarify the role of binational activism, **Martha Jiménez, Secretary of Culture** of the **Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC)** presented strategies the Zacatecan Federation uses to organize on both sides of the border. Jiménez underscored advantages of migrant communities maintaining home-country culture and tradition, and that this has been a basic component of the Federation's successful record raising money and fundamental for their model development programs like Three-for-One (3X1).

Martha Jiménez, Secretary of Culture, Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC)

Organizing Around Culture and Tradition: The way we organize is by mentoring our culture and tradition. We want to make sure that if we live here, we do not want to lose who we are or the language we speak. For instance, I can tell you of a recent fundraiser that we had of a member of *Clubes* of *Nochistlanses* were 18 clubs from the region of Nochistlan. They have the highest number of immigration rates within Zacatecas. And we bring the mariachis from our town and the Lady of El Rosario. We target all the different migratory circuits throughout the United States so that they know that the *Día de Nochistlán* is going to take place for three days in the month of April. In two days we were able to fundraise \$58,000.

This money automatically gets matched in Mexico because *el Programa 3X1* [Three-

for-One Program] was not created by the Mexican government. They want to take it away from us. But it was created by the *zacatecanos* who said, You know it's not fair. How come only the state and the local government is responding? Let's have the federal government match our program. So we went and lobbied before the *Secretaria de Hacienda* [Ministry of the Finance] and the Mexican Congress and we were able to get funding sources for the program.

A Model Migrant Made Matching Program: After that, when Vicente Fox came into power, we said it's not fair that only *zacatecanos* [Zacatecans] are benefiting from such a great co-development project. We want for every *mexicano* [Mexican] to take part in this program. And that would require for us to create a rainbow coalition come together with *mexicanos* [Mexicans] from all over the United States so that they can also be part of this effort. And President Vicente Fox loved the idea of institutionalizing the 3X1 Program, but what happened was that he tried to change the name of our program *Iniciativa Ciudadana* [Citizen Initiative]. And we went fought, and we said that's not what we want. We want to have *un rostro humano* [a human face]. We don't want to be just imaginary migrants without a human face. So we gave him a hard fight and to this day there are 26 Mexican states working on the 3X1 Program. And it only gets better because Zacatecans send on a yearly basis between \$70 and \$75 million to do between 370 to 400 social infrastructure projects. These projects wouldn't be done if it weren't for the fresh seed money that Zacatecans and other Mexicans send.

Our 3X1 Program is being observed by the United Nations as a model of co-devel-

opment where other nations want to use it. We have traveled all over the world to talk about the 3X1 Program and this year this is a new project that can bring about social justice while creating jobs for the communities.

In addition to Zacatecan Federation's success with their co-development program, Jiménez described her organization's solidarity with organizations working to engage Latino migrants in civic affairs. She noted that the Federation actively promotes citizenship and collaborates with other LA-based organizations to bridge gaps between new immigrants and information about and access to workshops, ESL classes, voter registration and opportunities to vote.

Activities in the US: In terms of what are we doing here, well here, we have the duty to ensure that everyone has access to US citizenship completion form workshops. So we don't just work to empower the Zacatecan, the Mexican, the Latino community, we want to make sure that we are bridges to everyone. So by working with the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and three other major law firms and NALEO, we're able to provide citizenship workshops five times a year, where sixteen different languages are spoken, and people become empowered. So after we do the workshops we want to make sure those people transition to really becoming US citizens. At the *Federación Zacatecana* [Zacatecan Federation] we have the *Plaza Comunitaria Zacatecana* [Zacatecan Community Plaza] where the Mexican government offers a big scholarship so that we can provide an open space where people come to take citizenship classes, ESL classes,

and also we have a mechanism where the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* [Ministry of Public Education] in Mexico works in conjunction with us so that Latino migrants can complete their elementary school, their junior high school, and high school at the *Federación Zacatecana* [Zacatecan Federation] via a special articulation agreement.

We also work with the churches and with the labor unions, for example, in order to mobilize the pressure to get President Bush to start thinking about creating a legalization program. We gathered 25,000 signatures, which was part of the one million campaign that CHIRLA and the labor unions had. So I think it is very empowering that we work with all these organizations because by ourselves we cannot do much.

And we're at a point where we want to create a new *Secretaría* [Department] under the *Federación Zacatecana* [Zacatecan Federation] where we do civic engagement. And for that we need to come up with some funding sources. So we are going to tap into our professors here so that they can help us.

Finally, we decided that it's not fair that as we get people excited about becoming a US citizen but we don't offer a mechanism where they can go out and register to vote. So we created a voter registration program called *Nuevas Voces Salgan a Votar*/ New Voices Go Out and Vote. And it's especially geared toward people that applied under IRCA. And in the past five years we have registered about 3,000 people. And we do this working in conjunction with the churches in the perimeter, the organizations, the schools, and other non-profit organizations.

In the binational context, activists are faced with the challenge of taking into account migrants' past political experience and knowledge. This may be one reason activists like **Jesús Martínez-Saldaña, former Director of the Office of Migrant Affairs, State of Michoacán, Mexico** have a broad perspective of civic engagement. Martínez-Saldaña joined the panel to share his first-hand experience as an official migrant representative in for the state of Michoacan. He suggested expanding the definition of civic engagement, in part because fraud and violent repression are present in the minds of many migrants upon arriving to the U.S. He explained that this type of mindset is not necessarily static, however, and noted that while there has been progress to engage migrants in politics in the US, there is still more to do.

Jesús Martínez-Saldaña, former Director of the Office of Migrant Affairs, State of Michoacán, Mexico

Defining Civic Engagement: When we talk about civic engagement we should consider from the start what we mean by civic engagement. The panel has done a very good job of pointing out what immigrants have in mind and what immigrants have been doing, whether in Michoacán, Zacatecas or wherever else, haven't been thinking about civic engagement as in the electoral term or limit the conception, which many of us in academia here in the US perceive civic engagement. They have been talking about all kinds of different types of community, individual representation both in Mexico and the US.

Progress on Engaging Mexican Migrants in Politics: One of the challenges we find dealing with *michoacanos* is that when you talk to them about politics or becoming

involved in the electoral arena, the first thing they say is, We don't want to have anything to do with it, because Mexican politics and Mexican political culture has alienated them to the point where they don't want to have anything to do with politics. So even persuading them to talk about politics is difficult enough. To go from that point to actually get them to organize and to get them register to vote and to get them to vote are a series of steps that are increasingly difficult. So the achievements that have been made by the organizations that have participated so far I think are very impressive but we also know it's insufficient. None of us are satisfied with what has been achieved so far. That's one of the reasons we have this conference, to learn so we can make even more significant progress.

Understanding the Migrant Mindset: To adequately understand and deal with the immigrant population, we need to think in binational or transnational terms. We have to take into account the mentality of the immigrants. And if you go back to the research that was conducted by people like Miguel Gambio, an anthropologist back in 1929 and 1930s to the most contemporary immigration researchers, they all point out that in the case of Mexican immigrants who are predominately here for economic reasons, the major objective they have with migrating to the US is they want to go back to Mexico. They want to earn money in the US to go back to Mexico.

So if we think in terms of the lifeline of the immigrants, where there is an individual or a social group, then their relationship to the US may obviously increase over time. If they get married here and they have kids and everything else, then their mentality is going to shift over time. But at least for a

number of years, the mentality, the major concerns are going to be with Mexico—with the home community where the parents, where the children, where the brothers, where the grandparents, where the ties to the land, to the culture, to the civic traditions have transformed them into what they are. And what we heard right now is they are very proud of being what they are, whether it's *oaxaqueños* [Oaxacans] whether it's *mixtecos* [Mixtecs], *zapotecos* [Zapotecs], *zacatecanos* [Zacatecans], whatever. We need to recognize that identity of the immigrants and that mentality that helps to influence the way they connect to the United States.

Unfortunately, part of the problem we have faced as immigrants in the US is that the policies and programs that have been developed to try to engage us in civic affairs, haven't always taken that into account and have been very narrowly defined—all in terms of getting us to naturalize and getting us to vote. If we would have the incentive to become naturalized, or to vote, because in Mexico they also ruined our democratic ideals, then it's going to take a lot of effort to get us to do that.

In this sense, low rates of naturalization among Mexican migrants in past years may in part have had something to do narrow definitions of civic engagement and the fact that many Mexican migrants had little faith in democracy as Martinez-Saldaña described. On the positive side, he discussed the impacts migrants have had changing the way government responds to them and the advantage of having pro-migrant government leaders as was the case in the state of Michoacan.

Impacts of Migrant Binational Advocacy: One impact that migrants have

had is transforming the way that government responds to them in Michoacán. They have done this in several ways: *michoacano* clubs and federations, like in the case of other groups, only represent a minute proportion of the overall Michoacán population. Very few are actively organized in clubs and federations. But that minute percentage has developed a very interesting and impressive trajectory of organizing and contributing to their home community. Programs like the 3X1, or 2X1 or 1X1 that they originated. [These programs] may have been supported by government officials initially because they wanted to coop the immigrants.

We [in Michoacan] had the good fortune of having a government that was very pro-migrant. Lázaro Cárdenas [Batel] was governor of Michoacán 2002-2008. He had been a federal legislator, a *diputado* at the federal level. Since he was in Congress, he had been voting pro-migrant policies. When he became governor, one of the first things that he did was to promote pro-migrant policies in Michoacán, and he included the migrants in a governing council that was created to do that. As a result, several innovative policies were promoted in the State of Michoacán.

One of those policies was the creation of the State Migrant Affairs Office that during the course of his administration went from a very minute, almost non-existent office to an *instituto* that was serving approximately 30,000 people a year in Michoacán, which is an incredible amount for any government agency of that level.

In addition to the transformation of the state government response, Michoacán also did something that, as far as I know, no other state is doing. They began to promote

the creation of municipal level migrant affairs offices. By the time I left the state government of Michoacán, we had 70 municipalities out of 113 that exist in Michoacán to create migrant affairs offices that would be centralized and also expand the governmental attention to immigrant affairs that would serve migrants but also their families and their communities. And the migrants were actively involved in promoting this with the state government and with the municipal governments. That is something that cannot be explained without the participation of the immigrants, that's a very effective way.

Immigrant identity that is being developed on their part is also moving [immigrants] to see themselves in other ways. For that, I think Angela's participation here and the involvement in NALACC has been very important because some *michoacanos* [migrants from Michoacán] have become actively involved with organizations like NALACC.

Martinez-Saldaña added to this note that participation in organizations that build on immigrant identity strengthens immigrants' social and political capital across regions and across the globe. Estimates of the number of migrants in the world are more than 190 million. They are an easily mobilized population but rarely enjoy full rights where they live, and are therefore one of the most vulnerable to civil, labor, and human rights abuses. In Martinez-Saldaña's view, bringing together migrants from different regions of the world and making sure they are informed of their rights encourages collaboration and alliances that empower migrants to advocate for themselves.

Developing Migrant Alliances Across the Globe: The *michoacano* migrants [from Michoacán] were spearheading an effort, for not just a continental conference, but an international summit of migrant communities. We had a lot of people come from Mexico, from Michoacán, obviously, from Central America and South America, but also from Europe and the Middle East. And to have the capacity to draw those people to Michoacán and help what I think was a very successful conference, it also transforms our mentality and our identity. We're not just *michoacano* migrants or *mexicano* migrants, but we also have things in common with migrants from other parts of the world. And that ends up developing, I think, a political agenda that opens the door to other types of efforts, of campaigns, of collaboration, of alliances, at the national, binational, and international level. And I think that's part of the political development that takes place among leaders of immigrant groups.

Migrants Advocating for Their Own Interests: I subscribe to the theory that the best immigrant is a well-informed immigrant. And if we have a well-informed immigrant that knows about her or his rights, interests, then that person is going to be better prepared to defend her/his rights and interests, whether it's in relation to the homeland or in relation to the country where they are residing. So our efforts should be focus greatly on how to strengthen and promote that information that immigrants can have on helping the individual and their organizations become stronger so they can defend their rights and their interests as they perceive them.

WHY ARE THEY MARCHING HERE AND NOT THERE?

From the perspective of activists that have been working with the Church, Jose Luis Gutierrez clarified that because groups or individuals are Catholic does not mean they are pro-immigrant. He noted that some Catholics, especially in wealthier areas, are very anti-immigrant. And one of their questions is what is the government of Mexico doing. Why are the people from Mexico doing all the things they do? Why don't they organize and march over there? And I think you have shed some light and opened my eyes to what is going on. I keep hearing migrants, but I don't hear Mexican citizens. What are Mexican citizens doing in Mexico, as an example, to fight for number one to have better opportunities?

In response to the idea that Mexicans are not politically active until they reach the United States, Martínez-Saldaña cited Nora Hamilton's analysis of Mexican politics in the 1930s. Her work studied the nationalization of oil among other things, and she wrote that the one thing that fails the Mexican government is commitment to democracy. I think it is

still a democracy in transition. Mexico is not yet a democracy we would like it to be. But there is more involvement more civic activism, immigrant organizations than there has been at any other stage in Mexican history. And Mexico will hopefully be better ten, twenty years down the line.

Also addressing the question about the perception that Mexicans are not marching in Mexico, Sanbrano noted that many ask the same thing—Lou Dobbs, for one. She explained that average American does not understand the impact that U.S. foreign policy has on Latin America, and have no idea that it often results in more people coming to the United States. That's why she recommends analyzing NAFTA to find out if it truly created the jobs they said it was going to create. Most Americans are not aware that the US was funding and training the military that was waging war against the people of Central America in the 80s and failed to connect that fact to an influx of Central Americans to the US during the same decade. Sanbrano pointed out the experts and activists have a lot of educating to do to explain forced migration to the average American and the mainstream media.

FINAL REMARKS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

THE CONTEXT OF THE LOS ANGELES CONVENING

Fox described the broader project that was launched in 2005 in Washington, DC hosted by the Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The event brought together activists, particularly migrant leaders, from across a wide range of sectors, a wide range of regions in the US, and a wide range of regions of origin to try to take stock of the trends in terms of civic and political engagement locally, nationally, and binationally. The organizers produced a report, *No Longer Invisible/ No mas invisibles*, available at, www.wilsoncenter.org/migrantparticipation, that took into account the spring mobilizations of 2006, and still, as Fox pointed out, merely covers the tip of the iceberg. Further, he pointed to questions that the mobilizations and structural issues of the U.S. political system.

Jonathan Fox

Lessons from the 2006 Marches:

Thinking about some of the lessons and impacts of the wave of mobilizations, one of the puzzles was, one of the slogans was: *¡Hoy marchamos, mañana votamos!* How do

we know whether that slogan was a prediction? Wishful thinking? A threat? An empty threat? Really the *moneda estaba en el aire*, we really didn't know what was going to happen. Then we see all the actions of all the groups that are here today, that really shifted gears, to focus as the call for today's event mentions, to the more nitty-gritty work farther from the public eye, from the media spotlight, of getting people and families more fully engaged in the system. All that labor-intensive, behind the scenes, often risky, or experienced as risky work to put oneself out there and get into the system, and particularly focusing on permanent residents getting citizenship and the right to vote in order to change the balance of power in Washington.

Translating Civic Action into Political Power: In other words, one of the questions was: How is this massive and unprecedented civic energy going to get translated into raw political power that's going to be able to actually affect federal immigration policy? It may very well be that all politics is local, but when it comes time to change immigration policy, it's just not. The decisions are made very far from Los Angeles, and whether it's 850,000 people in the street

or a million people in the streets of Los Angeles, for people sitting in Washington, that might as well be in another country, right? And that is a structural problem of the US political system where we in terms of the federal level, we do not have a one person, one vote system.

We have a Senate that treats different states very differently in the representation. We have a House of Representatives, which until this coming election, never saw more than a 5-10% turnover. The rest were some would call Soviet-style districts, where they were running up extraordinary margins where there was no competition. And, of course, we have a presidential system where it's the Electoral College that decides. So it at the presidential level it doesn't really matter if a candidate wins 51% of the vote in California, or 98% of the vote in California, they have the same voice in this election of the president of the United States. So a lack of a one person one vote system really makes, immigration policy aside, translating civic energy into political power, turns it into a structural problem.

Fox reviewed objectives of research that covers various states in the US, and described the cross-sectoral meetings, similar to the meeting in Los Angeles, which brought together unions, faith-based groups, Spanish language media, civic organizations, and community-based organizations to talk about Latino civic engagement. He emphasized that a primary goal is to produce documents that encourage change across cities, but also to inform policy makers in the Beltway to DC. Comparing and contrasting lessons from the various meetings with the LA meeting's take away messages, Fox highlighted reasons it is important to observe and analyze immigrant civic engage-

ment in large and small cities, as well as in urban and suburban areas.

Varying Contours of Civic Infrastructure Across the US:

In terms of this transition to this second phase after this national overview to city-level forums like this, we wanted to get a sense of what was going on closer to the frontlines.

One of the underlying premises at looking at smaller cities, gateway cities and some bigger cities as well that have led the way, was to really build on the work that Roberto [De la Cruz] has been leading for a long time. It's usually hard to summarize someone's academic contribution in two words, and I think Ricardo [Ramirez] will agree, context matters. It's the short version of his takeaway message.

The next phase of that question is, Ok, context matters, California immigrants are more politicized, more likely to be naturalized than in Texas or Florida, as his early work showed, but how? What are the mechanics of that? What is it about the different degrees or patterns permeability of local power structures? What is it about the different patterns of density of civic infrastructure that shapes the map of potential alliance partners? It's not just demographics, it's not just electoral politics, it's not just media messages, it's also about alliances, and who can folks who are otherwise isolated get together with to be able to change the balance of power.

We've heard a lot about, about the Church, about unions, about the Spanish language media. Those are players whose presence is and whose openness is not a constant throughout the country. Here in LA you have some of the highest rates of union density. Not in Omaha! Not every bishop,

or archbishop, or cardinal is as committed and out there as here in LA. There is a huge variation in the nature of potential of alliance partners. One of the indicators of that is on the back page of an eyes-glaze-over government document, which has naturalization rates of Mexican origin permanent residents by county in California.

Fox continued, briefly noting that the different contexts in states and cities shape analysis about rates of naturalization. He pointed to these types of findings and general trends that are beginning to show variances in civic infrastructure that immigrants have access to across the US.

TABLE 2: *Citizenship Rates of Eligible Mexican-Origin Permanent Residents as of 2004*

State and County	LPR Status - 1985 to 1999			
	Total	Naturalized	Not Naturalized	Percent Naturalized
California	1,857,717	517,594	1,340,123	20.9%
Alameda	26,427	8,598	17,829	32.5%
Contra Costa	14,628	4,124	10,504	58.2%
Fresno	66,441	11,170	55,271	16.8%
Imperial	41,741	5,655	36,086	13.5%
Kern	39,168	6,840	32,328	17.5%
Los Angeles	783,376	236,270	520,106	33.6%
Madera	10,972	1,628	9,344	14.8%
Merced	19,842	3,717	16,125	18.7%
Monterey	40,509	7,502	33,007	18.5%
Orange	161,696	49,162	112,534	30.4%
Riverside	60,201	12,059	48,142	20.0%
Sacramento	12,690	3,471	9,219	27.4%
San Bermadrino	66,291	18,545	47,746	28.0%
San Diego	149,104	33,570	115,534	22.5%
San Joaquin	26,613	4,553	22,060	17.1%
San Mateo	17,683	5,982	11,701	33.8%
Santa Barbara	31,816	7,377	24,439	23.2%
Santa Clara	51,858	17,944	33,914	34.6%
Santa Cruz	25,591	4,879	20,712	19.1%
Sonoma	14,279	3,898	10,381	27.3%
Stanislaus	22,933	4,187	18,746	18.3%
Tulare	37,610	6,245	31,365	16.6%
Ventura	47,636	10,981	36,655	23.1%

Note: Counties with less than 10,000 Mexican-origin LPRs are not included here.

Source: Immigration Statistics, Department of Homeland Security.

Explaining Rates of Naturalization:

Some of you may have seen in that report we did at Wilson Center, variations state-to-state, where the naturalization of eligible Mexican permanent residents in Illinois, Illinois was twice the rate of naturalization among Mexicans than New Mexico. You can't explain the rates of naturalization by country of origin. Even within California, LA and the Bay Area have twice the rates of naturalization, and this is going back a few years before this recent wave, twice the rate of naturalization as Mexicans have in the Central Valley. That, I would argue, that suggests that we are looking at a snapshot of the different degrees of density of the civic infrastructure that is available to immigrants. That we're not seeing differences in the mindset, isolated from their social and political contexts of the immigrants themselves.

We're seeing an image of how long is the waiting list for English language and civics classes. How hard is it to find an honest lawyer? What is the message coming out of the TV? And the radio? That's what I would argue we're seeing with this pattern. But this is still a snapshot, it doesn't tell you about the mechanics and the strategies and the interaction between the different alliance partners that can take this context and reshape that context. In other words, how can actors and action reshape the constraints that real people face?

Now in terms of findings from this broader study, we're really still just boiling down the results in each city-based project. And it would be overstating things to claim that we have clear and firm results. But I think one of the most general trends that we're seeing first has to do with this deepening gap between the big cities like LA

and Chicago, and to some degree DC, and the smaller cities, in terms of the political stage that we're at. We see so much forward movement here and in Chicago, and in places like Omaha or Charlotte or even Fresno, you see much more of a backlash. In other words, it was one thing to come out and be visible. It's another thing to be able to hang on when the response comes. The mobilizations of '06 energized both ends of the spectrum and that has different effects, depending on where you live.

National Political Significance: And so, on one end you have this deepening bifurcation between the big cities and the smaller cities, and you also have the suburbs as battleground as really contested terrain. We heard about the some of this earlier, San Fernando Valley, for example. In Chicago, you have the collar counties, outer suburbs that have become 30, 40, 50% Latino in demographics, much less in the electorate. But those are republican congressional districts. And therefore, that local politics, and the work of your counterpart organizations in Aurora, Illinois, has national political significance. Because if Congressman Henry Hyde's republican seat is up for grabs, that is really going to shake things up. It's, the suburbs have not been a place that have the kind of density that is needed to really sustain the work that circles back to the funding problem.

WHY DOES FINANCIAL SUPPORT SEEM UNIMAGINABLE?

Fox proposed activists and scholars think and share ideas about sustained investment in citizenship campaigns. He noted that disseminating information to immigrants, helping them prepare for the citizenship exam, encour-

aging them do it, and seeing them through the process is an enormous financial burden, let alone the time and effort involved.

Perhaps in the conversation remaining we could brainstorm, What is it going to take the other players that have resources, beyond the unions and the churches, and the media, of course, what is it going to take to make the kind of sustained commitment to provide the resources that people need? So that once they hear the message from *Ya Es Hora*, they're able to stick with it through the entire citizenship process. We have at the federal level a clear strategy to not encourage immigrant integration, a clear strategy to not encourage naturalization. Because when you line up the increased fees, the change in the test, the increased rejection rate at the test stage, and there's no one really able, we heard earlier about the difficulty in tracking, there's no one counting those who drop away between the application and the test. You have data on who bounces from the test. Up to 12% of the three-quarters of a million people who applied in '07 didn't make it through the test. But at least they made it to the test.

You have those three things together, plus the lack of investment in the whole process over all. When we heard, there was a phrase earlier used today, I think it was about NALEO. Ok, you heard about the late 80s early 90s and then the funds dried up. They didn't dry up, they were cut. There was a piece by Doris Meissner in American Prospect, the Feds put \$4 billion on the table to put IRCA into effect through the state governments and community organizations to accompany people through the incredible, messy, difficult, labor intensive process.³ Four billion dollars! That is very hard to imagine today. It is so hard to imagine, no one even questions openly the lack of funds. It's

just taken for granted. That's just the way life is. Tough luck!

And people make a few vague references, Oh, in Illinois they have the New Americans. And I only learn reading an interview that there is a California State budget line item that I've never even heard of. That is, right? I mean, why isn't the State of California? Where is the campaign to get the state government to put \$50 million a year into all of this? Why is it the responsibility of civil society to encourage those who already quote, played by the rules, to get into the system? It's like voting rights. Why is it up to individuals to register instead of the government's job, which it is in every other industrial democracy? That was the debate back around the time of the motor-voter law. But it's kind of revealing that it's so taken for granted that it's not the government's job, that there is no broad, deep campaign to shift the funding burden to the government.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

In order to provoke a discussion about the future directions of immigrant civic participation **Jonathan Fox** posed a series of provocative question to the audience such as: What would the wish-list be if we had people in power at the state and federal level who thought immigrant integration was a good idea? How could tax dollars be put at work to broaden the citizenry, in every sense, but in particular, the citizen part that makes so many other kinds of citizenship possible? **Angelica Salas** from CHRILA responded to this challenge by outlining a series of targets for action and accountability:

Angélica Salas: Part of my wish-list is that we engage progressive donors so they invest in immigrant civic engagement de-

void of unions. Not that we wouldn't be partners. But for example, the We Are America Alliance, our partners are the labor unions, they're great partners. We have ACORN. ACORN raises \$30 million for their entire voter engagement campaign. Most of the immigrant rights organizations are operating on \$100,000 or less to do the civic engagement of immigrants. There is no way you're going to get the result. So what ends up happening is you never build capacity. So the first part of my wish-list is about building the resources for immigrant civic engagement, solely. And it wouldn't just be foundations, it would be from progressive donors, a donor base that usually gives for the Democratic Party, for 501c3s. I mean we're not even on their radar screen at all. So that would be one of the first things.

The other thing is that we actually have a whole program for investment in California. In the civic engagement world, we're ignored completely. California is a blue or it's not a swing state. The problem is that we get no resources into California in order to take us to the next level. And the next level is engaging not only the naturalized citizens, but their children. What good is a [city-level] study that goes down to the detail of ... impact we can have, if you don't have the resources to do it? So California is in a stalemate in that we've done a lot of work over all these decades, but we don't have the resources to take it to the next level. So I would say a whole California investment plan, and that would also include the formation of 501c4 organizations that could then be targeting candidates around their issues.

And finally, the Naturalization Service Program: We have fought tooth and nail

to get that program into place. We fought Davis on this piece. We finally got it a permanent line item [with] \$3 million in it. We're about to slash the program, basically get rid of the program, de-fund it this year. We need to figure out how, through both government investment, and [as] Victor Griego [suggested] personal investment into this program in order for us to have the resources available to give the Naturalization Services. I think that would go a long way, if we can get the \$10 to \$20 million into that program, we would hit LA, hit most of the counties and do a lot of work.

And that would be connected to a communications campaign, and that is why I think that Illinois is so successful, or perceived to be so successful. They targeted the work itself with a communications strategy that created momentum in support of it.

In a previous interview with Executive Director **Mari Ryono** of Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote made suggestions of how organizations and academics can focus on **documenting the impact of immigrant organizing** and stay connected as one important good practice to keep in mind for the future.

Mari Ryono: Two things we are investing in that are important for civic engagement. One of them is showing power and impact, not for just civic engagement. I feel like the immigrant civic engagement movement has the numbers to show nationally. More folks are naturalized, more folks are participating, more folks are voting. But we don't necessarily have the evidence to show that immigrant communities are influencing policy. And because of their electoral power and that they are voting around the

united issue of policy agenda. And this is true of civic engagement even beyond the immigrant community. The discussion right now is not do you represent 50,000 votes or 100,000 votes or can you turn out people on election day. That seems like the discussion a while back.

Now the question for immigrant communities and all marginalized communities is how are you leveraging that power for change on issues that your constituents care about. And that 2008 is a real crossroads for immigrant communities to demonstrate that, not just participation, and 2009 will be an opportunity to show how immigrant communities are leveraging that power. Will there be a comprehensive immigration reform in the first term.

Related to that is investing in case studies of immigrant civic engagement and demonstrations of power and impact. One of the things that we strongly believe is that immigrant communities do have power but often don't have the resources to document the work or even document their victories. We feel it's important to document those case studies, not only to inspire our communities themselves when people in our communities say why should I vote? At their fingertips they will have these case studies, but also to lift up these case studies state wide and nationally.

Any activities that encourage organizations to stay connected is helpful. Meetings like you're organizing, or contact lists, and anything that will help groups network with academics and funders.

2008 ELECTORAL SEASON

In a post-meeting interview with **Angela Sanbrano, President of the Board of**

Directors of NALACC spoke about the issue of the nearing presidential election. In her view, the Latino vote is going to have a significant impact this fall. During the long primary campaigns leading up to the summer's race between Senators Barack Obama and John McCain, evidence has been building that the Latino vote is not guaranteed for one party or the other. She believes there is a responsibility to inform voters, particularly if there are assumptions about how Latinos vote.

There's a lot of work to be done to introduce and to get Latinos to get to know Obama. Because I think that's the challenge, Latinos do not know Obama. I mean he's relatively new. Not only Latinos, but I think to the general public, but I think for Latinos even more. Because it's not like you're able, it's not like Latinos are able to access the larger media stuff that a lot of times your average voter really gets to, like the Anglo, the English-language media. [For] A lot of the new immigrants, the new voters, their main source of information is the Spanish news and the news papers. And the Spanish news and the news papers, I think that they put a lot of emphasis on Hillary Clinton. So that's why we, some of us decided to start working.

Sanbrano admitted that a major concern among Latino civic leaders and elected officials is the myth that Latinos would not vote for an African American candidate. She explained her approach, which was not to focus on race but rather on the candidate's record, values, and positions on important issues to the Latino community such as access to health-care, and immigration reform.

TABLE 3: *Demographic/Political Profile of Likely Voters by Race/Ethnicity*

		LATINOS	WHITES	BLACKS	ASIANS	OTHERS
All Likely Voters		15%	70%	6%	6%	3%
Party Registration	Democrat	64	37	74	38	43
	Republican	18	42	8	32	32
	Independent	14	16	16	28	18
	Other	4	5	2	2	7
Ideology	Very liberal	12	12	13	10	13
	Somewhat liberal	22	20	24	22	19
	Middle-of-the-road	32	29	35	39	35
	Somewhat conservative	24	24	20	19	20
	Very conservative	10	15	8	10	13
Region	Los Angeles	40	20	44	24	23
	SF Bay Area	13	24	20	37	22
	Central Valley	14	18	11	10	17
	Orange/San Diego	14	19	12	22	12
	Inland Empire	12	9	11	5	7
	Other	7	10	2	2	19
Age	18 to 24	10	4	11	9	10
	25 to 34	20	10	12	15	14
	35 to 44	22	17	20	23	17
	45 to 54	21	24	22	22	27
	55 to 64	15	20	15	18	18
	65 and older	12	25	20	13	14
Gender	Men	47	50	46	53	50
	Women	53	50	54	47	50
Education	No college	38	13	20	13	14
	Some college	29	29	36	21	39
	College graduate	33	58	44	66	47
Income	Under \$40,000	38	20	28	19	33
	\$40,000 to \$79,999	35	32	37	32	30
	\$80,000 or more	27	48	35	49	37
Own/Rent	Own	68	80	62	76	69
	Rent	32	20	38	24	31
Nativity	U.S.-born	61	94	96	39	88
	Immigrant	39	6	4	61	12

Sources: Ten PPIC Statewide Surveys, July 2007 - July 2008, including 22,522 adult residents, of whom 12,110 were likely voters. California Department of Finance, Race/Ethnic Population with Age and Sex Detail, 2000-2050, July 2007.

Contact: surveys@ppic.org

Dispelling Myths about Latino Voters:

In the primaries some efforts were done by Latino leadership to put out [make it known that there were] Latinos for Obama. And I think Latinos for Obama began to break the notion, the myth that Latinos would not vote for Obama because he's Black, and because there was just because Latinos just do not have the experience and/or this caution about voting for a Black man. And I think that, well, some of us felt that Latinos would vote for a Black man if they knew him, and if they knew what he or she stands for and what the politics of the person are about.

And that's why we knew, some of us knew what Obama's position had been on immigration reform, which is one of our key issues that we're really concerned about. And you know, about the health, the issue around education, and the whole issue about environment. These are issues that when you really look at the concerns and the issues that concern the Latino community, we're not really that different than your average [voter]. You know, we're concerned about the economy, we're concerned about the energy issues that relates to the cost of energy, the war, and then lack of access to healthcare.

In addition, she and others began to make their support for Senator Barack Obama public, with the intent of both countering the stereotype about Latino's voting patterns and leading by example. At the same time, grassroots clubs of Latinos for Obama were forming, primarily of retirees and students who want their friends, family and neighbors to know who their candidate is. Sanbrano communicates with Latinos on either end of the spectrum, from elected officials to non-voters

whose naturalization application will not be processed in time for the election—all want to get the word out and rally their counterparts to vote for their candidate.

Latinos Voice their Support for

Obama: Perhaps the issue where sometimes we differ from mainstream or the general public, may be immigration reform. Although, we know that when you ask a person the question about immigration reform, if you ask the question in the right way, the public opinion is that, yeah, they would agree that they should give undocumented immigrants the right to stay in the United States and continue working and so forth. So some of us came out as Latinos for Obama, we saw Maria Elena Durazo coming out very, was one of the first ones that came out and we were very pleased that she did that. And we had Gil Cedillo, who is also a prominent Latino. We had Congressman [Xavier] Becerra. We were all like really excited about Governor, from New Mexico, Richardson. And so some of the known Latino leaders that came up.

We had a meeting at the Pamona Obama Club because we're having students from Cal Poly and the Claremont Colleges and people from the area, you know like retired people, and this man came with a sign, two signs that had Obama in the middle of a square and he had little stakes. And he said he's going to put this in his lawn because he wants his neighbors to know that he's going to vote for Obama. He's home-made sign said: *Obama para Presidente* [Obama for President] and then it said, Latino Connection on one side and on the other side it said, Obama Club. He also wanted to have buttons but doesn't know where to get them? So now

the Obama people are going to open an office out here and people can go and get these buttons.

Two women that work cleaning the colleges, Latinas. One of them is waiting, and is sad that she's not going to get her citizenship until maybe next month and she said, she probably won't be able to vote for this election, but that she's going to get all her *comadres* [friends] to vote. So these are the people the kind of people that are getting excited about voting.

As the many-month Democratic Presidential primaries came to a close, polls showed that overall, Obama led McCain 47% to 40% among registered voters. Among Latino voters, however, McCain won 38% of Latinos against Obama. By mid-summer, this trend had reversed showing Latino support for Obama by a large margin. The survey conducted by the Pew Hispanic Center in the summer months of 2008 showed Hispanic registered voters support Democrat Barack Obama for president over Republican John McCain by 66% to 23%.

In California, Latino Voters have their own.

FIGURE 2: *Obama Leads McCain by Nearly Three-to-One Ratio Among Hispanic Voters*

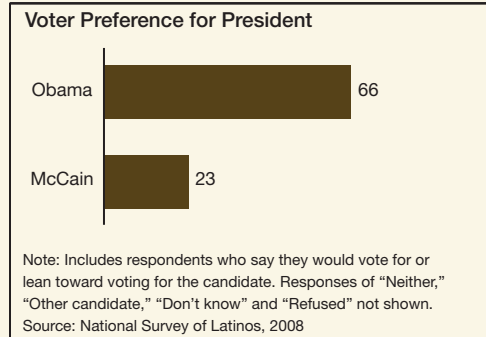


TABLE 4: *Facts: Latino Voters in CA*

Most Latino voters live in Southern California	42% of the state's Latino likely voters live in Los Angeles
Compared to whites, Latinos represent only a small share of the state voters	Latinos make up about 32% of California's adult population but only 15% of the registered voters most likely to turn out in elections
Latinos are least likely to register as Independents; most likely to identify as Democrats	More than 6 in 10 Latino likely voters are Democrats (64%), while 18% are registered as Republicans and 18% as Independents ("decline to state") or with a third party

Source: Pacific Policy Institute of California, August 2008

CONCLUSION

Summing up the discussions of the day, **Jonathan Fox** of UCSC noted the highlights from the day's presentations as well as the LA meeting's role in his broader study on immigrant civic engagement across the US. He outlined three main takeaway messages that he heard from the presentations and discussion.

Jonathan Fox, Takeaway Messages:

The Two-edged Sword of Binational

Organizing: One, on the binational question, I think we've heard a couple of the ways in which we need to disentangle what I call in other work civic binationality, struggling to be an active participant in both societies from the specific issue of engagement with home-country governments. It's not the same thing.

And there are a couple of ways that strategy has proven to be a two-edged sword. One has to do with the brief apparent moment of opportunity before 9/11 when the Mexican government and the Bush government were about to cut a deal that would have been highly inadequate by any standard, more of a guest-worker program, and would have divided Mexicans in the US from all other immigrants in the US. So

it might have appeared to be a short-term step forward for some groups, and in the longer-term it might have actually caused huge problems. And that raises questions about relying on one's home country government to defend one's interest in the US. And it really underscores one point, which is that there is no substitute for changing the balance of power in the United States, on the path to assuring a just and humane immigrant rights change here.

The other two-edged sword issue has to do with the government outreach programs to the diaspora in the US and particularly some of the matching funds programs. Because not all Mexicans in the US have [state] governments that are as vulnerable to being lobbied as the Michoacán and Zacatecas governments are. And if we think about the Oaxacan state government, it's no coincidence that there are very few 3x1 projects in Oaxaca. 3x1 means every level of government has to sign and agree. That gives every level of government veto power over migrant initiatives. And in the case of Oaxaca it is a corrupt, authoritarian, illegitimate group that is in power right now. So for an organization like the FIOB it is unthinkable to be able to organize a 3x1

program when the state government is actively producing political exiles

Becoming an American: Another take away message has to do with the importance of taking into account home-country ideas, and ties, and relationships as empowerment strategies are developed in the US. And I think one shorthand way of putting it is: You don't have to stop being Mexican to become an American.

Building and Broadening the Core of Activists: The third takeaway message has to do with what some academics call the transferability hypothesis. That is if someone is engaged civically in one arena it is more likely to be engaged civically in another. If they're active in their church, they're more likely to be active in their union, or they're more likely to be active in their community organization. We heard that earlier today from Roberto, nothing

new. But the binational engagement is part of that, if one is more active in one's home-country politics, then one is developing the skills and commitments and ideals that make one more likely to be civic and to be engaged in the communities and the societies of residence.

And that underscores the importance of what happens probably everyday in this room, which has to do with building and broadening the core of activists who are the people who make things happen. That's very different from the very broad spectrum or very generic outreach messages that might help people decide whether or not to vote on a one-shot basis. But really points to a longer haul strategy of broadening the core group that are the motors of engagement, that come back time and again, year to year, to build power, which is what we've been talking about all day.

APPENDIX A:

Biographical Summaries: Panelists and Moderators

David Ayón, Senior Research Associate, Center for the Study of Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount University www.lmu.edu

David Ayón is U.S. Director of the bi-national 'Focus Mexico/Enfoque México' project at the Center, studying the political relationships of leaders of Mexican origin in the United States with Mexico. Ayón is a contributor to books and publications including the Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States (2005); the journal *Foreign Affairs en Español* (which he also serves on its editorial board); *México en el Mundo*, an annual review of Mexico's foreign relations; *The American Prospect*; and has contributed numerous essays to the op-ed and Sunday Opinion pages of the Los Angeles Times. Ayón was educated at Princeton, Stanford and El Colegio de Mexico.

Nancy Berlin, Executive Committee Chair, Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV) www.miv.org

Nancy Berlin is the director of California Partnership, a statewide coalition of grassroots community groups fighting poverty. She also serves on the Executive Committee for Mobilize the Immigrant Vote. For over 30

years, she has worked on policy, organizing and service efforts with farm workers, homeless people and other low-income communities, and has extensive experience in grassroots leadership development, education and organizing.

Erica Bernal, Senior Director of Civic Engagement, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund www.naleo.org

Erica L. Bernal-Martinez is responsible for leading the organization's political participation programs and oversees the NALEO Educational Fund's Civic Engagement Programs nationally. Since being with the NALEO Educational Fund, Bernal-Martinez has been instrumental in developing strategic programs aimed at empowering Latinos to participate fully in the American political process. As part of her portfolio, Erica oversees the *ya es hora* Campaign, an unprecedented civic engagement effort to increase naturalization rates and voter participation in the immigrant community. In 2007, the campaign mobilized over 1 million legal permanent residents to apply for U.S. citizenship

Roberto “Bobby” De La Cruz, Senior Community Organizer, Service Employees International Union (SEIU) www.seiu.org

Roberto “Bobby” De La Cruz is a Senior Community Organizer with the SEIU. As a seasoned organizer, De La Cruz draws much of his knowledge and wisdom from the starting point of his career with the the United Farm Workers in the early 70s. He dedicated twenty years to mobilizing farm workers for labor rights, transforming get-out-the-vote to include Spanish-speaking communities Los Angeles, and forging a path for Latino into mainstream civic and political engagement. After being away from California for more than 13 years, organizing industrial and healthcare workers and doing political and legislative work in Chicago, De La Cruz returned to the Los Angeles area to work as the Immigration Project Coordinator for SEIU Western Region. His work also helped elect Latino politicians to positions in the California State Assembly and to City Mayor. De La Cruz has been a key advisor and activist during the *Ya Es Hora* campaigns for citizenship and GOTV and continues as an active member in the We Are America Alliance.

Jonathan Fox, Professor, Latin American and Latino Studies, UC Santa Cruz <http://lals.ucsc.edu>

Jonathan A. Fox is director of the project on Latin American Immigrant Political and Incorporation, a national study on immigrant civic engagement in the US. Among recent books and articles, he is co-author with Xóchitl Bada of “Migrant Organization and Hometown Impacts in Rural Mexico,” *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 8(2-3), May, 2008, forthcoming;

“Exit Followed by Voice: Mapping Mexico’s Emerging Migrant Civil Society,” in Carmen Diana Deere and Fred Royce, eds., *Alternative Visions of Development: Rural Social Movements in Latin America*, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008, forthcoming; and co-editor [with Xóchitl Bada and Andrew Selee] *Invisible No More: Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States*, Washington, D.C. Woodrow Wilson Center, Mexico Institute/University of California, Santa Cruz, Latin American and Latino Studies, August, 2006, www.wilsoncenter.org/migrantparticipation [bilingual edition]. Fox earned his Ph.D. in Political Science at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Kenneth Fujimoto, Senior Organizer, One-LA, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) www.industrialareasfoundation.org

Kenneth Kenji Fujimoto has worked as a full-time organizer with IAF projects in the southwest since 1981. He came to the IAF from the United Woodcutters Association (UWA) and the Southern Woodcutters Assistance Project (SWAP), both in the state of Mississippi. Prior to that worked as a boycott organizer, field organizer, field representative and contract negotiator with the United Farm Workers (UFW), AFL-CIO, in both California and Arizona. He also has experience working with SEIU locals in both Los Angeles and San Diego, where he helped organize chapters of the then nascent Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA); worked briefly with “Neighbor-to-Neighbor”, an effort to end the civil war in El Salvador in the early 1990’s (in LA). Fujimoto was the lead organizer for IAF projects in: Austin, TX; East Los Angeles; Phoenix, AZ.; and Sacramento, CA.

Javier Gonzalez, Executive Director,
Strengthening Our Lives (SOL)
www.sol-california.com

Javier González is an experienced political organizer. He started his career as a day-labor and community organizer. He later worked as a wage-and-hour investigator for the Justice for Janitors movement where he led the field work for the largest janitorial wage and hour lawsuit in American history. In 2000, he began organizing for the SEIU Janitors, local 1877. As SEIU's political director, he ran successful campaigns in Los Angeles and Orange Counties and built one of the largest and most dynamic election field machines in the US. With the idea to expand electoral organizing to a year-round organization, Gonzalez created SOL, which focuses on immigrant civic participation, voter registration, and getting out the vote.

Martha Jiménez, Secretary of Culture,
Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur
de California (FCZSC) <http://federacionzacatecana.org>

Martha Jiménez is Secretary of Culture at the Federation of Zacatecan Clubs of Southern California (FCZSC). Jiménez has fought for legalizing undocumented migrants and adequate English Language course offerings to help integrate migrants living in the US. Her work is grounded in a commitment to better the lives of her community on both sides of the border. She strongly believes immigrants can preserve their home-country language and traditions and still learn English and integrate into US society. Jiménez works tirelessly to make alliances with immigrant rights organizations and increasing civic engagement through citizenship campaigns and voter registration. She was recognized as Zacatecan of the

2007-2008 Year by the State of Zacatecas for her dedication to fighting for social rights and as an outstanding community leader in Los Angeles, California.

Jesus Martinez-Saldaña, former Director
of the Office of Migrant Affairs, State of
Michoacan, Mexico www.jesusmartinez.org

Jesus Martínez-Saldaña was the first ever representative in the local congress of the Michoacan, Mexico state legislature for that state's Mexican migrants living abroad. He was elected in 2004 and served a three-year term. Before he was a representative of the state of Michoacan, Martínez-Saldaña held a faculty appointment at California State University, Fresno, in the Department of Chicano and Latin American Studies. He has written numerous articles on the rights of migrants to participate in Mexican political affairs while abroad. Martínez-Saldaña earned a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor
of Political Science, University of Southern
California <http://college.usc.edu/faculty/faculty1003624.html>

Ricardo Ramirez is coeditor (with T. Lee and K. Ramakrishnan) of *Transforming Politics, Transforming America: The Political and Civic Incorporation of Immigrants in the United States*. His most recent writings include: "Segmented Mobilization: Latino Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote Efforts in the 2000 General Election"; "Are Naturalized Voters Driving the California Latino Electorate? Measuring the Impact of IRCA Citizens on Latino Voting" (with M. Barreto and N. Woods); and "Giving Voice to Latino Voters: A Field Experiment on the Effectiveness of a National Nonpartisan

Mobilization Effort.” Dr. Ramirez studied Chicano Studies as an undergraduate at UCLA, earned a Master’s degree in Education, Administration and Policy Analysis and a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stanford University.

Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Project Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education www.labor.ucla.edu

Gaspar Rivera-Salgado is currently Project Director at UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. He has previously held positions at several universities in the United States (including the University of Southern California, University of California at Santa Cruz and San Diego, and Columbia University). He serves as an advisor to several migrant organizations in California, including the Binational Center for Oaxacan Indigenous Development (CBDIO), the Coalition for Humane Human Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), and was elected in June, 2008 as the Binational General Coordinator of the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB). He has extensive experience as an independent consultant on transnational migration, grassroots philanthropy and Mexican economic development. He is the author of many publications about immigration and social movements. He is co-editor (with J. Fox) of the volume *Mexican Indigenous Migrants in the United States* (UCSD, 2004). Rivera-Salgado earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Odilia Romero, Binational Women’s Coordinator, Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB) <http://fiob.org>

Odilia Romero is the Los Angeles Office Director for the Bi-national Center for Oaxacan Indigenous Development. She works to build sustainable community change through the development of community-based Oaxacan leadership. As a member of, and advocate for, the Oaxacan community in Los Angeles, Romero’s approach is to build on existing strengths and nurture capacities that preserve indigenous culture, improve quality of life, and express community power. Currently, she also serves as the Women’s Coordinator of the Indigenous Organizations Bi-National Front (FIOB).

Janna Shadduck-Hernández, Project Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education www.labor.ucla.edu

Janna Shadduck-Hernández is a Project Director at the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. She is also a lecturer in UCLA’s Department of World Arts and Cultures, César E. Chávez Chicano/a Studies Department and the Labor and Workplace Studies Minor. Her interests lie in the intersections between labor, immigration, student and community activism and the arts. She has collaborated with artists like Suzanne Lacy (*Stories of Work and Survival @ the MOCA*) John Malpede (*Utopia/Dystopia/La Llorona*), Peter Sellars (*Human Trafficking and Art Activism*), David Bacon (*Labor/Immigration Forum*), Michael Garcés (*Los Illegals*) and Gideon Mendel (*HIV + in Mexico*) developing installation, theatrical, video and photographic expression with collaboration from labor and community partners. She is particularly interested in the exploration of participatory art making as a pedagogical vehicle in social movements and community

organizing projects. Shaddock-Hernandez is also the co-director for the UCLA Global Learning Institute Summer Session in Guanajuato, Mexico (2006, 2007, 2008) through the UCLA International Institute-Global Studies (IDP). Shaddock-Hernández received her doctorate from the University of Massachusetts Amherst's School of Education within the Center of International Education.

Angélica Salas, Executive Director, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) www.chirla.org

Angélica Salas is Executive Director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) and is widely regarded as one of the most gifted activist/organizers in the country today. Since becoming CHIRLA's director in 1999, Salas has spearheaded several ambitious campaigns. She helped win in-state tuition for undocumented immigrant students and established day laborer job centers that have served as a model for the rest of the nation. She led efforts to allow all California drivers to obtain a drivers license and is a leading spokesperson on federal immigration policy. As part of a national coordinating committee, Salas helped convene a coalition of organizations in Southern California which have successfully mobilized millions of immigrants to demand comprehensive immigration reform including legalization with a path to citizenship, family reunification, and the protection of civil and labor rights.

Ángela Sanbrano, President of the Board of Directors, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) www.nalacc.org

Ángela Sanbrano has dedicated most of her adult life to the struggle for peace with justice. In 1985 she was elected National Executive Director of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). She traveled throughout the Central American country, building solidarity with the people and working toward an end to US intervention in El Salvador and Central America. After the signing of the Peace Accords, she founded the International Solidarity Center in El Salvador. When Sanbrano returned to Los Angeles in the mid-90s, she joined the administrative staff of the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN) and, in 1997, was appointed Executive Director. She was elected President of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) in 2005. Sanbrano holds a B.A. in psychology and received a law degree from the People's College of Law.

Christina Sánchez Camino, Director of Public Affairs, Univisión www.univision.net

Christina is the Director of Public Affairs for KMEX-TV/Univision, Los Angeles (Channel 34), the leading Spanish-language television station in the country. She joined KMEX-TV in 1997 and oversees all FCC requirements, public affairs programming, Children's Programming compliance and community outreach campaigns for the station and public affairs programming. Sanchez Camino has been a principle leader in the media component of the *Ya Es Hora* campaigns that helped Univision win a Peabody Award in 2007. Sanchez-Camino previously worked as a producer and hostess of "Foro 22" a weekly Spanish-language public affairs program at KWHY, Channel

22. She is a strong advocate of immigrant rights and works closely with several community based organizations and advocacy groups on immigration reform.

Kent Wong, Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education www.labor.ucla.edu

Kent Wong previously worked as staff attorney for the Service Employees International Union Local #660. Dr. Wong's research interests include immigrant workers in Los Angeles and he recently co-authored "Educating Immigrant Workers for Action" with Victor Narro, in *Labor Studies Journal*, 32 (1), 2007 and co-edited *Sweatshop Slaves: Asian Americans in the Garment Industry* edited with Julie Monroe, UCLA Center for Labor & Research Education, 2006.

APPENDIX B

Pre- and Post-Meeting Interview Participants

Erica Bernal, Senior Director of Civic Engagement, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund April 2, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Efraín Jiménez, Project Director, Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC) April 9, 2008 Los Angeles, CA

Kenneth Fujimoto, Senior Organizer, One-LA, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) May 7, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Javier Gonzalez, Director, Strengthening Our Lives (SOL) April 16, 2008. Downey, CA

Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Southern California, March 14, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Mari Ryono, Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote, March 26, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Christina Sánchez Camino, Director of Public Affairs, Univisión, April 11, 2008, Culver City, CA

Angélica Salas, Executive Director, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) March 18, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

Ángela Sanbrano, President of the Board of Directors, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC) August 26, 2008, Los Angeles, CA

APPENDIX C

Today We March, Tomorrow We Vote: Latino Migrant Civic Engagement in LA Panel Presentations and Presenters, May 27, 2008

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND CITIZENSHIP CAMPAIGNS

Erica Bernal, Senior Director of Civic Engagement, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

Christina Sánchez Camino, Director of Public Affairs, Univisión

Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Southern California

Moderator: David Ayón, Senior Research Associate, Center for the Study of Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount University

GETTING OUT THE VOTE

Angélica Salas, Executive Director, Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA)

Nancy Berlin, Executive Committee Chair, Mobilizing the Immigrant Vote (MIV)

Kenneth Fujimoto, Senior Organizer, One-LA, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF)

Roberto “Bobby” de la Cruz, Senior Community Organizer, Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

Moderator: Janna Shaddock-Hernández, Project Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education

ADVOCACY, ALLIANCES AND BINATIONAL CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Odilia Romero, Binational Women’s Coordinator, Frente Indígena de Organizaciones Binacionales (FIOB)

Ángela Sanbrano, President Board of Directors, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC).

Martha Jiménez, Secretary of Culture, Federación de Clubes Zacatecanos del Sur de California (FCZSC)

Jesus Martinez-Saldaña, former Director of the Office of Migrant Affairs, State of Michoacan, Mexico

Moderator: Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, Project Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education

COLLECTIVE REFLECTION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Moderator: Jonathan Fox, Professor, Latin American and Latino Studies, UC Santa Cruz

CLOSING REMARKS

Kent Wong, Director, UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education

APPENDIX D

Ya Es Hora Coalition

NATIONAL COORDINATORS

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO)

Service Employees International Union (SEIU)

National Council on La Raza (NCLR)

REGIONAL PARTNERS

ARIZONA

La Union Del Pueblo Entero (LUPE)

Service Employees International Union-Tucson

Tonatierra

Machualli Work Center

United Food and Commercial Workers

United Food and Commercial Workers-Tucson

ACORN-Phoenix

ACORN-Mesa

Roofers Union

Mariscos Playa Hermosa Restaurante

Univision-Flagstaff

Univision-Douglas

Univision- Tucson

Univision Radio

Campesina 88.3

Campesina 104.5- Yuma

Campesina 93.9- Lake Havasu

LUCAC- San Luis

Arizona Advocacy Network

LOS ANGELES METRO

AFL - CIO - Los Angeles County Federation of Labor

AltaMedHealth Services

Asian Pacific American Legal Center

BIENESTAR

Café Canela - Plaza Mexico

Casa Michoacan

Centro Familiar Cristiano

Centro Tepeyac

Chrysalis

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)

Colombianos en Accion

Consejo de Federaciones Mexicanas (COFEM)

Desert Alliance for Community
 Empowerment (DACE)
 Estrada Courts Residents Management
 Corporation
 Federacion Mexico Unido
 Hermandad Mexicana Nacional
 Hermandad Mexicana Nacional
 KidWorks
 La Huasteca Restaurant- Plaza Mexico -
 LA Voice PICO
 Latino Health Access
 Law Offices of Garcia & Marroquin, LLP
 Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles
 Los Angeles City College
 Los Angeles Mission College
 Los Angeles Southwest College Bridges to
 Success
 Los Angeles Trade Technical College
 Mexican American Opportunity Foundation
 Our Lady Victory Church
 P.U.E.B.L.O.
 Plaza Community Center
 Plaza Mexico
 Root Law Group
HOUSTON
 Amegy Bank of Texas
 Independence Heights Neighborhood Center
 La Fuerza Hispana de Conroe
 Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center
 Houston International University
 Texas Citizenship and Education Project
 CARECEN
 Cleveland-Ripley Neighborhood Center

College of Biblical Studies
 Community Family Centers
 CRECEN
 Harbach-Ripley Youth Center
 Houston Community College – Southeast
 Immigration Counseling Center
 Mexican American Council (S. Antonio)
 Neighborhood Centers Inc.
 The BRIDGE/EL PUENTE
 Tejano Center for Community Concerns
 Service Employees International Union
DALLAS-FT. WORTH METROPLEX
 Proyecto Inmigrante ICS
 Baptist Immigration Center
 New Hope Services Inc
 Centro Hispano
 Casa del Inmigrante Fort Worth
 Fort Worth Public Library System
 AculturAccion
 Casa Chihuahua
 Centro De Mi Salud
 Dallas Concilio of Hispanic Service
 Organizations
 Dallas County Community College District
 El Conquistador News
 Greater Dallas Hispanic Chamber of
 Commerce
 LULAC 102 Oakcliff-Dallas/Law Office of
 Domingo
 Garcia
 LULAC National Education Service Center-
 Dallas
 Mountain View College

Service Employees International Union Local 5
Texas State Representative Roberto R. Alonzo
District 104

NEW YORK TRI-STATE

Catholic Charities Archdiocese of New York
Central Labor Council
City University of New York
Coordinating Agency for Spanish Americans
(CASA)
Consortium for Worker Education
Council of Peoples Organization (COPO)
Dominican American National Roundtable
Dominico-American Society
Education & Assistance Corp (EAC)
Episcopal Community Services of Long Island
Institute for Puerto Rico/Hispanic Elderly
Latino Initiative for Better Resources and
Empowerment
Nestor Diaz, Esq.
Northern Manhattan Coalition for Economic
Development
Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant
Rights
New York Immigration Coalition
North Brooklyn Community Council, INC.
Pannun The Firm
San Juan Macias Orientation Immigrant
Center
Santa Ana College - Centennial Education
Center
Santa Paula Family Resource Center
Service Employees International Union
1199 / SEIU
S.O.S. Inmigración Internacional

SOUTH FLORIDA

Hispanic Unity of Florida
Minority Development & Empowerment, Inc.
Abriendo Puertas, Inc.
American Fraternity
Colombian American Service Association
(CASA)
Centro de Orientación del Inmigrante
(CODI)
Cuban American National Council
Democracia USA
Miami-Dade County Public Schools Adult
ESOL
Program
Organizacion Hondurena Intg Francisco
Morazan
(OHIFM)
SEIU Local 11
SEIU Florida Healthcare Union
Unidad Hondureña
Unite for Dignity, Inc.
Unity Coalition/Coalición Unidad
WASHINGTON, DC AREA
World Relief
NICE
People for the American Way
Dominican American National Roundtable
Alianza Dominicana
CARECEN
HANAC Corona Beacon
Centro Salvadoreno, Inc.
Latin American Integration Center
32BJ / SEIU

NOTES

- 1 See transcripts archived at: <http://www.kcet.org/lifeandtimes/archives/200703/20070306.php>
- 2 US Department of State Fact Sheet on the Merida Initiative: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2007/oct/93800.htm> (October 2007). Marcela Sanchez of the Washington Post <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/12/06/AR2007120601783.html> (December 2007). President Bush makes remarks upon signing H.R. 2642, including the Merida Initiative <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/06/20080630.html> (June 2008).
- 3 See Meissner's 2005 article "As Congress seeks a comprehensive immigration fix, the lessons of 1986's historic reform must guide the way," in the archived articles <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=10482>.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

GASPAR RIVERA-SALGADO is currently Project Director at UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education. He has previously held positions at several universities in the United States (including the University of Southern California, University of California at Santa Cruz and San Diego, and Columbia University). He serves as an advisor to several migrant organizations in California, including the Binational Center for Oaxacan Indigenous Development (CBDIO), the Coalition for Humane Human Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), and was elected in June, 2008 as the Binational General Coordinator of the Binational Front of Indigenous Organizations (FIOB). He has extensive experience as an independent consultant on transnational migration, grassroots philanthropy and Mexican economic development. He is the author of many publications about immigration and social movements. He is co-editor (with J. Fox) of the volume *Mexican Indigenous Migrants in the United States* (UCSD, 2004). Rivera-Salgado earned his Ph.D. from the University of California, Santa Cruz.

VERÓNICA WILSON is a project coordinator at UCLA's Center for Labor Research and Education. She concentrates her time on fund development, research, and report writing for projects on migrant civic engagement and international worker solidarity. She also fundraises for Centro Binacional para el Desarrollo Indígena Oaxaqueño, a community organization based in California. Before joining UCLA's Labor Center, Veronica worked in education, consulted for The Rockefeller Foundation, and collaborated on documentary film projects. She earned a master's degree in Latin American Studies at the University of California, San Diego.

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