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“Ahora Marchamos, Mañana Votamos”  
Naturalization of Latino Immigrants in San Diego and the Current Immigration Reform  
Movement

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of  
Arts

in

Latin American Studies (International Migration)

by

Norma Rodriguez

Committee in charge:

Professor April Linton, Chair  
Professor Christine Hunefeldt  
Professor Isaac Martin

2010

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2010

Gracias a mi familia, especialmente mi mamá y a mi papá, los quiero muchísimo! Sin el apoyo, y amor de ustedes no estaría aquí, logrando mis metas. Su lucha y dedicación para darnos una vida mejor siempre la cargo conmigo. La valentía que tuvieron en venirse de Puruándiro Michoacán a los Estados Unidos para poder darnos las oportunidades que ustedes no tuvieron siempre dirige mis acciones y mi pasión por la justicia social y la igualdad para la gente trabajadora.

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“Knowledge makes me more conscious. Knowing is painful because after it happens I can't stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before.”

-Gloria Anzaldua

“This nation was founded by men of many nations and backgrounds. It was founded on the principle that all men are created equal, and that the rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one are threatened.”

-John F. Kennedy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Signature Page.....iii

Dedication Page.....iv

Epigraph.....v

Table of Contents .....vi

List of Tables.....vii

Acknowledgements.....viii

Abstract.....ix

Chapter 1: The Beginnings of a New Social Movement?.....1

Chapter 2: Literature Review of the 2006 Mobilizations and Latino Political  
Participation.....12

Chapter 3: The Structure of the Immigration Reform Movement Today.....29

Chapter 4: Naturalization as an Outcome of the Immigration Reform Movement.....49

Chapter 5: The Future of Latino Political Participation.....63

Bibliography.....78

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1: Naturalization Rates of Latino Immigrants 2003-2009, San Diego County.....	11
Table 4.1: Workshop Applications Processed 2000-2009, Los Angeles.....	61

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

“Ahora Marchamos, Mañana Votamos”  
Naturalization of Latino Immigrants in San Diego and the Current Immigration Reform  
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by

Norma Rodriguez

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies (International Migration)

University of California, San Diego, 2010

Professor April Linton, Chair

The motivations and opportunities for immigrants to naturalize continuously change. During the 2006 nation-wide mobilizations against House of Representatives bill 4437 the message: “Ahora marchamos, mañana votamos” (Today we march, tomorrow we vote) was a common banner carried amongst the marchers in the streets. I examine the extent to which the mobilizations created an opportunity for Latinos in the U.S. to naturalize and their motivations for becoming United States citizens within the context of this renewed

mobilization for immigration reform. This research focuses on Latinos who have become or are in the process of becoming naturalized U. S. citizens since the 2006 mobilizations and who participated in citizenship workshops in San Diego. I also provide a closer look at the current campaign to promote immigration reform and naturalization in order to see how the tactics activists are employing now are related to those developed or adopted in 2006. My analysis employs theories about citizenship as well as a social movements lens. Using both theoretical perspectives helps expand our understanding of naturalization embedded within the larger immigration reform movement in the United States. The final part of this thesis suggests future implications these movements may have for the political incorporation of Latinos within the political opportunity structure created by the mobilizations of 2006. What does the future hold for Latino political participation and incorporation?

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Beginnings of a New Social Movement?**

With politicians it was an eye opener for them, San Diego has never seen a march at that scale here in San Diego county, it was really one of the first of its kind, in my years of growing up in San Diego, it was probably close to 100,000 people it was significantly greater than any politician or elected official had seen for a very long time, it was kind of the first step of the coming out of the Latino population here in San Diego. In regards to our community I think that for our community it was the first time, really in a long time that they have galvanized around a single issue at that large of a scale. I think it created some solidarity and I think it created some hope you know, that we were able to organize in mass a large amount of people around an issue that greatly impacts our community.

-Pedro S., a San Diego Community organizer on the impact of the April 9, 2006 San Diego Pro-Immigrant march, the largest in the history of San Diego; mirrored after La Gran Marcha in Los Angeles

March 25, 2006: Los Angeles, California

A sea of thousands of energized individuals wearing white t-shirts jubilantly marches through the streets of downtown Los Angeles. There are people dancing, there are people chanting, entire families walking hand in hand, hundreds of organizations, churches and unions represent themselves with logos and banners; overall there is an atmosphere of organized chaos and the participants' energy is electric and palpable. Thousands of people are present, as far as the eye can see. Downtown Los Angeles is taken by complete surprise even though the ethnic media outlets, in hand with community organizers, had saturated their newspapers, radios, and television shows with promotion of the march. People wave placards and signs which include statements like: "I am not a Criminal, NO on HR 4437," "We were here first, Today we March tomorrow we Vote", and dozens of other creative slogans basically giving the same message: the immigration system is broken, we contribute

this society and we belong to this nation. An estimated between 500,000 to a million people took to the streets on March 25th in what is commonly known as “La Gran Marcha” (The Great March). While there were many allies, many of the participants were Latinos, “without regard to nativity, immigrant status, generation or age, Latinos of all backgrounds participated in the immigration rallies in 2006” (Barreto 2007 p.438). This was just the beginning; in the ensuing months an estimated 2 million people in over 130 cities of all sizes and demographics participated in the various anti- HR 4437, pro-immigrant marches and rallies across the country. Fierce opposition to the pending House of Representatives Bill HR 4437 introduced by Republican James Sensenbrenner sparked the highly visible mobilizations. The bill was an anti-immigrant piece of legislation that would criminalize undocumented migrants and all those who assisted them. “It would have...called for building a 700 mile fence along the U.S. Mexican border; made it a crime for any agencies including churches, and charity organizations to aid or assist undocumented persons; and imposed stricter penalties for employers who knowingly hired undocumented workers” (Martinez 2008: 557). HR 4437 was quickly condemned as a violation of civil rights not only by social justice groups but also by many other organizations including unions and religious groups. What started as a modest response to oppose HR 4437 quickly evolved into massive political mobilization.

September 2007: Escondido, California

It is only 7:00 a.m. and yet at Resurrection Church in Escondido California in San Diego County there is a line of hundreds of people patiently waiting for the doors of the church’s recreation rooms to open. Nearby organizers and volunteers coordinate name tags, sign-in sheets and direct the finger print people, the photo people and the lawyers to

designated areas. There are various “stations” that people go through in order to get their initial orientation to make sure that they have the necessary paper work to get their N-400 naturalization applications filled out, have their photos taken, and to get free legal advice. People carry envelopes, binders, and purses, which hold their documents. With the help of the local newspapers, television and radio stations along with local community organizations including labor, faith and community groups (Justice Overcoming Boundaries, ACORN) and church leaders; they have been able to turn out what turns out to be close to 800 people to the church by the end of the day (Wingard 2007).

These members, overwhelmingly Latino, are here to become naturalized citizens. They are at a free citizenship workshop, one of hundreds, which continue to be held since the 2006 marches. These workshops are oftentimes organized in partnerships amongst local organizations, community members, unions, students, and faith based groups in cities across the country. They gained momentum in the months following the immigration mobilizations. Organizations and groups seized the heightened political climate surrounding the immigration issue to promote political participation within Latino communities. One of the first noticeable barriers to full political incorporation was citizenship. Connecting to the networks created for the mobilizations, citizenship workshops became an easily accessible way for immigrants to have their N-400 applications filled out.

#### A Brief history of Immigration and the United States

In order to contextualize the current debates on immigration reform, a quick review of the history of Immigration, to the United States, which has been a controversial topic since the Immigration Act of 1924 is necessary. Beginning in the 1970's there was

“an increase in public sentiment in favor of boundary enforcement and immigration restriction in the United States. Southern California and San Diego in particular, were among the hotbeds of these feelings” (Nevins 2002: 61). In the United States a pattern emerges: during economic downturns, or other problems the most visible immigrant population of that given time period becomes the scapegoat (Japanese internment, the Chinese Exclusion act [Salyer 1995; Lee 2003] and most recently Latino immigrants). The 1990’s saw a resurgence of nativism and anti-immigrant sentiment. Desipio partially attributes this to a shift in demographics in urban locations with an influx of immigrants to non-traditional destinations, “the dramatic increase in immigration to new destinations in the 1990’s can potentially destabilize power distributions, serving to intensify group fears about loss of power or wealth... Not only are privileged groups concerned about shifting demographics and the loss of power, marginalized groups worry about having to share or compete over the little that they do have” (Desipio et al 2007 p.5). One of the most known highly contested attempts at controlling immigration was Proposition 187 in California. In his article, “Critical Race Theory and Proposition 187: The Racial Politics of Immigration Law” Garcia (1995) notes that in order to understand the racialized context of laws and policies; they must be analyzed within the proper historical context. He also posits that anti-immigrant laws such as Proposition 187 are not necessarily attempts at controlling state resources but an “attempt to save the state’s racial identity from becoming increasingly non-white.” Proposition 187 and now HR 4437 are part of a long string of immigration laws with “racial subtexts” (p. 1). Garcia situates the severe anti-immigrant rhetoric not as a result of attempts to preserve government resources but as a growing fear of a nonwhite California: “undocumented immigrants provide a

convenient scapegoat for the social problems currently confronting America...nowhere has this virulence been more severe than in California... as the state where most immigrants choose to settle, undocumented immigration is seen as a major problem” (p. 5).

Immigration law bias has occurred historically in the United States with policies that favor certain groups over others and that unfairly target specific racial groups. In her article “A Return to More Blatant Class and ‘Race’ Bias in U.S. Immigration Policy” Kim (2007) analyzes the contradictions within these biases, “contradictions and myopia...on the one hand of the exclusion of immigrants whom Congress deems “economic burdens,” and, on the other hand, the government’s windfall revenue from taxing these immigrants, including the undocumented millions among them.” Kim asks why a severe backlash exists against immigrants when it is very clear that they benefit the U.S. economy overall? Why are undocumented immigrants framed as ‘economic burdens’? The U.S. government may be the very reason for the negative views on immigrants. She concludes that the reasons deal with race and class, immigrants are constructed as burdens and not humans; she concludes with a warning, “until our society acknowledges that no human being is ‘against the law,’ that borders are sociopolitical constructions of elites, and that immigrant entry should not be based on costs or color, we as a nation will continue to backslide” (p. 476).

The rhetoric oftentimes used to support harsh immigration policies is the economic burden that immigrant populations pose for the United States. However much work has been done to demonstrate the contrary that immigrants benefit the United States. For example since the ‘revenue act’ in 1913 undocumented immigrants are

required to pay income taxes. This law continues to this day, and although not all undocumented migrants pay their income taxes, they all nonetheless pay into social security payroll taxes on every dollar of reported wages, regardless of whether or not they have a legitimate social security number. As an example she notes the amount that the U.S. government received in social security taxes in 2003 from 7.5 million workers with mismatched social security numbers: 7 billion dollars, and this number has probably tripled since then. This does not take into account the other ways in which immigrants contribute to the United States economy: “in addition to making unrequited contributions to social security, Medicare, and unemployment insurance programs, undocumented migrants contribute to the U.S economy both by investing and by consuming goods and services” (Kim 2007: 474). These millions of dollars do not take into account the taxes that immigrants pay at state and local levels- such as property taxes through renting or owning homes. In “The Spring Marches of 2006: Latinos, Immigration, and Political Mobilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” Pantoja et. al. note that immigrants have always inhabited legitimate spaces within communities in the United States, “working, paying taxes, attending to children, becoming a part of community organizations, and school boards and sending remittances to families back home” (2008: 499).

Jeannette Money (1997) notes three main factors that help create anti immigrant sentiment by “natives”: 1) labor market competition in an economic recession 2) competition over state resources in the midst of an economic recession, and 3) the rate of growth of the immigration community and its assimilation (p. 693). While I agree with Money, I would add that competition is either real or perceived, different research such as Kim’s above note that immigrants actually benefit the economy. The situations after

Proposition 187 and HR 4437 occurred under conditions that are similar to what Money proposes lead to anti-immigrant sentiment: The United States was in an economic downturn, and natives used immigrants as scapegoats for the country's economic woes. Nativism caused by social problems including economics, along with changing demographics, and racialization of immigration help guide the anti-immigrant sentiment currently occurring in the United States.

In his article "The Hispanic Challenge" Huntington (2004) refers to the threat of Latino immigrants and their inability to assimilate into dominant "American culture" as the Hispanic challenge. In his article he articulates the threat that he deems Latinos are to mainstream America: "the persistent inflow of Hispanic immigrants threatens to divide the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. Unlike past immigrant groups, Mexicans and other Latinos have not assimilated into mainstream U.S. culture, forming instead their own political and linguistic enclaves—from Los Angeles to Miami—and rejecting the Anglo-Protestant values that built the American dream. The United States ignores this challenge at its peril" (p.1).

The current immigration reform movement is happening within this context. Understanding this history of immigration policies in the United States, it is understandable that the situation was set for the passage of HR 4437, approved in the House of Representatives on December 16, 2005.

Why San Diego?

I chose to conduct my interviews in San Diego because San Diego has been a particularly contentious location for the immigration issue. San Diego is one of the traditional arrival destinations of Latino immigrants into the United States. There is also a

harsh divide on immigration reform in San Diego, especially between the North and South Counties of San Diego. North County (which includes the cities of Escondido, Vista, Oceanside, Solana Beach, and Fallbrook) has high concentrations of immigrant communities while at the same time being the location of harsh anti-immigrant sentiment). North County is known for its many attempts to control immigration at the local level. These include harsh anti-immigrant groups such as the Minuteman Project, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (I.C.E.) raids. One particular example that reflects this anti-immigrant attitude in North County is the attempt to pass the anti-housing city ordinance in Escondido which would make it illegal to rent homes and apartments to undocumented immigrants.<sup>1</sup> The sentiment in North County is in strong contrast to San Diego's Southern county where in 2006 the then-mayor of National City announced it as a Sanctuary city for immigrants and that city funds would not be used to enforce federal immigration laws (Sierra 2006). Being the most heavily crossed border in the world, San Diego has a history as a site of these strong tensions. These tensions, the mobilizations around immigration reform and the large amount of citizenship workshops held in San Diego make this an ideal and location to study the current immigration reform movement and resulting naturalization of Latinos.

### Methodology

Research for this thesis was gathered through a combination of interviews, research on the existing literature and participant observation. Interviews were conducted doing semi-structured questionnaires with Latino participants who had been naturalized

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on city ordinances see: Ridgley 2008, Varsanyi 2008, Bono 2007.

since 2006, lawyers participating in the citizenship workshops, and national and local level organizers engaged in immigration reform and the naturalization movement. Participants in the thesis were found through networking with Justice Overcoming Boundaries and other local networks. While some bias may have occurred as far as the type of people that were interviewed, findings are nevertheless relevant and useful in analyzing future implications of Latino political participation. Research on past academic work on the topic was central to this research. In addition participant observation was conducted. During the 2006 marches and continuing to the present, I have been an active member of Justice Overcoming Boundaries (J.O.B) immigration task force, a local non profit organization based on developing community leaders which is engaged with the Reform Immigration for America (RIFA) campaign and is also a part of the national organization Gamaliel a group which focuses on developing community leaders throughout the country to effect positive social change. I am also the national Civil Rights of Immigrants chair of Gamaliel; the national organization with which J.O.B. is affiliated. I participated in protest events, helped coordinate local leadership development events, conference calls with the national campaign and lobbied for Immigration reform with San Diego area Congress members in Washington D.C. Much of the knowledge on the strategies and structure of the national campaigns is based on participant based research through these roles and conversations with members and their websites.

#### Main Focus

This research hopes to focus on these areas: provide information on what the current campaign and tactics for immigration reform and naturalization attainment are at

the local and national level; to understand the level of collaboration and strategies that the national campaigns in connection with local grassroots organizations had on the naturalization of Latino migrants, to examine naturalization as a social movement outcome of the immigration reform movement, examine the motivations and political incorporation of Latino citizens naturalized in the current context of immigration reform and the contentious debate surrounding the issue and future implications of Latino political participation.

I argue that first, the 2006 mobilizations expanded what Bloemraad (2006) calls the “political opportunity structure” available to Latinos. Here I define “political opportunity structure” as the system and structures available in order for groups of people to be able to have the support and access to information with which to be able to participate in the political system. Second I also argue that the 2006 mobilizations combined with an increase in resources, and organization among local and national groups resulted in the success of the citizenship workshops, which increased naturalization rates amongst Latinos. Currently, it appears that we are having another “surge” in naturalization rates, which appears to be fueled in part by the marches and the current immigration debate in congress. It appears that the citizenship workshops and mobilizations along with the availability of more resources are partially the reason for the recent increase in rates of naturalization. Third I also argue that naturalization should be examined as a social movement outcome of the immigration reform movement. Finally, I argue that because this new ‘cohort’ of new citizens since 2006 became naturalized during a period of contention and perceived threat against their group as a whole; it will result in higher rates of Latino political incorporation and participation in the future.

## Naturalization Rates in San Diego County

Table 1.1: Naturalization of Latino Immigrants 2003-2008, San Diego County

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>
Mexico	2,582	3,122	3,749	4,294	8,156	10,695
Brazil	0	80	92	99	122	159
El Salvador	65	0	0	0	104	139
Peru	67	0	0	94	0	0

Source: Department of Homeland Security

While some of this increase in numbers can be attributed to the increase in fees from \$400 to \$675 on July 30, 2007, there is still an upward trend occurring after the fees increase.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review on the 2006 Mobilizations and Latino Political Participation**

The following literature sets the framework for the project and also identifies certain gaps within the literature of citizenship, community organizing and political/civic participation of Latinos.

#### **Latino Political Participation**

Latino Political Participation has historically been low. This includes voting or demonstrating. This is due in part to the fact that a large number of Latinos in the United States are not citizens (Desipio 2006) and are unable to vote. Another factor is a lack of access to information on political issues within immigrant and Latino communities. In his article “Hispanics and the Future of America,” Desipio highlights that one of the main barriers to increased political participation is lack of citizenship, (2006: 465). He notes that naturalization will be the most important resource at the disposal of the Latino community. Desipio notes that the N-400 application proves to be one of the most difficult barriers to overcome for immigrants, “approximately twice as many Latinos eligible for naturalization request but do not complete the application as complete the naturalization process” (p. 472). Therefore resources focused on the actual application process in order to acquire citizenship are important for successful naturalization increases within the Latino community. Desipio notes that while in the late 1990’s the surge in naturalization saw an increase in resources, currently resources are scarce.

In his article “Si se Puede! Latino Candidates and the Mobilization of Latino Voters” Barreto (2007) also focuses on factors that lead to Latino political participating. Through his study he analyzes five different city Mayor races with Latino candidates in

2001 and 2003, and discovers that Latinos are more likely than White, Black, and Asian American voters to vote for co-ethnics. He also concludes that if the right electoral context is present Latinos are more likely to participate. Here the “right electoral context” includes 2 factors: “the combination of issues and circumstances covering the latter half of the 1990’s, arguably part of a national anti-immigrant movement, and the prominent and viable candidacy of a Latino contestant” (p. 426). He concludes by noting that his hypothesis that shared ethnicity directly influences Latino vote choice was consistently true.

Additionally, in his article “Political Participation by Latino non-citizens in the United States” Leal (2002) notes that the profile of immigrants most likely to become politically involved included, “understanding politics better, planning on naturalizing, having strong ethnic identity, familiarity with English, and being younger” (p. 353).

#### Overcoming Low Rates of Political Participation

So while there are low rates of political participation, there is research that demonstrates that this low political participation of non-citizens can be overcome with appropriate organizational resources and social networks. In her article, “The Individual and Contextual Determinants of Protest Among Latinos,” Martinez (2008) focuses on the factors that engage Latinos to take collective action. Using survey data from the Latino National Political Survey and contextual data of city-level characteristics in the 1980’s Martinez analyzed the determinants of political participation of Latinos in the 1980’s. Martinez concludes that higher Latino participation rates can be explained in terms of their social connections to politically minded friends, as well as neighborhood dynamics that are more likely to expose them to mobilization or organizational involvement. She

also determines that community resources are another factor that determines the political participation of Latinos. Social movement organizations have become a strong mobilizing force within the Latino community: “by focusing on organizing demonstrations, sponsoring voter registration drives, lobbying state legislatures...they serve to mobilize constituents against anti-immigrant anti-Latino efforts by dominant group members” (2008: 191).

Martinez suggests that it appears that there are two forms of political leverage that Latinos have access to: one that is institutional (Latino elected officials who work within the political system) and one that is extra-institutional (the ability to mobilize protest in the face of constrained political environment which cannot be circumvented through legislative means (2008). After running regression models on the effects of the contextual measures on protest, Martinez finds support for the resource mobilization and political opportunity frameworks. One of her main findings is that “Latino organizations have a positive and significant effect on the likelihood of protest among Latinos” (2008: 197). This is an important finding in some ways because in some ways it appears that these organizations help to make up for some of the lack of access that Latinos have to institutional resources that non marginalized non-Latinos have access to.

#### Incorporating Citizens

In “Becoming a Citizen: Incorporating Immigrants and Refugees in the United States and Canada” Irene Bloemraad focuses on the differing ways in which Canada and the United States incorporate citizens into their societies by analyzing Vietnamese immigrant communities in the United States and Portuguese immigrant communities in Canada. Bloemraad suggests that the political incorporation of immigrants does not

necessarily depend on the characteristics of immigrants but rather on their context of reception: “the story of citizenship is not just about the immigrants we receive, but also fundamentally about the reception we give them” (2006: 2). Bloemraad focuses on political incorporation outside of the context of the marches and latest civic engagement movements within the US. My research will help fill in the missing gap of what sort of impact the immigration marches had on Latino political participation. Bloemraad argues that political incorporation is a social process and focuses on the importance of the social aspect to newcomers’ political knowledge. She also argues that people become political participants through personal networks and personal ties rather than via impersonal individual ways- such as through “a distant relationship between the voter and the candidate” (2006: 65). Studies of political incorporation and citizenship mostly focus on the laws regulating access to citizenship and overlook the social nature of political learning and mobilization and the mechanisms that link individuals with political systems (2006: 66).

In her book, “Becoming a Citizen” Bloemraad (2006) highlights similarities and differences in methods of immigrant incorporation between Canada and the United States, she notes that a lack of programs and structures to help successfully incorporate immigrants politically has a serious impact in rates of political participation. Bloemraad adds “for immigration scholars the salient features of a country’s political opportunity structure include citizenship laws [Clarke, Van Dam, and Gooster 1998; Weil 2001], immigration policies [Portes and Rumbaut 1996], national political cultures [Brubaker 1992; Lipset 1990] and the presence of anti-immigrant parties or politicians” [Koopmans 2004; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001] (2006 p.103 as quoted by Bloemraad).

Missing from this are local level opportunities for immigrants to incorporate into. While Canada has programs designed to incorporate immigrants, no such programs exist in the United States. Bloemraad notes that because immigrants have less access to formal avenues for information on citizenship they rely on their social networks and community organizations, and the ethnic media. Community organizations prove to be the key to political participation in immigrant communities, as they seek to educate and mobilize immigrant communities about politics, “community organizations, especially community-based social service agencies, also organize formal events that explicitly seek to educate newcomers about current policy issues or teach them about the political system” (2006: 88). In addition to community organization and media, Bloemraad emphasizes the importance of ‘get out the vote’ voter registration campaigns and citizenship registration for mobilization.

Overall Canada’s multicultural approach appears to have more success in politically incorporating its immigrants. Programs that ease the incorporation of immigrants prove to be the key difference in the diverging rates of political participation among immigrants in the United States and Canada. Canada overall has higher rates of citizenship acquisition, political participation and electoral representation. Her overall conclusions regarding immigrant political participation highlight that political participation must be “understood as a process of structured mobilization and recognize that political integration is largely a social phenomenon and that “communities abilities and interests in promoting political integration rely on the symbolic and concrete support of government which includes policies such as multiculturalism and newcomer

settlement” (2006: 237). Bloemraad and Martinez both note that organizational and social networks are the key to increasing political participation and integration of noncitizens.

#### The 2006 Mobilizations: Surprising changes

Given the findings on the low political participation of Latinos, the mobilizations of 2006 are surprising in many ways. First, the number of Latinos participating in the mobilizations was unprecedented. Reyes (2008) focuses on mobilization strategies used to mobilize Latinos in 2006 and looks at how these strategies differ from the past. Reyes notes that while Latino activism is not a new phenomenon, the massive numbers of people involved in the 2006 mobilizations is unprecedented, “the Los Angeles march served as a model for effective community mobilization that helped inspire hundreds of other similar marches through the nation in the months that followed” (2008: 1). She analyzes the factors that finally “awoke the sleeping giant” (2008: 1). These factors included the use of new resources (technology such as text messaging, internet) or previously untapped resources (Spanish language media) and coalition building across diverse groups. (2008).

Another surprising aspect of the marches was that these marches occurred in communities that traditionally do not have organizations or networks to support high rates of political participation. Desipio, Benjamin-Alvarado, and Montoya (2007) analyze the 2006 mobilizations outside of traditional destination cities for Latino immigrants. Desipio et al. point out that one of the main problems that Latino immigrants residing in new immigrant communities deal with is the lack of resources for civic and political participation that can assist in immigrant incorporation and that “immigrant political mobilization rarely occurs without a rich civic infrastructure” (Desipio et al 2007 p.8).

However the marches and mobilizations in these smaller cities offer “the potential that immigrants in areas of new migration may become politically engaged more rapidly than previous scholarship would predict” (2007: 4).

Desipio et al. ask how it was that so many immigrant protests occurred in these communities which typically do not participate in political mobilizations. Factors included technology: cell phone and internet communications in order to: organize the marches, create talking points and coordinate media, security and other logistics. The threat of HR 4437 against Immigrants caused greater unity amongst Latinos “because of the growing opposition to Latinos as a class, the debate served to unify their disparate interests and identities to form a pan-Latino unity in response to being grouped together by immigrant groups” (2007: 13). Desipio et al conclude that the mobilizations were effective and helped engage large numbers of Latino immigrants, but that continued investment in outreach and engagement is required in order to continue the work started with the mobilizations of 2006 within new immigrant communities.

Another surprising aspect of the marches was the profile of the participants. Many of them did not fit the profile of those who are typically politically active or involved. The involvement of Latino youth in the mobilizations is an example, theories of political socialization focus on parent influence on child political participation, but with the marches, it was the students who engaged their parents and their peers with the help of professors and technology, such as text messaging and myspace.com (Reyes 2008).

Reyes notes that the use of modern technology was a key factor involved in mobilizing Latino communities to march. These factors included: the Spanish-language media, the Internet and text messaging. Reyes posits that technology was key to the

success of the mobilizations. This use of technology contradicts the existing scholarship that new technology would not benefit minorities, “effective political activism via modern technology and the mass media is beginning to be employed...” (2008: 3). The authors give a brief review on the importance of ethnic media (Spanish television stations, Spanish radio station, Spanish newspapers) in mobilizing the masses of people that marched in La Gran Marcha in Los Angeles. The strong presence of Latino youth and second-generation participants opens up an important space for future mobilizations. As Barreto (2007) states Latino immigrants who do not fit the profile of individuals likely to participate politically may become participants when they feel threatened, “the idea of ‘group consciousness theory’ was simply that members of minority groups who shared an identity would be more likely to participate if they saw their group as politically disadvantaged. This theory fits the position of Latinos in the 1990’s/2000’s quite well.”

These findings about the marches raise the question that this thesis hopes to answer: can the political participation inspired by the mobilizations be sustained? I hope to show that the movement created with the mobilizations has and will continue to be sustained because the marches themselves transformed the political opportunity structure. While this sustainability will vary in degrees it will also depend on outside factors such as future legislation for or against immigrants, organizing efforts by community and national organizations. The political opportunity structure was transformed through the creation of new coalitions and growing ethnic solidarity (as will be discussed in Chapter 3) and through the increase of naturalization rates within Latino communities (as will be discussed in Chapter 4).

Desipio et al (2007) deal with question of the sustainability of the 2006 movements. In their study of Omaha, Nebraska, a relatively new destination for immigrants, they observed that immediately following the mobilizations; coalitions involved with the mobilizations helped increase and promote voter registration. The authors note that while the mobilizations sparked political participation and resulted in voter registration and an increase in subsequent Latino voter turnout and mobilizations, there are many challenges that Omaha and other new receiving communities will deal with, which might result in more failures than successes. The immigrant mobilizations do, however, open a unique venue for political participation that has potential to be translated into a continued sustainable movement.

Pantoja and his colleagues also analyze the potential long-term impact of the marches and mobilizations on Latino political mobilization. Part of my research is to understand what the long-term impact will be. While three years is not enough time to demonstrate sustained and long-term political mobilizations, it is enough time to gauge the short-term impact in order to understand what the possible future trajectories might be. What Pantoja et al are missing is the ethnographic aspect of naturalization within Latino communities, which can help to inform on the motivations for naturalization amongst Latinos at the individual level. Most research that is currently done on naturalization focuses on the numbers and percentages of people becoming citizens with less of a focus on why people want to become citizens. This thesis can also have practical application by informing future methodology that organizations use when coordinating campaigns for citizenship.

Reyes (2008) concludes her analysis by pointing out that the marches are a critical juncture for the future of Latino participation and that the marches may be the beginning of a renewed interest in the political process. Reyes points out that activist networks which were established during the marches continue to work together, “activists networks established are now being used to promote other issues as well as broader forms of conventional political participation demonstrating the development of critical political skills key to obtaining political power” Reyes (2008: 8). My focus expands on her work, specifically looking at continued mobilization and organization focused on citizenship workshops, naturalization and voting rates.

#### Political Opportunity Structure

Political Opportunity Structure literature “theorizes that certain political contexts are more conducive to mobilization than others” (Desipio et al 2007 p.7). It appears that the immigrant mobilizations of 2006 created a wider political opportunity structure for Latinos to be able to participate in a variety of ways. This happened through the creation of new coalitions and solidarity, “immigration advocacy groups included members of churches, unions, students organizations and other grassroots organizations in both English and Spanish” (Pantoja et al 2009 p.500). In addition to coalition building, a growing sense of solidarity among Latinos cut across generational, citizenship status, socioeconomic, and demographic divides. Working together on the mobilizations led to a decrease in longstanding tensions between U.S. and foreign-born Latinos. In Flower’s “from the Same Soil” Martinez (2008) interviews Colorado Grassroots Organizers from Immigrant and Latino groups and uses Pew Hispanic Survey data to focus on the emergence of ethnic solidarity. She concludes that the 2006 mobilizations fostered a

sense of ethnic solidarity, “Latinos in Colorado became more empathetic towards immigrants as they increasingly felt they too were being targeted by punitive legislation and extremist rhetoric at the height of the immigration debate. As a result, grassroots organizers used this as an opportunity to appeal to a wide audience and framed the immigration issue so that it would be more appealing to...U.S-born Latinos” (Martinez 2008 p. 566). Building these coalitions and networks helped to enhance the political opportunity structure available to Latinos. When organizations and groups collaborated together to mobilize people through marches, and events, these became ways that Latinos could participate politically and be informed of legislative issues having to do with immigration. Access to this type of information is often seen as a barrier for full political participation.

Barreto (2007) focuses on voting choices based on shared ethnicity, “shared ethnicity directly influences Latino vote choice” (2007: 438). He studies city elections for Mayors in America’s largest cities: Los Angeles, New York City, Houston, and San Francisco. He posits that ethnicity is an important component of Latino political incorporation for 5 reasons: “1) Latinos share a Latin American heritage/culture 2) shared immigrant experience 3) continued discrimination highlights their commonality 4) ethnic candidates focus on co-ethnics as their base 5) Spanish surname candidates cue known traits in low information environments” (2007: 426). In his article he echoes the argument of growing Latino solidarity in the face of legislation that targets the Latino community as the “other.” Barreto’s article ends by noting that the success of the marches of 2006 signifies the successful ability of the Latino community to mobilize around ethnicity.

Another way in which the mobilizations have led to sustained political participation is through the increase of naturalization amongst Latinos (as will be discussed in chapter 4).

In order to make the case that sustained political participation continues through the transformation of the political opportunity structure, this thesis looks at examples of several studies of social movements that show how protest can influence subsequent rates of participation in e.g. reporting crimes (McVeigh 2003) or claiming welfare benefits (Piven and Cloward 1978).

### Measuring Social Movement Outcomes

Social Movement outcomes are difficult to assess. A cursory review of the literature shows the many ways in which social movement outcome success is measured. Social movement outcomes involve debate on how to best measure the success of a social movement. Should the measurement involve measuring the outcome to the expected goals of a movement (Rucht 1999), should it include the personal level identity and consciousness levels changed as a result of participation in a social movement (Gelb and Hart 1999), or should it measure the unintended consequences of movements (Andrews 2001)? There is much debate within the literature about the methods with which to measure social movement success. One method that has been overlooked is the actual implementation of policies.

### Social Movements and Policy Implementation

In their article “Hate Crime Reporting as a Successful Social movement Outcome,” McVeigh, Welch and Bjarnason also tackle the question of what happens after a policy is passed. Is the enactment of a passage enough to say that an outcome of a social movement was successful? What about ensuing questions over legitimacy or actual

implementation of the policy? Their main questions then are: what determines compliance with a public policy once it is put into place? And what factors explain variance in compliance with public policy across local settings? To address the questions McVeigh et al analyze Hate Crime Legislation. Civil rights activist organizations played a role in promoting hate crime legislation at the state and federal level, requiring the government to collect data on hate crimes (McVeigh et al 2003). This article most closely begins to look at implementation and the ensuing issues that arise once a policy is passed. They use a combination of theoretical frameworks that include political mediation and political context and framing in order to explain the varied outcomes of hate crime reporting.

They note that there is a problem measuring the success of the Hate Crimes Act. The initial support for hate crimes reporting came from the fact that policy might be able to be developed based on levels and reports of hate crimes. However there are problems with the unequal reporting of hate crimes (for example in 2000 California reported 1,943 hate crimes, while Alabama reported none), problems with the definition of participating in hate crime reporting: while the number of law enforcement agencies participating has increased this is deceptive because “participation” includes submitting that there were no hate crime incidents, another problem is that although the Federal government is required to report hate crimes it is optional for local authorities to participate. Finally what McVeigh et al consider most problematic is the difficulty that law enforcement agents face in determining what constitutes a hate crime.

Given all of these problems, McVeigh et al define a social movement “success” the actual reporting of a hate crime, “because each reported incident represents a

deliberate choice made by local authorities to take positive action on legislation that endorses the validity of claims and demands asserted by various civil rights organizations” (2003). To explain the consequences of the hate crime reporting movement, McVeigh et al focus on Political Mediation theory which “combines organizational strength of a movement and the political context in which the movement operates” (2003). One of their key findings is that processes of meaning construction not only are important in the development of public policy but in gaining compliance with public policy. Their findings suggest that civil rights organizations play an important role but only in certain situations in which they have availability of resources and there is a favorable political context. This finding relates to the current naturalization movement because it appears that these two factors: resources and favorable political context are in place and help explain, in part, the success of citizenship workshops.

In his article, “Social Movements and Policy Implementation: The Mississippi Civil Rights Movement and the War on Poverty, 1965 to 1971“ Andrews focuses on the social movement outcomes of the War on Poverty during the 1960’s and 1970’s, and connects the poverty programs in Mississippi as an outcome of the civil rights movement. For Andrews’ the three main factors necessary to successfully analyze social movement outcomes: “1) examining different forms of political change, 2) analyzing opportunity structures, institutional arenas and key actors that shape movement dynamics, and 3) measuring changes over time because “movements change their tactics and goals” (2001 p. 73). In order to analyze the social movement outcomes he focuses on quantitative analysis of Mississippi counties and qualitative evidence from interview and archival data. One of his main findings is that movements shaped the implementation of local

poverty programs, “the local movements had a positive impact on the amount of Community Action Program funding and the movements helped influence the formation of CAPS by carving out areas of administrative control” (2001p. 89). He proposes that future work on social movement outcomes focus on how movements shape policy implementation--- in his case studies he found varying ways in which social movements were able to successfully influence policy implementation including: disruption of program operations, negotiation with agency officials, and symbolic persuasive protest activities. Indirect influence was the most successful when movements prompted white politicians to actively pursue grants for poverty programs. The strength of Andrews’ article includes his proposal to look more closely at the mechanisms within social movements, which lead to policy implementation and his criteria for measuring social movement outcomes.

In the section “The Welfare Rights Movement” of their book, “Poor People’s Social Movements: Why they Succeed, How they Fail,” Piven and Cloward (1978) focus on the welfare rights movement that started in the 1960’s and on the movement’s outcomes specifically within the context of direct implementation of the welfare program on the participants. Aid to families and dependent children had been in existence since 1935 when the Social Security Act had been passed, but few benefited from the act, and partially because of the negative stigma associated with receiving welfare aid, the number of people on the rolls was very low. It remained low until the 1960’s and 70’s when the emergence of poverty as a national issue helped change the number of people applying for aid. In 1964 when the Economic Opportunities bill (commonly known as the Antipoverty Program) was signed by president Johnson, the act “greatly expanded an

array of service programs initiated in the Kennedy years” (Piven and Cloward 1978 p.271). In addition as social workers and community aides were activated to help with the new service programs, they began to learn the welfare regulations and to learn to fight for their clients. In addition, antipoverty lawyers became involved with fighting for welfare rights- they won cases in state and federal courts which expanded the number of people eligible to get assistance, the end result was that “a multifaceted campaign against welfare restrictiveness had formed with the federal government as its chief source of both resources and legitimacy” (Piven and Cloward 1978: 272).

After the success of enrolling families into the welfare programs, organizers turned to strategizing for future movement. Disagreements quickly ensued amongst the organizers on how to proceed, Piven and Cloward believed that “political influence by the poor is mobilized not organized” and argued that disruptive strategies do not need long-term participation but mobilization in masses, they also believed that there would not be enough incentive for people to continue being engaged since the incentive would end as soon as they obtained welfare benefits.

While initially the National Welfare Rights Organization, which was created to continue mobilizing the welfare reform movement, there were seventy-five organizations in forty-five cities and twenty-one states affiliated with the NWRO, by 1970 the organization had collapsed. Reasons for the collapse included: that the welfare recipients themselves came to understand the regulations of being represented and therefore they no longer depended on the welfare organizations, also many families benefitted from the help that welfare organizations provided and then no longer needed assistance and therefore dropped off. Piven and Cloward offer useful tools for analyzing social

movement outcomes, especially when the outcomes directly affect participants. Their article is helpful to understand the problems that arise when a social movement outcome involves direct implementation.

#### Summarizing the Literature Review

The low percentage of naturalized citizens and voting rates amongst Latinos continue to be a problem in part because of lack of what Irene Bloemraad calls “political incorporation.” I argue that the marches appear to have expanded the political opportunity structure for Latinos and are an avenue to becoming involved in political participation. Furthermore the mobilizations along with ethnic media and use of modern technology are also helping in encouraging Latinos to become U.S. citizens and to vote. Many articles echo the sentiment that naturalization is key to increased power within Latino politics, which is why I focus on this specific aspect of the newest wave of mobilization within the Latino community. Looking at San Diego as a case study, current motivations and causes for citizenship acquisition within Latino residents will help add to the existing literature on Latino political participation.

## CHAPTER 3

### **The Structure of the Immigration Reform Movement Today**

The question became ‘Are we going to be able to not just show our muscle on the streets but are we going to be able to flex our muscle on the polls and really to push politicians to be less anti-immigrant or to take the immigrant vote more seriously?’ And so there was a big push for voter registration and voter engagement

-Norma C, San Diego Community Organizer, on the push for naturalization after the immigration mobilizations of 2006

In order to understand the factors that contributed to the success of the citizenship workshops and peoples motivations’ for citizenship, it is important to understand the current context and structure of the campaigns and coordination between local and national organizations.

Coordination for the large scale 2006 immigration mobilizations (which included marches, rallies, prayer vigils, and economic boycotts) involved collaboration across many groups, including groups that typically might not work together because of differences in ideology, strategies, and methods for organizing. Difficulty organizing across Latino groups may in part be due to a large number of Latino/a organizations with their own leadership and set of ideologies which makes coordination across different groups a challenge (Meier 1993). Regular planning and strategizing meetings helped build a foundation for these groups to continue working together after the success of the marches. As a participant in planning of the immigration march here in San Diego, I saw this happen at the local level. There were around 30 faith, labor, social justice, and student groups collaborating. These included SEIU, United Domestic Workers (UDW), Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN), various church

and faith groups including Justice Overcoming Boundaries, student groups from University of California San Diego (UCSD), San Diego State University (SDSU), Border Angels, and the San Diego City College *Si Se Puede* coalition. Amongst these groups \a large range of ideologies and ideas exist concerning what a successful strategy to bring about immigration reform might be. Some groups advocate no borders, while others advocate visits with their House and Senate representatives. The success of the marches was in navigating these ideological differences and focusing on the immediate threat that the HR 4436 bill posed to all of the undocumented immigrant communities and those who aided them in the United States. In the San Diego March, “For Dignity and Hope,” an estimated 100,000-plus participants marched from the corner of Laurel and 6<sup>th</sup> in Balboa Park, all the way through downtown to the Federal Building. After the turnout and success of the march, some of the coalition members continued to work together and to develop important relationships with media outlets including television, radio and newspapers.

After the 2006 marches, the “We Are America” coalition, a national coalition which included National Council of La Raza (NCLR), Center for Community Change, Gamaliel, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) and other national-level organizations divided its efforts into two major focuses: Reform Immigration for America (RIFA) and “We are America.” This division was viewed as a successful strategy because organizing and outreach would occur on aspects of immigration reform and civic engagement concurrently. RIFA became the nation-wide campaign focused on creating greater support for immigration reform though organizing community organizations and national organizations across the

country around immigration reform and was the part of the campaign that focused on the legislative and policy aspects of immigration reform. Part of their strategy included legislative visits and information sessions with members of congress and with the presidents' advisors on immigration reform. Other organizations continued working with the We are America coalition focusing on civic engagement within and among immigrant communities. This included the push for citizenship workshops, working with various media outlets including radio, newspaper and television in order to give information about how to naturalize and the location of upcoming citizenship workshops. The coalition also focused on voter registration and turnout during the 2008 elections. While there was a division of work between RIFA and We Are America, there was not an ideological division; both campaigns included members of the same groups. Desipio et al note that mobilization rarely happens without an already existing civic structure and that "ethnic radio, unions, churches, transnational federation, and immigrant service organizations have in antecedents in the party machines, bosses, ethnic organizations have antecedents in organization of previous waves of migration" (2007:8).

The campaign that specifically focused on naturalization was led by NALEO along with SEIU and NCLR at the national level and came to be called *¡Ya Es Hora Ciudadania!* It was launched immediately following the immigration marches. These major players came together along with local organizations to launch citizenship workshops. While this may not seem like a big feat, it was impressive because the amount of coordination and collaboration occurring at the national and local level was unprecedented. The collaboration that happened during the marches, continued to the immigration reform campaign and to naturalization outreach. The launch of the campaign

occurred right after the marches; many local organizations started doing citizenship workshops in their communities with help in the form of resources and training from NALEO.

### Coalition Building

Never before in any other period of the movement for immigration reform has it ever been as organized as it is right now

-Eliseo Medina, SEIU Labor Activist, Speech in San Diego, March 2010

Eliseo Medina, a nationally recognized labor leader echoes a common belief and reflects on the evidence of growing coalition building and organization of the current immigration reform movement. He participated in a forum I facilitated in San Diego, addressing various labor, faith and community leaders in a speech about immigration reform in the nation today. Coalition building gained strength with the 2006 mobilizations. Coalition building around immigration issues in the past had not reached the level that the present coalitions have. These coalitions and collaborations led to more resources, strategies and overall strength for immigration reform and contributed to the success of the citizenship workshops and naturalization of Latinos.

One reason that organizing Latino communities has been traditionally difficult is the diversity found within Latino communities such as background, ideology and socioeconomic status. However during the mobilizations and immediately following a growing solidarity across Latinos was noted. In “Flowers from the Same Soil”: Latino Solidarity in the Wake of the 2006 Immigrant Mobilizations” Martinez (2008) finds that prior to the marches, tensions between Latino immigrants and Latino U.S.- born citizens or residents were a constant problem that the organizers were faced with. After the

mobilizations in 2006, Colorado organizers found it easier to create collaboration amongst the various Latino groups. Pantoja and his colleagues similarly argue that as a result of the marches, all Latinos were equally “othered” and targeted by anti immigrant backlash, which resulted in the formation of a more cohesive solidarity. Their main argument is that due to the growth of anti-immigrant sentiment expressed throughout the immigration debate, “the 2006 mobilizations created a renewed sense of ethnic solidarity among Latinos. Even though ethnicity, generational differences, documentation status, political ideology and social class often create cleavages among Latinos, a sense of shared fate and experience became more apparent in the wake of the 2006 mobilizations” (Martinez 2008: 558). She also focuses on how this growing solidarity is further encouraged through very strategic framing on the part of community organizers.

#### Faith and Labor Groups

In addition to the growing solidarity across Latino groups, there was also growing collaboration with faith and labor groups. In his article, “Today We Act, Tomorrow We Vote’: Latino Religions, Politics and Activism in Contemporary U.S. Civil Society” Espinosa talks particularly about the strategies for coalition building used by two faith leaders: Cardinal Mahoney of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and Reverend Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference during the 2006 mobilizations. Cardinal Mahoney specifically used a lot of the tactics of Cesar Chavez, the famous icon in the struggle for farm worker rights in the Central Valley of California. His tactics included: “nonviolent protest, citing Catholic social teaching, and sponsoring or supporting pilgrimages and candlelight prayer vigils” (2007: 158). Reverend Mahoney helped create the “Justice for Immigrants” campaign in January 2006

in which he asked Catholics to pray and fast for 40 days for humane immigration reform and just laws beginning on March 1. The campaign had many layers and goals: “1) to educate Catholics about the benefits of immigration 2) to strengthen public opinion about the positive contributions of immigrants 3) to advocate for just immigration laws that promote legal status and legal pathways for migrants workers and their families and 4) to organize Catholic legal service networks to assist immigrants to access the benefits of reform, the final goal was to try to change the laws so immigrants could support their families with “dignity” so families could remain united” (2007: 159). This reflects the same use of family values when framing the immigration debate that Martinez mentions in her article, which discusses the growing solidarity amongst Latinos and focuses on Colorado community organizers. One of the most powerful strategies was Mahoney’s decision to instruct priests to engage in civil disobedience by disobeying HR 4437 if it was made law. His argument was that “not providing humanitarian assistance to those in need ‘violates a law with higher authority than Congress- the law of God” (2007: 160). He along with hundreds of other religious leaders used Chavez’ rhetoric along with religious rhetoric to bring to light the inhumane aspects of HR 4437. Another key leader in this religious movement to stop HR 4437 was the Reverend Samuel Rodríguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC). He indirectly worked with Mahoney. The NHCLC sought to engage in bipartisan work, “holding meetings, seminars and colloquia with key Democratic and Republican political leaders and sought to promote a “middle path” between the extremes of HR 4437 and amnesty” (2007: 166). Espinosa concludes by noting that while there had been a decline in Latino faith-based organizing, there was a revival in the wake of Cesar Chavez and other leaders during the

1970's. Once again the opportunities are becoming available for increased religious faith based organizing, an example is the loose partnership created between Rodriguez and Mahoney. Religious institutions are gaining increased access to government; "Latino Catholics and protestant leaders and their advocates are gaining unprecedented access to the White House and the Congress because of their growing clout and fears of defections" (2007: 169). One of the national religious organizations, Gamaliel, is an example of a national faith-based organization with growing political clout, focused on organizing across religions with a focus on social justice. They work on immigrant rights and have a Civil Rights of Immigrants (CRI) national taskforce which focuses on working in partnership with the Reform Immigration for America (RIFA) campaign and encourages its members to engage community members in civic participation, mobilizations and works directly with congress members to help set the path for humane and just immigration reform.

These religious groups have played a key part in the coalition building across groups nationwide. Labor Unions have also begun partnering with faith-based groups on different campaigns although until recently, historically unions in the United States have been anti-immigrant, Kent et al. in their article, "The 2006 Immigrant Uprisings: Origins and Future" note that during 1986 during the Immigration Reform and Control Act, unions voted to for employer sanctions, in 1999 this changed when labor leaders from unions representing immigrant workers demanded that the AFL-CIO change its stance on immigrant workers during an AFL-CIO convention in Los Angeles. The following year "the AFL-CIO executive council passed a historic resolution asking for unconditional amnesty, an end to employer sanctions and an increase in workplace protections for

immigrants” (Kent et al 2007: 51). Since then, divides continue to happen with immigration groups and Labor Unions, including difference viewpoints on guest worker programs. Yet despite these difficult past relationships between unions and immigration groups; there has been progress made with collaboration between these groups, not only in the realm of immigration reform but also worker and economic justice.

#### Collaboration between the Local and the National

In addition to the increased collaboration amongst Latinos and with faith and labor groups, the mobilizations sparked collaboration between local organizations and the national campaigns and groups. The collaboration on the mobilizations between groups across different cities, counties and states facilitated continued communication between the groups beyond the mobilizations of 2006. While some networks may have not continued working together, once the Reform Immigration for America and the We Are America campaigns were launched, these pre-existing networks were tapped into once again in order to continue collaborating on reform and civic engagement.

#### Resources

Ya Es Hora is essentially about connecting three dots: on one end you have the national coordinating organizations, like NALEO, NCLR and SEIU who bring the strategy and so forth, and connecting with national media partners who promote a hotline to get naturalization information, to local workshops and events that you can get information on citizenship, and then the third piece of that, the third dot of the triangle is connecting to the local organizations on the ground, the people who actually have a presence on the ground; they have volunteers, they have a vested interest in the community and are trusted in the community, that’s not something that we have as an organization so that’s how in essence it worked, connecting those three dots together becomes a very effective vehicle for massive mobilization.

-Evan, NALEO Civic Engagement Director, on the collaboration between local and national groups to promote the citizenship workshops and naturalization

One of the many benefits of collaboration between local and national groups was the sharing of resources. The large size of the nation-wide coalitions and groups means that they had access to larger amounts of money because they could apply for grants, apply for foundation money and seek money from Unions or even individual donors in higher amounts than smaller local organizations. From my observations and discussions with community organizers, this money is used to pay staff but also to help local organizations pay for the members of their coalition groups to participate in various events in different places across the country, such as Citizenship Day “Unity in Movement: 2009 National Mobilization for Citizenship Day” in Washington D.C.. The events include nation-wide mobilizations as well as in-person meetings with legislators to discuss immigration reform. Many participants attending these meetings and mobilizations in Washington D.C. would not have been able to attend without the extra support from the national organizations to help defray travel costs. In August 2009 I participated in a Reform Immigration for America strategy meeting as a representative of the Gamaliel organization in Washington D.C. and expenses were covered by Gamaliel. Justice Overcoming Boundaries (JOB), the local affiliate, cannot afford to fly community members to D.C. on its modest funds.

Many local groups have small budgets and depend on fundraising and small grants in order to run their groups. They frequently mobilize with unpaid volunteers and leaders. After the 2006 mobilizations, relationships between local groups and the national campaigns facilitated resource sharing. Both RIFA and the *¡Ya Es Hora!* campaigns

gained access to communities where they only had a vague presence through their collaboration with local established community groups that residents trusted. By coordinating with these organizations they were able to have a stronger reach into these communities, while at the same time, the local groups benefited from the larger budgets that the national campaigns had. This was true locally in San Diego as JOB was able to benefit from free training provided by NALEO staff in order to train volunteers to fill out the N-400's for the citizenship workshops. JOB gathered the volunteers through its networks and provided a location for the training and NALEO staff came to train volunteers. In addition, the *¡Ya Es Hora!* Campaign had thousands of free materials to distribute to local groups which included check lists, study materials such as packets and flash cards for participants of the citizenship workshops to continue studying after the event. They also provided suggestions on ways to successfully run the workshops which groups tailored to their specific needs. Locally, NALEO gave us the concept of using "stations" in which each station was a different step of the process. While theirs was a rough idea of how to conduct a workshop we elaborated their model to include: 1) orientation (a sort of screening process to ensure that participants at the workshops had all of their materials necessary, 2) filling out their forms (having a trained volunteer fill out their N-400 for them), 3) photo stations and 4) legal advice with pro-bono lawyers. This general model was used in different variations at the citizenship workshops across the country.

### Strategies

Collaboration across Latino groups and within local and national organizations also made it possible to develop stronger strategies through the use of ethnic media,

technology, clear framing, and coordination. One of the key resources and strategy used during the 2006 mobilizations and the ensuing push for naturalization was the use of ethnic media. While information about *La Gran Marcha* had been circulating through the ethnic media for weeks before the march, on the day of *La Gran Marcha*, mainstream media were caught unaware; they did not know that it was going to occur or perhaps underestimated the massive turnout. Via ethnic media (Spanish language television, radio and newspapers) organizers and radio and television personalities were able to work in conjunction to spread the word about HR 4437 and the reasons that the community needed to march. The power and reach of ethnic media was highly successful in mobilizing Latinos. Interestingly enough, the media relationships that were created between the media and organizers at both national and local levels were key in promoting and providing information about the citizenship workshops and naturalization information hotlines. Locally, after the mobilizations, we began to have the direct contact with various television reporters, newspaper journalists and radio DeeJays in San Diego. When we were going to do a press release or advertise the citizenship workshops we could easily contact them to promote our events. The use of technology, (also see Felix et al 2008) however, was not reserved to youth; much of the success of the mobilizations is credited to ethnic radio. DJ's engaged Latino audiences on the issues of the bill, and they also encouraged their audiences to become involved, come out for the marches, and after the marches to naturalize and register to vote.

Technology also played a key role in the high turnout for the mobilizations and citizenship workshops. While organizers initially used traditional ways of mobilizing, they quickly began taking advantage of modern technology. This included use of the

internet, text messages and the Spanish-language media. A website was created specifically for *La Gran Marcha* where groups could sign up, learn how to become involved, and find information and details (Reyes 2008). Mainly youth used text messaging and posts on myspace.com to spread news about the marches, and later about the student walkouts. Faith and social justice groups also spread information about the mobilizations through the use of websites. In addition to using technology in order to coordinate the mobilizations, communication has proven key to continued collaboration between local and national groups and coalitions. This includes conference calls amongst groups. While technology and better methods of communication were key to the successful turn out, framing also proved to be important in promoting the immigration mobilizations, immigration reform and naturalization amongst Latino communities.

### Framing

In social movement theory, framing is important to understanding the success or failure of social movement outcomes. Cress and Snow (2000) note that a movement's success should depend greatly on coherent and well-articulated framing. If the framing of an issue is in line with the way that social movement participants see an issue, there is greater chance of success for that social movement. McVeigh et al. (2003) add that frame resonance varies across different contexts and can help account for varying levels of success: "our approach can lead to an understanding of how coherent and well-articulated frames can fail in some circumstances, while incoherent and poorly articulated frames may succeed in other circumstances" (p.863). Framing within the immigration reform movement was crucial in gaining support for immigration reform within the nation and

for increasing interest in naturalization within and outside Latino communities<sup>2</sup>. Martinez (2008) discusses the framing strategies that the Colorado organizers used in order to gain more support for immigration reform. Organizers framed their message to appeal to the largest amount of people. Using family values and appeals to pan-ethnic Latino identity was helpful in gaining larger support for the campaign. In addition to unity in a shared identity they utilized the resulting shared discrimination, which became another frame that helped build solidarity and support for immigration reform. The RIFA campaign sought to appeal and gain support from to the 'moveable middle' by framing the immigration issue so "it would appeal to a larger swath of the general public; this included appeals to Latinos on the basis of pan-immigrant and pan-ethnic ties, human rights and family values" (p. 61).

#### The "Moveable Middle"

The campaign noted that most Americans fit into the "the moveable middle." They are neither anti- nor pro-immigrant but they saw the problems and wanted logical, humane solutions. The frame of "family values" is one of the strongest aspects of the campaign aimed at the moveable middle. At an immigration summit in San Diego, one of the national RIFA media organizers noted, "it is hard to argue against keeping families together." By focusing on statements that people can agree with, they were able to frame an appealing campaign. This is in the "Who Are We" section of the Reform Immigration for America website<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Many of the ways in which immigration reform is framed in Colorado echoes the current strategies of the Reform Immigration for America (RIFA) campaign.

<sup>3</sup> <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/>

We are asking Americans who support immigration reform to join us. We are reaching out to all Americans who want a common-sense solution to our broken immigration system that strengthens equal opportunity and the rule of law, treats hardworking immigrant families with respect and dignity, and moves all communities and families in America forward together.

This appeal for immigration reform involves fair and just solutions, and focuses on fixing the immigration system so that it moves all communities and families forward.

Astute framing led to stronger support; RIFA campaign organizers noted the success of using a “family values” framework to support immigration marches and reform. At many events and vigils, families suffering with the loss of family members either through deportation or work raids, often speak passionately about the broken immigration system. These families are dealing with the problem of having their families separated and oftentimes losing a crucial source of financial support. This sort of framing is also used at a local level across the country. In addition, immigration reform is framed as an issue of human rights and dignity. RIFA and the *¡Ya Es Hora!* citizenship campaign also use red, white and blue on their logos and fliers. This is to appeal and affirm that Latinos in the U.S. are patriotic, given that many right-leaning politicians and community members question this. Using these colors also appeals to the “moveable middle”: the majority of people who are not leaning towards either direction. In addition to the family values appeal, many religious organizations used Christian rhetoric to gain support for immigrants (Espinosa: 2007).

Framing: Pan-ethnic identity

Appealing to pan-ethnic identity also appears to be one strength of the campaign. This pan-ethnic appeal was particularly successful because it appears that the

mobilizations and ensuing discrimination and racialization of Latinos led to a growing sense of shared identity. While there are obviously differing political viewpoints among Latinos in as far as immigrants in the United States due to differences resulting from socioeconomic status, generation, and difference backgrounds; a growing sense of solidarity across Latino groups was observed (Pantoja et al 2008, Martinez 2008). The growth of nativism, and the growth of the negative stereotyping of Latinos in the national spotlight, helped create a shared sense of identity by Latinos. It did not matter how long Latinos had been in the United States or their current legal status; they were all viewed as “the other” and have always been viewed as the other.

Using data from the 2006 national Pew Hispanic Center survey, “The Latino Debate” I analyzed the question of increased Latino solidarity since the 2006 mobilizations.

The “Latino Debate” survey asked respondents their heritage, responses could be:

- 01 Mexican (Mexico)
- 02 Puerto Rican (Puerto Rico)
- 03 Cuban (Cuba)
- 04 Dominican (the Dominican Republic)
- 05 Salvadoran (El Salvador)
- 95 Other Central American (Central America)
- 96 Other South American (South America)
- 97 Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (you and your family’s country of origin)
- 98 Don’t know
- 99 Refused

I recoded these categories to look specifically at the two groups that I was interested in:

0= Cuban Americans and Puerto Ricans and 1= Mexicans, Central Americans and

Salvadorians. The rest of the respondents were removed from the study because I sought to limit the study to the difference between groups of immigrants that have traditionally

had an easy time of gaining legal entry into the United States (Cubans and Puerto Ricans) versus groups of immigrants that have traditionally had a difficult time of gaining legal entry into the United States (Mexicans, Salvadorans and other Central Americans).

Respondents were asked, “Do you think that the immigration marches signal a new social movement?” The responses options were yes or no, or refusal to respond. After removing all of the empty responses, I only looked at the yes and no responses. Using this question, I hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the responses to the question between the groups that have traditionally had easy access to legal entry (Cuban and Puerto Rican) and those who have traditionally had difficulty in gaining legal entry to the United States ((Mexican, Salvadorean, and other Central American) . I hypothesized the divergent views would stem from Cubans and Puerto Ricans not perceiving themselves as part of the immigrants who have traditionally had a hard time of gaining legal entry and who are different from them in class, background and legal status. This would influence their view of the marches as not being the start of a new social movement. After running this data, 178 Cuban and Puerto Rican respondents answered the questions and 576 Mexican, Salvadorian and Central American respondents answered the question.

After this a t-test was run to see if there was a significant level in difference between responses between the two groups, the results showed that there was not a level of significance between the groups. For Mexican, Salvadorean and Central American respondents who answered the questions, the result was 64%, who believe that the immigration marches signal the beginning of a new social movement, which was only

slightly higher than the 58% of Cuban and Puerto Rican respondents who responded similarly.<sup>4</sup>

## Findings

The results show that there was not a level of significance between the groups. My hypothesis was incorrect, however it still has importance in answering the question regarding how the immigration marches affected solidarity among Latinos. After looking at the data above, it seems that there is no difference in response to this question, perhaps pointing to an increase in solidarity between the two groups. This helps support the research of scholars who are looking at this question and finding that there is increased solidarity among Latinos post 2006 mobilizations.

Framing that resonates with the participants and fits the context of mobilizations and social movements is key to their success. In the case of immigration reform, it appears that the campaign is having success in framing the immigration reform issue, while also successfully campaigning for naturalization among immigrants.

While the mobilizations of 2006 are by no means the answer to creating continued massive political participation and increase in naturalization within the Latino population, their unprecedented success and ensuing collaboration and networks across different groups has opened up many spaces for Latinos to be engaged and connected to new forms of participation. This collaboration and strategizing has been a part of why the citizenship workshops have succeeded and facilitated an increase in naturalization amongst Latinos.

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<sup>4</sup> A T-test for differences in means, which adjusts for the different sample sizes and standard deviations, shows that there is not a significant difference.

## Motivations for Naturalization

Yo tengo que hacerme ciudadana una para poder votar, dos para proteger a mi familia, tres porque quedé viuda y tenía que tener un mejor trabajo y entonces el ser ciudadanía te da la libertad, los derechos y la seguridad de proteger a tu familia yo decía yo tengo que votar, si yo digo soy una ciudadana, tengo que votar para quien quiero que sea presidente, los funcionarios, yo soy culpable si están los que no quiero... y por eso luche para la ciudadanía”

I have to become a citizen one to be able to vote, two to protect my family, three because I am a widow and I needed to have a better job and citizenship gives you the liberty, the rights and the security to protect your family. I would tell myself, I need to vote, if I am a citizen I have to vote for whom I want to be president, and for politicians, I will be to blame if those who I don't want are in power, and that's why I fought to become a citizen

-Señora Elizabeth on why she became a citizen

Señora Elizabeth a recently naturalized citizen who has been politically active since her naturalization summarizes some of the common reasons that migrants have in seeking citizenship. While she became a widow and it was a strong factor in her decision to become a citizen she points to the fact that that she wants to protect her children and that she wants to vote.

Siendo residente tengo derechos, pero siendo ciudadana tengo privilegios, porque puedo aspirar a tener mejor trabajo, puedo emigrar a mis hijas. Y yo creo que puedo participar mejor en la comunidad, ahorita estoy estudiando para ser tutora y me gustaría involucrarme mas en la comunidad, siendo ciudadana seria mas fácil y mejor. Siendo ciudadana puedo votar, puedo ser jurado, puedo cantar el himno nacional, tengo muchas opciones. Siento que se me van ampliar mis horizontes, ahorita hay muchas cosas que puedo hacer, pero puedo hacer muchas mas siendo ciudadanía, especialmente votar y puedo postular para un cargo publico

Being a resident I have rights, but being a citizen I have privileges. I can aspire to have a better job, I can immigrate my daughters. And I think that I can participate better in the community, right now I am studying to be a tutor and I would like to involve myself more in the community, and being a citizen would make it easier and better. Being a citizen I can vote, I can

be a juror, I can sing the national anthem, I have more options. I feel that it will broaden my horizons, right now there are many things that I can do, but I can do more things being a citizen, especially vote and to carry a public position

-Señora Patricia, on why she wants to become a citizen

Señora Patricia, a participant of a citizenship workshop this year, is a resident in San Diego with strong ties to Mexico; their family owns a home in Tecate, which they visit regularly. She is involved in her community as a reading tutor and is very passionate about education and feels that becoming a citizen will afford her privileges that she simply does not have as a resident. To her these privileges will open more avenues for her to be involved in her community and in politics. The idea of citizenship as a privilege and gateway to more rights was also echoed amongst other participants.

Porque la cosa es que con la ciudadanía es mas dificil que te la quiten, no como la residencia aunque... mientras tu seas un hombre correcto y de bien no tienen porque. Pero para el residente se vence y a sacar otra vez la mica. Ya se me ha perdido mi mica 2 o 3 veces, se me ha perdido y con la ciudadanía ya no ... se tiene que preocupar uno y hay mucha diferencia

Because the thing is that with citizenship, it is more difficult for them to take it away, not like residents although, as long as you are a good man they don't have a reason to. For the residents their green card expires and you have to renew it. I have lost mine 2 or 3 times, but with citizenship you don't have to worry about that... There are a lot of differences

-Señor Oscar, on why he wants to become a citizen

Señor Oscar also voices a common reason among Latino residents who were either in the process or had recently become naturalized citizens, the idea that being a resident is limiting because it needs to be renewed and can be taken away from you easier than citizenship. He has been a resident since 1987, attempted to become a citizen in 1993 but did not pass the oral part of the exam. However he has been inspired to try again

this year. A community organizer Oscar knows told him about the citizenship workshop and motivated him to attend.

These three quotations show the range of motivations for acquiring citizenship by Latino residents: protecting their rights, gaining benefits, protecting their families, family reunification, and political participation. Driving these factors are the contexts in which Latinos become citizens. That those naturalized after 2006 have become naturalized in a context of perceived threat (anti-immigrant sentiment, nativism, minute men) and mobilizations (immigrant mobilizations) has been important to motivations for acquiring citizenship.

In the next section I analyze naturalization as an outcome of the Immigration Reform Movement. Besides the increase in naturalization within Latino communities, the new strategies, methods, energy and coalitions that emerged from the marches have the possibility to translate into increased political participation and continue increasing naturalization levels within the Latino community.

## CHAPTER 4

### Naturalization as an Outcome of the Immigration Reform Movement

Que te permitan decidir por quien quieres que te gobierne ya eso te hace sentir bien, porque sabes que no es lo mismo que estar como un residente que no tienes voz ni voto, que cuando tienes tu el derecho del voto y quien quieres que este gobernando tu país creo que todo los que vamos por la ciudadanía, vamos por eso

That they allow you to decide who you want to govern you that makes you feel good, because you know that it is not the same as being a resident who has no voice and no vote, when you have the right to vote and who you want running your country, I think that's what all of us who become naturalized citizens are doing it for

-Señora Luz, recently Naturalized U.S. citizen, on why she became a citizen

It was immediately following the marches in 2006 so that was primarily and obviously in May and June, the latter half of the year, folks here at NALEO, SEIU, NCLR and a couple of other organizations asked, 'how can we translate this into action?' You know because the tagline that folks were using was 'today we march tomorrow we vote' but the problem being was that a lot of those people at the marches weren't U.S. citizens

-Evan, NALEO Civic Engagement Director, on how the ¡Ya es hora Ciudadanía! Campaign came to be

Señora Luz became a naturalized Citizen in 2007 after attending a 2007

Citizenship Workshop. She is part of a recent surge of Latinos becoming naturalized in the United States. Naturalization rates of Latino citizens have increased in the last decade, but historically these rates have been low. In this section I focus on two recent situations where there has been an increase in naturalization rates of Latinos, the periods following Proposition 187 in 1994 and the House of Representatives bill 4437 (HR 4437) in 2006. Comparing two relatively similar situations in which there was a noticeable surge in naturalization rates among Latinos will be useful to note difference in contexts.

Although Proposition 187 was specific to California and HR Bill 4437 was national in its reach, both of these pieces of legislation were harsh in the ways in which they targeted and criminalized immigrants. While both were eventually struck down (Proposition 187 because it was deemed unconstitutional and HR 4437 because it was not passed on the Senate side), the effects of both pieces of legislation among Latino communities were similar. Because of Proposition 187, Latinos continued to view the Republican Party negatively even after Pete Wilson left office. “Several years after Wilson was out of office, Latinos still associated those negative attacks with Pete Wilson and Republicans” (Barreto and Nuño 2003 p. 2). An interesting result of these pieces of legislation is that although they are reflective of a growing and historically cyclical nativist perspective in the United States (Sanchez 1997, Nevins 2002) they have also had a positive impact on the civic participation of Latino communities.

These pieces of legislation created a context of perceived threat among immigrants, which according to Pantoja and Segura (2003) in their article, “Fear and Loathing in California: Contextual Threat and Political Sophistication Among Latino Voters” leads to increased political participation, when the political context (candidates or policies are deemed threatening) to an individual or group creates feelings of threat and anxiety. These feelings of threat in the targeted group lead to higher political participation. Another main factor that leads Latinos to naturalize at higher rates is not only the motivation to vote but to ensure that their rights are protected, “It is harder to be stripped of my rights as a citizen than as a resident” noted Señora Tomasa as she spoke about her`. Also after both of these pieces of legislation passed they became opportunities for community organizations to push for immigrant rights, citizenship, and

voting. While the initial legislation negatively targeted immigrants, I argue that the resulting mobilizations on immigration reform grew to encompass other goals including naturalization and political participation (voter registration, voting, and being politically informed) because of how closely interrelated citizenship and access to political participation are. The immigration reform campaign was framed with a focus on using your voice to speak out and vote. Indeed many of the interviewees expressed similar views: that they were choosing to become naturalized citizens not only for the increased rights but because they would vote, many of them unconsciously noted that immigration reform was one of the main reasons that they wanted to become citizens. They wanted to be able to vote on fair immigration reform. As I was interviewing participants, many stated that they wanted to vote so they could help with immigration reform, it seemed that these two things, citizenship and immigration reform were mutually exclusive and that citizenship led to being able to vote for immigration reform. This seems to point to a growing “coalescing” of movements- immigration reform and political participation within a large part of the Latino community, which has increased in the periods following legislation deemed as threatening. Among the people that I interviewed, it is almost assumed that when naturalized they will be voting and be able to impact immigration reform. Comments about voting on immigration reform always came after they stated that they wanted to become citizens in order to be able to vote. This signals a growing connection among Latinos between citizenship attainment and being able to vote on immigration issues.

This coalescing of movements and the current gap on social movement outcomes are the focus of this chapter. I will be looking at naturalization as a social movement

outcome of the immigration reform movement. How is naturalization within the Latino community being implemented? How is the context of the immigration reform movement being used to mobilize Latinos to naturalize specifically in the years following the 2006 mobilizations, with a look at a similar situation: the period after Proposition 187. I will be focusing on the naturalization campaigns that stemmed out of the latest 2006 mobilizations against HR 4437 and comparing this unique opportunity to promote Latino naturalization to the period after Proposition 187 in California. What was the structure of the citizenship mobilizations, specifically the citizenship workshops which proliferated after HR 4437?

There is existing literature on the effects of Proposition 187, but a gap remains regarding the effects of the mobilizations against HR 4437. The lack of research may in part be due to the recentness of these mobilizations. In his forthcoming article, "Drawing New Lines in the Sand: A Retrospective Evaluation of the Failure of Immigration Reform from 2006 to the beginning of the Obama Administration" Desipio (forthcoming) analyzes the impact of the 2006 mobilizations on immigration reform legislation and notes that there is not enough information on the structure of the current national immigration campaign, "the coalition of immigrant support organizations that formed to coordinate the 2006 marches remains, but it is not clear how vibrant it is (p. 23). He focuses on the networks and organizations that are pushing the immigration agenda and the obstacles facing the passage of comprehensive immigration reform.

What is the benefit of comparing the periods following Proposition 187 and HR 4437? As previously noted, the periods following both of these pieces of legislation are very similar in relation to the political context and mobilization opportunities created.

While differences exist, a comparison is still possible between these two time periods and can yield information on how mobilizations against legislation perceived as threatening to Latinos are currently happening, the goals of these mobilizations, and the impact on Latino naturalized voters.

### Social Movement Outcomes

Most research on social movement outcomes focuses on the resulting outcomes in the form of policies. Social movement scholars focus on policy outcomes as an effective gauge with which to assess if a social movement was successful or not. However most social movement scholars fail to look at the next step after a policy is enacted: implementation. Less work has been written on the ways in which these policies are implemented and how they actually serve people.

The current gap on policy implementation is the focus of this section. I will be looking at naturalization as policy implementation. How is naturalization within the Latino community being implemented? How is the context of the immigration reform movement being used to mobilize Latinos to naturalize specifically in the years following the 2006 mobilizations, with a look at a similar situation: the period after Proposition 187. The movement for naturalization within the Latino community had existed for years in Latino organizations that promoted civic engagement. However it came to the forefront as a result of the 2006 mobilizations against House of Representative Bill 4437. Organizations considered power players within the Latino community at the national level: Service Employee International Union (SEIU) Labor union, National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) and National Council of La Raza (NCLR) came together to create the ¡Ya Es Hora! Ciudadania (Now is the Time Citizenship!) Campaign

along with local level community organizations, faith institutions, labor and non-profits. While this campaign appears to have started at the national level, local organizations appear to have concurrently begun pushing for citizenship amongst their members and communities. Interviews conducted with local level organizers demonstrate that citizenship workshops had already been a part of some organizations but that they had not been as successful or as visible until after the mobilizations. This idea was promoted through the now famous slogan seen during the mobilizations: “Ahora Marchamos, Mañana Votamos.” The national campaign combined with local level organizations and partners to hold citizenship workshops, many of which were large scale, with up to a 2000 people going through the workshops in one day. Organizations used the phrase as the slogan to campaign for naturalization among Latinos, in addition with mass advertisement through various ethnic media outlets, and collaboration among local community organizations.

#### Proposition 187 and its impact on naturalization

Proposition 187 was passed in 1994 in California had it been upheld its effect would have been to “deny public services to illegal immigrants as well as require public officials, including doctors and school-teachers, to report suspected undocumented aliens to Immigration and Naturalization Service” (Pantoja et al 2001 p. 730). Many scholars have written about the increase in naturalized citizens in the aftermath of Proposition 187. The harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric created a perceived threat within the Latino community (Pantoja et al 2001, Nevins 2002) and was largely led by nativist fears of a state over run by non-whites (Jacobson 2008; Sanchez 1997; Garcia 1995). As a result Latinos who became naturalized citizens during this political context

of perceived threat against Latinos voted at higher rates than their peers naturalized in periods in which there were no immediate legislative threats towards Latinos. In their article “Are Naturalized Voters Driving the California Latino Electorate? Measuring the Effect of IRCA Citizens on Latino Voting” Barreto, Ramirez and Woods (2005) compare the voting rates of citizens that became naturalized through the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) and Latinos who became naturalized in the 1994-1996 period following Proposition 187. The rise in the national Latino electorate had largely been attributed to the citizens naturalized through the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 however Barreto et al. find “to the extent that newly naturalized citizens help drive the increases in Latino voting, it is not the result of the IRCA amnesty process...the single most important factor emerging from our estimates is the measure accounting for newly registered Latinos in the 1994 through 1996 period. It appears that Latinos who came into the electorate at a time of contentious politics for the Latino community demonstrated a continued interest in voting and were a driving force behind the Latino vote growth in the 1990’s” (Barreto et al 2005 p. 808). Their findings are similar to those of Pantoja and Segura who note that racially charged ballot propositions in the 1990’s triggered feelings of anxiety and threat within the Latino community and pushed them to participate politically at higher levels. They note that while certain communities may lack “political sophistication” which they describe as knowledge of the system, and ability to defend themselves politically, this does not mean that they will always be at a disadvantage, “even those with the least political resources are able to accumulate additional information when the context is perceived to be more threatening” (Pantoja and Segura 2003 p. 282). I argue that this is similar to the current situation post

HR 4437. The increases in hate groups and anti-immigrant legislation attempts have created a climate of perceived threat within various Latino communities. That this anti-immigrant sentiment is highly racial in nature has caused Latinos of various socioeconomic backgrounds and legal statuses to work together.

HR 4437 and its impact on naturalization

Had HR 4437 been upheld, its provisions would have: created a 350 mile fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, and made it a felony to be undocumented in the United States or to aide undocumented immigrants (Felix et al 2008: 619). In their article, “Latino Immigration and Citizenship” Marie Sierra et al. (2000) describe the effects of legislation targeted at Latinos in the 1990s, “As the public debate over immigration intensified during the 1990s, Latinos increasingly came together to express concern over, and opposition to, anti-immigrant attitudes and measures through their behavior at the ballot box, grassroots protest, and their pursuit of citizenship through naturalization”(p. 535). This description could easily describe the current situation with immigration reform and the reaction that the Latino community is having in response to HR 4437.

While there are a lot of similarities between these two contexts, one of the key differences is the increase in resources in the current situation. This time around there is increased multi-level coordination occurring within the campaign, collaboration across labor and faith groups, strong media relationships, and additional resources. These have made information on naturalization more readily available and “approachable” for the Latino community.

The current coordination between national and local level organizations has benefited the current push for naturalization. The *¡Ya Es Hora!* Campaign is multilevel

with resources coming from the national and local levels. NALEO with its past work with the national Spanish media was able to effectively push the citizenship campaign at the national level and coordinate with the local community level organizations to have citizenship workshops. The goal of the campaign when it was launched was to have 1 million immigrants become naturalized citizens, this goal was surpassed in 2008: “Today, the *Ya es Hora: ¡Ciudadania!* (Citizenship, It’s Time!) Campaign announced that it surpassed its goal of helping mobilize more than one million eligible immigrants to apply for U.S. citizenship in 2007. Even with thousands of applications still being processed, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) confirmed receipt of 1,029,951 citizenship applications from January to October, 2007—nearly double the number of citizenship applications received in 2006” (NALEO press release January 7, 2008) while directors at NALEO were careful to point out that it is difficult to measure the reach of the campaign because there were various ways that the campaign could have touched people: the public service announcements on Spanish television, radio, internet, the 1-800-ve y vota information line, the citizenship workshops, the campaign still did massive outreach for naturalization. Most of these goals were possible because of the large-scale coordination that occurred between organizations at all levels. An interesting factor is the continued work by organizations to naturalize people, now that the model exists and has become standard. In addition, another difference between 1994 and now, is the collaboration across groups, faith and labor groups continue to work together with non-profits with greater frequency.

In addition to coordination at local and national levels, ethnic media was another key factor that helped promote the citizenship workshops and naturalization of Latinos.

In their article, “Political Protest, Ethnic Media and Latino Naturalization” Felix et al. (2008) note that the role of the ethnic media (radio stations, television stations, newspapers) during the Gran Marcha in Los Angeles was massive. Mainstream media outlets were caught completely unaware of the marches while the ethnic media had been saturating the airwaves and newspapers for weeks leading up to the Gran Marcha in Los Angeles on March 25, 2006. Baum notes that the success of the mobilizations was in large part due to the ethnic media and that many Latinos use radio as their source for news and it may be attributable to the fact that those who work in the service industries are able to listen to the radio while they work, thus spending most of their work hours connected (2006).

As local and national organizations worked in partnership with these media outlets for press releases and information and interviews on the marches and the HR 4437 bill, relationships were established. Prior to the marches, local nonprofits did not have the attention of the media. This changed after the marches. Media relationships were later strengthened when mobilizations for naturalization happened after the marches. For example, organizers and community leaders who had been on the radio to communicate information about the marches were able to return to the radio stations to promote the citizenship workshops and naturalization. These already established media networks were fundamental in getting the word out about naturalization and the citizenship workshops. At one of the citizenship workshops organized by J.O.B., of 233 people surveyed 134 (57.5%) had learned of the workshops through radio or television: 39 (16.7%) through word of mouth, 33 (14.1%) through their church, 18 (7%) through the local El Latino

newspaper, 8 (3.4%) through “other” ways, and one through email (Justice Overcoming Boundaries, unpublished data).

The other key factor that differentiates the increased promotion of naturalization in the post- proposition 187 period from the current situation is the growth of the citizenship workshops. While citizenship workshops had been in place for years through NALEO, they had never been used at the level in which they were utilized after the 2006 mobilizations. As Tomasa, an attendee of one of the citizenship workshops in San Diego who is in the process of becoming a naturalized citizen notes that there is a lack of resources and knowledge and the workshops facilitate her access to information on the naturalization process:

Quiero votar para poder tomar decisiones, para que el senado tome mejores decisiones y que nos tome a nosotros los hispanos más en cuenta. Que en el hecho de ser hispano que nos valga el voto, con tanta cosa que está pasando las personas están decidiendo y motivándose en convertirse en ciudadanos, pero faltan más organizaciones como esta para promover y motivar a la gente en informarla. Este es el único recurso, hacia falta un taller como el que están haciendo ustedes para involucrarnos más, muchos queremos información y tenemos muchas dudas pero no sabemos a donde ir para ir a hacerlo

I want to vote to be able to take decisions, so the senate will take better decision and that it will take us into account. That the fact that we are Hispanic will make our vote have value, with so many things going on people are deciding and becoming motivated in becoming citizens, but we need more organizations like this one to promote and motivate people in informing them. This is the only resource, we needed a workshop like this one to involve ourselves, a lot of us need information and we have a lot of doubts but we don't know where to go to do it

-Señora Tomasa, on the process of becoming a citizen

Many of the people I interviewed talked about a lack of resources or information available to them. They spoke about not knowing where to go or who to talk to in order

to find information on the naturalization process, voting or other resources. They also felt intimidated about who they could talk to, they felt comfortable while at the citizenship workshops because most of the volunteers spoke Spanish and all were willingly participating. The citizenship workshops appear to be a way to bridge the barrier of access to this information and provide a non-intimidating setting in which to ask questions and acquire information. In addition, physical material and study aides provided by US-CIS and bilingual material from NALEO helped make studying for the citizenship test easier and more accessible to immigrants in the process of becoming citizens. These citizenship workshops also provide a friendlier, easier way to maneuver the overwhelming process of becoming a citizen. Many of the participants noted that they had wanted to become citizens but were afraid of the process or not doing it correctly. Señora Elizabeth, expresses her gratitude for the workshop and its help on overcoming her fears of the citizenship process:

Si ellos no me hubieron ayudado yo todavía seguiría igual, porque era el miedo. Era un miedo muy fuerte. Eso es algo que yo admiro tanto con esta organización que organizó ese evento y la iglesia... que sabe muy bien que dentro de sus parámetros y sus líneas son ayudar al más débil y a la justicia. Entonces eso fue lo que me ayudó mucho, la organización J.O.B., con la combinación de la iglesia, los feligreses, todos los que ayudaron

If they hadn't helped me, I would still be the same, because it was fear. It was a very strong fear. That is something I admire about this organization that organized this event and the church who knows very well that helping the weak and fighting for justice are within its parameters. And this is what helped me, the organization J.O.B, with the combination of the church, the parishioners, and all of those who helped

Many of the volunteers were Spanish speakers and this helped ease the fears of many immigrants with questions about citizenship.

## Naturalization as an outcome

Proposition 187 and HR 4437 both pieces of legislations that targeted immigrants were taken as a direct attack by many Latinos, regardless of their legal or socioeconomic status. This proved to be part of the impetus for Latino residents to naturalize at higher rates. While the larger immigration reform movement continues advocating immigration reform, it also has coalesced with the campaigns and promotion of citizenship and voting. I argue that naturalization then, became one of the goals of the overall immigration reform movement. What has the outcome been? What will it look like in the future?

To date, the *Ya es Hora! Cuidadania* Campaign has reached and surpassed its goal of one million naturalized citizens, and it continues advocating naturalization. Organizations both affiliated and unaffiliated with the *Ya Es Hora* campaign, continue conducting workshops. These continue occurring with higher than average participation compared to prior to 2006, Table 4.1 below shows the number of workshops citizenship applications processed at citizenship workshops in the last nine years for the Los Angeles area based on NALEO figures. The table below shows that the number of applications processed at citizenship workshops from 2000 to 2009 and shows that from 2005 to 2006 the number of applications processed jumped from a 180 to 1892 more than ten times from the year before. From 2006 to 2007, the numbers continue to rise from 1892 to 2868, 15 times the amount of applications processed in 2005. While the number of applications has decreased from the largest amount in 2007, the number has still not decreased near the 180 applications that had been processed in 2005, prior to the immigration mobilizations.<sup>5</sup>

Table 4.1: Number of applications processed at citizenship workshops 2000-2009, Los Angeles

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>Workshop Applications Processed</b>	N/A	N/A	220	300	200	180	1892	2868	980	780

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<sup>5</sup> NALEO organizers and NALEO press releases are careful to explain the increase in applications is not only due to the *¡Ya Es Hora!* campaign, but also to the fee increase by US-CIS in 2007.

Source: National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO)

The movement for immigration reform and for naturalization appears to be the strongest it has ever been, but is it poised to continue the momentum built and will it be able to sustain itself in the coming years without the introduction of yet other anti-immigrant legislation? Another important question for the future of Latino political participation and incorporation is the long-term impact that this wave of naturalization will have on the political participation and incorporation of Latinos in the future.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE FUTURE OF LATINO POLITICAL PARTICIPATION**

Given the impact that the 2006 mobilizations had on naturalization and voting, what does this mean for the future of Latino political participation and incorporation? Will the political opportunity structure that was transformed during the 2006 mobilizations continue to create spaces for Latino participation? Will the message waved during the 2006 marches, “Today we March, tomorrow we Vote” continue to be true? Will newly naturalized Latinos become active participants through their vote?

#### **Citizenship Workshops**

Will the citizenship workshops continue in the future? It appears that many organizations have institutionalized the citizenship workshops as part of their work plans. NALEO which spearheads the national campaign, continues to have quarterly citizenship workshops in Los Angeles, here in San Diego, Justice Overcoming Boundaries and the Association of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE formerly ACORN) have applied for and obtained grants through NCLR and are planning on quarterly citizenship workshops with their already established network of volunteers ready to fill out the N-400's, with existing media relationships that have already been created and with the existing knowledge gained from conducting previous workshops.

#### **Voting**

As Desipio (2006) reflects, while achieving this goal (increasing naturalization of Latinos) will require considerable effort on the part of ethnic and national leaders, alone it will not suffice to ensure higher Latino electoral participation” (p. 471). While naturalization is key to the continued political participation of Latinos, political

incorporation and political power will involve organizing Latinos to vote and to be informed. According to a 2007 NCLR report, “more than 16 million Latinos are eligible to vote.”<sup>6</sup> (Daniels and Martinez De Castro 2007 p. 2). In that same report Daniels and Martinez show that “naturalized citizens exhibit higher voting rates than their native-born counterparts” (2007 p. 4), starting “in 1996, Latino naturalized voters outvoted U.S. born voters” (Arteaga, Flegal and Rodriguez 1998 p.13).

Right away. Claro que sí. Creo que es importante ... porque el voto cuenta. Si entonces en una democracia se supone que una mayoría manda, entonces al votar estoy expresando mi deseo que algo se haga o no se haga, y si no participo va ser otra persona la que decida por mi

Right away. Of course. I think it is important... because the vote counts. If this is a democracy it is assumed that the majority rules, so therefore when I vote I am expressing my desire for something to be done or not done, and if I don't participate it will be another person that decides for me

-Señora Patricia, on why she will be voting upon completing her naturalization process

Claro que voté fui la primera que llegue. Nadie me lo iba impedir, fui la primera que llegue a votar eran las 6 de la mañana... y no abrían hasta las 7. Pero yo estaba ansiosa que amaneciera porque yo tenía que votar y yo estaba convencida de que mi voto iba cambiar el mundo y que iba a marcar la diferencia...yo me decía es un solo voto pero el mío va contar. Como cuando uno dice de que se va ganar la lotería pues yo me gané la lotería al votar yo me di la oportunidad de hacer ciudadana completa, porque voté por el presidente del que yo quería tener. Sentí que yo había crecido porque yo ya no era una persona entre miles que se sienten que están mal. Era alguien que tenía todos mis derechos, era una ciudadana 100 por ciento. Completa. indivisible, y me dio muchísimo gusta en estar allí y ser la primera papeleta que se llenaba nada, nada me iba detener y sí, voté

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<sup>6</sup> In 2004, the last year with a presidential election, the Latino population reached 40.5 million. Of those, approximately 13.9 million were of non-voting age, ten million were voting-age immigrants not yet eligible to vote, and more than 16 million were eligible to vote”

Of course I voted I was the first to arrive, no one was going to stop me, I was the first one that arrived to vote it was 6 in the morning... but they didn't open until 7am. I was anxious for it to be morning because I needed to vote and I was convinced that my vote was going to change the world and it would make the difference. I told myself its only one vote but mine is going to count. It's like when someone says that they are going to win the Lottery, well I won the lottery that day when I voted and I gave myself the opportunity to be a complete citizen, because I voted for the president that I wanted to have. I felt that I had grown because I didn't feel like a person amongst the millions that feel that they are not right. I was someone that had all my rights; I was a citizen one hundred percent. Complete. Indivisible, and it gave me a lot of joy to be there and be the first ballot that was filled, nothing was going to stop me and so yes, I voted

-Señora Elizabeth on her first experience voting shortly after becoming a citizen

Both Señora Elizabeth and Señora Patricia talk about the importance of voting because if they don't vote someone else will make decisions for them. For Señora Elizabeth voting was a transformative experience and she finally felt that she was a "complete citizen."

Voting is a growing trend among Latino citizens, according to a 2010 report released by America's Voice, "from 2000 to 2008, Latino voter registration grew 54% and turnout grew 64%" (p.1). During the 2008 presidential elections, "approximately 10 million Latinos voted, a growth of about 2.5 million voters nationwide compared to 2004 and a nearly 4 million person increase since 2000" (2010 p.1). While these numbers are pretty impressive, Latino voter increase in "new immigrant" states was explosive, "Latino voter turnout between 2000 and 2008 exploded by 157% in South Carolina, 164% in Nevada, 250% in North Carolina, and 392% in Georgia" (2010 p.2).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>This increase in Latino immigrants in non traditional immigrant destinations and the visible changes within these cities fuels nativist fears

During the 2008 presidential campaigns, Obama was able to win the Latino immigrant vote: (in 2004 they voted for Kerry by a 52-48% margin...then swung dramatically for Obama in 2008 (75-25%)<sup>8</sup>. While it is possible that Latinos will continue to vote Democrat, according to the America's Voice report (2010) "both parties will need to work hard to continue to court the Latino vote, with big implications for races in the Southwest, Florida and other states with large Latino populations as well as 'new immigrant' areas across the map" (p.2).

Desipio (2006) critically explores the concept of the "Latino vote," looking closer at electoral/non-electoral politics, and posits possible trajectories of future Latino politics. Desipio notes that in politics, the division between Latino mass and elite interests has been narrowing. Many national organizations organize around a pan-ethnic frame (NALEO, NCLR, MALDEF, LULAC). In addition, continual immigration from Latin America to the United States has helped create a shared preference of issues. It has also created more opportunity for immigrants of different national origins and backgrounds to come into contact with each other. Desipio argues that Latino politics includes a focus on issues that "create opportunities for their economic and social advance, 'immigrant-settlement agenda'" (2006 p.453) things that will help immigrants and their children succeed in the United States. Education, public safety, public transportation and reducing discrimination were the top concerns for Latinos. An interesting aspect of these issues was that when opinion was disaggregated by national origin, there was little difference

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<sup>8</sup>For more on the Democratic lead on the Latino vote over the Republican Party see: Taylor and Fry 2007. They focus on Latino registered voters and their voting behaviors

amongst groups, with only Cubans placing a slightly higher emphasis on care for the elderly.

Desipio posits the future of Latino politics noting that the key will be increased naturalization rates among eligible residents, he notes that to the extent that a Latino political agenda exists, “they are neither outside the American mainstream nor particularly controversial (contrary to what Huntington [2004] might fear)” (2006: 473). His three possible scenarios range from optimistic to pessimistic to realistic. In his first scenario a national trigger motivates many eligible Latino adults to become citizens and vote, the second is that there is low success in mobilizing the potential Latino electorate to participate politically, and the third, which he claims is the most likely: Latinos will continue to see incremental yet gradual growth in their electorate, as the Latino population increases. The trigger that he describes might be something similar to the increase in Latino registration and voting surge that occurred after proposition 187 which would have excluded illegal immigrants from social services, health care, and public education. I argue that HR 4437 and the recently introduced SB 1070 law are these triggers that Desipio describes. These are also being deemed equally as harsh and discriminatory as Proposition 187.

Along with a particular set of social issues, another key factor that distinguished Latinos from their non-Latino counterparts is trust in the government: “in contrast to the direction of national and state policy since at least 1980, Latinos of all national origins report a willingness to pay additional taxes for an expansion in government programs... with issues such as crime control, drug prevention, child care services, environmental protection, science and technology, defense, and programs for refugees and immigrants”

(Desipio 2006 p.454). This trust in government is an important factor to take into consideration when mobilizing Latinos to become citizens.

It is clear that the issue of immigration reform is one of the top concerns for Latino voters, “the ‘potency of immigration as a ‘voting issue’ should not be underestimated. Both polling data and Hispanic voting behavior over multiple election cycles shows that immigration serves as a lens through which Latinos assess the political environment and candidate attitudes not just toward immigrants, but toward their community as a whole” (Daniels and Martinez De Castro 2007 p. 13). Additionally the report, “The Power of the Latino Vote in the 2010 Elections” America’s Voice (2010) outlines “various battleground House, Senate and Gubernatorial races across the nation” (p.42) in which Latinos will again play a key role. The report also warns: “failure to change their brand on immigration, however, will mean an increasing number of Congressional seats, statewide races, and entire segments of the Electoral College become out of reach for the GOP almost overnight” (America’s Voice 2010 p.5).

The participants I interviewed all had practical solutions for immigration reform. Contrary to right wing rhetoric, all of the participants made it clear that they are not expecting immediate amnesty without regard of background checks and merit. For them a fair and comprehensive path to legalization was the solution they thought would be most effective in order to fix the current immigration system. They mostly had solutions that involved looking closely at each individual and family case to make sure each participant was a person of good character, worthy, and a hard worker. They mostly spoke with a voice of compassion for hardworking people. While there were differing perspectives on

what should be included in the immigration reform bill, the concept of looking at each person's history and their contributions to their communities was important.

Señora Patricia, focused on reviewing the cases of people to make sure that they were hard working and also to assess if they contribute to the community:

Tiene que pasar (la reforma migratoria) porque mucha gente lo está pidiendo, es mucha gente la que lo necesita... alguien que no tiene antecedentes penales, muchas personas merecen que se les revise su caso. Antes no era tan difícil después del 9/11 hubo más restricciones todo más difícil. Pero me parte el corazón ver las noticias, de padres que sus hijos nacieron aquí, el papá no tiene papeles pero está trabajando, está pagando impuestos, están yendo sus hijos a la escuela, se comporta como un ciudadano decente, allí se les debe...revisar el caso, darles su residencia para que sean parte de la comunidad, merecen que les revisen el caso

It (Immigration Reform) needs to pass because many people are asking for it, a lot of people need it...someone that has no criminal record, many people deserve that their case be reviewed. Before it was not that hard but after 9/11 there were more restrictions everything was much harder. It breaks my heart to see the news, parents that their children were born here, the father doesn't have his papers but is working, he is paying taxes, his children are going to school, he behaves like a good decent citizen, that's when you need to review their cases

Señora Elizabeth, a leader with Justice Overcoming Boundaries who became involved with the organization after she attended a citizenship workshop they organized which helped her become a naturalized citizen, also focused on what she would do to fix the immigration system. She focused on reviewing peoples' cases and passionately defended children of immigrants, referencing religious rhetoric and the bible to make it clear that she does not believe that children should suffer for their parents' decisions to migrate:

Tiene que ver el historial primero que nada. Ver a la persona, su historia. Y luego ver el tiempo que ha estado permaneciendo aquí, que ha hecho de su vida y que ha hecho con su familia y entonces yo como país vería que esa familia está saliendo adelante pero con mucho miedo y son un

potencial grande para la nación. Entonces trataría de ayudarles ‘haber como estas?’ Como lo repito yo estoy en contra de los delincuentes, yo no estoy diciendo que apoyen a ellos yo estoy en aquellos que han luchado, que han llevado una vida correcta, una vida honesta. Es una frustración enorme y un dolor tan profundo que los hijos crecen en este país y cuando lleguen a terminar la high school se den cuenta que no pueden aplicar a ninguna universidad porque no tienen seguro porque no son ciudadanos o porque no son residentes. ¿Qué está haciendo el país con esos cerebros? ... Como presidente, como congresista ¿qué estás haciendo con ellos? ... Es un potencial tirado a la basura. Y eso es la frustración familiar... Yo estoy hablando de lo que es natural, ... todos aquí tienen familia de cualquier parte del mundo están aquí por una razón, pero que estamos haciendo como país nosotros y como... ciudadanos ¿qué estamos haciendo por ellos? ... Este país está basado en la biblia... cuando uno jura que la verdad y nada de la verdad está jurando en la biblia. Entonces los hijos no deben pagar los errores de los padres pero los niños están pagando... el pecado de los papás de querer ser mejor y querer crecer como familia y mejores ingresos, y mejores oportunidades.

You have to look at the history before anything else. See the person, their history. Then you have to look at the time that they have spent here, what have they done with their lives and what have they done with their families and then as a country I would see that this family is moving ahead in life but with a lot of fear and they have great potential in this nation. Then I would try to help them, how are they doing. Like I said before I am against criminals, I am not saying that I support them I support those who struggle who have led a good life, an honest life. It is an enormous frustration and a pain so deep that children grow up in this country and when they finish high school they find out that they cannot apply for any university because they don't have their social security because they aren't citizens or they aren't residents. What is the country doing with these minds? ... As president, as a congressperson what are you doing with them? It is a great potential thrown in the garbage. And this is the frustration that families deal with. I am talking about what is natural, everyone here has family from whatever part of the world they are here for a reason, but what are we doing as a country and as citizens what are we doing for them? This country is based on the bible when you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth you are swearing on the bible. Therefore children should not pay for the sins of their parents. But these children are paying... for the sin of their parents of wanting to improve themselves and grow as a family, and for better income, and better opportunities

In another example Señora Luz, wanted to include the opportunity for people to work, housing and healthcare as part of an immigration bill, healthcare may have been the focus of her response because her interview was held during the height of the healthcare reform debate:

El seguro medico para todos, y vivienda para todos.... Aquí solo si tienes muy buenos ingresos puedes tener vivienda, y aquí no se permite enfermarse. Ojala que dejen trabajar a las personas,...y que hagan una buena propuesta, algo que sea justo porque es tan ridículo que un país tan poderoso y tan grande y...con lo tan importante que es la salud y la vivienda no lo podemos tener al alcance.

Healthcare for everyone, and housing for everyone...here you can only own a home if you have really good income, and you are not allowed to get sick here. Hopefully they let the people work, and that they have a good proposal, something just because it is so ridiculous that a country so strong and so big and with how important healthcare and housing are, we cannot have it.

While there are diverse view points on what each participant would do given the opportunity to include aspects from their viewpoint for immigration reform, they all make it clear that they are not looking for hand outs but for fair and just ways to fix the situation of many families with mixed status<sup>9</sup> situations.

Voting and political knowledge is oftentimes dependent on the context in which citizens became naturalized. As mentioned in the literature review, Pantoja and Segura (2003) note that individuals in California who become naturalized in a context of perceived threat (Proposition 187) were more likely to become politically informed, participate politically and vote. Their key finding is that those “who are disadvantaged

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<sup>9</sup> Mixed status refers to families with family members with varying degrees of legal status; a common situation includes undocumented parents and most or all of their children with U.S. citizenship

are not forever consigned to the lowest levels of information, unable to defend themselves even when their material interests are forever challenged... rather those with the least political resources are able to accumulate additional information when the context is perceived to become more threatening” (2003: 282). Pantoja and Segura coin the term affective intelligence to describe when “politically threatened populations sometimes react by gathering more and better information with which to defend themselves” (2003: 273), after analyzing the contexts between proposition 187 and H.R. 4437, I argue that this is precisely what is currently occurring. H.R. 4437 spurred Latino immigrants to naturalize in order to be able to vote for immigration reform.

At the end of chapter 4 I asked the question: would Latinos continue to sustain the movement spurred by the 2006 mobilizations without the introduction of yet another piece of anti-immigrant legislation? It appears that this question cannot be answered because on April 23, 2010 Arizona governor Jan Brewer signed into law SB 1070, deemed the nations “toughest attempt at immigration enforcement,” a bill that forces police officers to ask anyone who is deemed as “reasonably suspicious” proof of their legal presence in the United States (Archibold 2010). “The law, which proponents and critics alike said was the broadest and strictest immigration measure in generations, would make the failure to carry immigration documents a crime and give the police broad power to detain anyone suspected of being in the country illegally. Opponents have called it an open invitation for harassment and discrimination against Hispanics regardless of their citizenship status” (Archibold 2010). Similar to the reaction that pro-immigrant groups had in 2006 against H.R. 4437, “immigration reform advocates have seen a flurry of activity since Brewer signed the Arizona measure into law last week...activists are

mobilizing through online social networking, churches and ethnic media. They have called for a boycott of Arizona businesses (Tareen 2010). In a follow up interview with Evan, the NALEO Civic Engagement Director, I asked him if he thought that there would be an increase in people wanting to naturalize given the current anti-immigrant sentiment (SB 1070) and visibility of the issue at the national level:

Absolutely, when HR 4437 (the Sensenbrenner bill) passed in the house in 2006 and millions marched in the streets, we were able to translate much of that sentiment into action, in the form of increasing naturalization (1.4 million N-400 apps in FY 2007). The passage of Prop 187 in California in 1994 similarly had a mobilizing effect in the Latino community. With proper channeling of that momentum, we'll likely see a spike in naturalization applications in many places across the country. The backlash against Arizona's law has spread across the country.

Immigrant groups have been coordinating and seen a renewed interest and visibility on the issue of immigration. At the national level, Gamaliel and Reform Immigration for America have been quick to condemn the law noting that it opens the door to racial profiling and violates civil rights. In addition individuals ranging from pop stars like Shakira (ABC 15) to athletes Adrian Gonzales (Nightengale 2010), the Phoenix Suns (Garcia 2010) and Charles Barkley (Dunn 2010) have responded similarly with press statements against SB 1070.

The law has continued increasing solidarity across groups, on May 6, 2010 an impressive collaboration amongst many of the 'power players' of Latino politics announced a massive boycott against Arizona: "This morning the National Council of La Raza was joined by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Center for Community Change (CCC), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the National Puerto Rican Coalition

(NPRC), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and many others to call for a boycott of Arizona in protest of the recent racial profiling law, SB 1070. ‘We take no pleasure in calling for a boycott<sup>10</sup>, but we feel there is no alternative,’ said Eliseo Medina, executive vice president of the Service Employees International Union.”

(Reform Immigration for America 2010).<sup>11</sup> These recent movements within Latino communities and allies across the country do not show any evidence of slowing down. Given the introduction of copycat bills in Minnesota and South Carolina and with a growing list of states ready to mimic SB 1070, Latino political participation is not going to slow down anytime soon.

#### Conclusion

The citizenship workshops and the increased methods of political participation that the mobilizations created through coalition building and strategic framing and use of ethnic media have created a change in the political opportunity structure for Latinos. The partnerships with media, local and national organizations have meant easier dissemination of more information to Latinos. They have gained access to resources and information on the political structure of the United States. Oftentimes the barrier has been as simple as a lack of knowledge of where to go in order to find out more information on

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<sup>10</sup> The boycott announced entails four basic points: (1) Considering the money spent as a consumer and whether it could be supporting an Arizona based company or corporation (2) Not holding conventions, conferences, special events or meetings in Arizona (if you are affiliated with an organization or company). (3) Asking others to reconsider Arizona as a place for those meetings as well. And (4) Calling on Major League Baseball to move its All-Star Game from Arizona.

<sup>11</sup> <http://reformimmigrationforamerica.org/blog/blog/groups-announce-major-boycott-of-arizona-in-protest-of-racial-profiling-law/>

how to naturalize or how to vote. Also the additional access to material resources in Spanish and English has been helpful. The sustainability of this increased political participation will depend on many factors including continued outreach by social justice organizations to Latino immigrants. Because in the U.S., immigration policy has no mechanism or programs in place to help immigrants incorporate politically and is mostly focused on the border, “the settlement, adaptation and progress, or lack of it, of immigrants is largely, in the U.S. context, up to them” (Glazer quoted by Bloemraad 2006 p.2). I argue that in the absence of immigrant incorporation programs in the United States, community organizations serve this role through naturalization and voter outreach to the Latino community. This role has the same function as the programs designed to incorporate immigrants in Canada. The sustainability of political mobilization will largely depend on them and the tactics they use to encourage participation by the Latino population in the United States.

This broadening of the political opportunity structure has also been facilitated by the current context of immigration reform in the U.S. Highly visible anti-immigrant sentiment in the public (news, and an increase in anti-immigrant groups) paired with the introduction of anti-immigrant legislation at the local (anti-housing ordinances), state (SB 1070) and national (H.R. 4437) levels have created a context of perceived threat and moved immigrants to participate politically and naturalize in order to protect their rights.

While Desipio (forthcoming) remains skeptical that the current network of pro-immigrant organizations will be able to successfully pressure the Senate, to enact immigration reform, I have focused on the other outcomes of the social movement for immigration reform. As Desipio correctly argues the coalitions have failed to get

immigration reform, but there have been many other wins, namely the political mobilization of increasing numbers of Latinos through naturalization and voter outreach. While it is not clear what will happen with immigration reform during this presidential term, it is clear that community organizations are successfully finding ways to continue engaging their communities to participate in their new political opportunities through naturalization and voter registration.

It is important to note that while the immigration reform issue is one of the main factors currently spurring Latinos to engage politically, long term engagement of Latino communities will need to go beyond immigration reform. Some of this is evident in the increase of naturalization and voter rates among Latinos. I argue that the solution will lie in using the immigration reform issue as a springboard to engage Latino communities in other issues. According to Desipio (2006) Latinos “are focused on issues that create opportunities for economic and social advance, an ‘immigrant-settlement agenda’...driving this immigrant settling agenda is the large share of the Latino population comprised of immigrants and their children who recognize that their advance in U.S. society depends on civil rights protections and public funded social services, particularly education” (p. 453). Focusing on these particular types of issues will be key to continued Latino political participation.

#### Recommendations

As Bloemraad (2006) notes, “people become political participants through personal networks and personal ties rather than via impersonal individual ways- such as through “a distant relationship between the voter and the candidate” (p. 65). Heeding this as a piece of advice, I have compiled a brief section on what I have found would be

useful through my research and personal participation on some of the various aspects of Latino political participation and community mobilizations. I hope that this section of recommendations/findings will be a useful and applicable section for community organizers and members to continue effectively engaging people to participate politically:

- Partnerships with community partners/members, while this may be an obvious recommendation, I find it important enough to reiterate. Working in partnership eases financial and staff strains on organizations. Networks have consistently proven to be more effective because of the combination of energy and resources in outreach and mobilization (Martinez 2008, Reyes 2008).
- Media relationships, using ethnic media (television, radio and newspaper) is a very effective way to publicize services (naturalization classes) and events (Felix et al. 2008, Reyes 2008).
- Latino voters respond to co-ethnic candidates better, finding suitable political candidates to reflect the needs of the community will encourage the Latino vote (Barreto 2007, Barreto and Nuño 2009).
- Focus on issues that are important to Latino communities, such as delivery of social services, public safety, public transportation, and reducing discrimination (Desipio 2006) as part of political campaigns will continue engaging Latino communities beyond Immigration reform.
- Adequate access to resources such as community organizations and workshops that include bilingual information for community members will be key to the continuity of this movement.

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