

# DIVIDED WE STAND, UNITED WE FALL: LATINOS AND IMMIGRATION POLICY

David Manuel Hernández

On the final day of its session, the 101st Congress passed the Immigration Act of 1990, greatly expanding the numbers of potential immigrants to the United States in the most sweeping legislation in 25 years. In what appeared to be a moment of confidence, National Council of La Raza president Raul Yzaguirre stated, "This legislation represents a new era in the immigration policy debate. The votes . . . in both the House and Senate have shattered the myth that Congress is unwilling to adopt [a] fair, human immigration policy."<sup>1</sup>

By many accounts in Washington, D.C., the outlook for immigrants, refugees and their families was very positive. However, within a few years of the 1990 legislation, the immigration picture changed dramatically as more restrictionist, or "anti-immigrant," legislation won greater success, and anti-immigrant sentiment fueled a broad pattern of backlash ranging from ambivalence to fear and hysteria. By 1994, Yzaguirre's "new era" was further swept away with the Republican Congressional takeover and the collapse of the Mexican peso. Many Latinos were served a wake up call in 1994 when California voters approved Proposition 187, the punitive "people's" initiative that seeks to deny undocumented immigrants the most basic human rights. The proposition and its supporters also seek to create a web of detection within the community, and to stigmatize immigrants as a population.

These negative events, however, were also a catalyst for political action in the Latino community at all levels. They opened the door to sophisticated coalition politics, and led to widespread protest in regions throughout the U.S. The surge in activism, building on the existing Latino pro-immigrant rights infrastructure, would shape the oppositional debate and guide the community under several organizational and strategic flags to challenge the anti-immigrant hysteria plaguing the United States.

### *Congressional Hispanic Caucus*

The caucus is united in its opposition against anything giving the perception of immigrant bashing. For us it is singling out a special group. —*Rep. José E. Serrano (D-NY)*

Hispanics in the House of Representatives are just one of the many voices addressing immigration. They are in closest proximity to the creation of legislative immigration policy, and have grappled with immigration issues since before the formation of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus in 1976. In the 1970s and 1980s, Latino Representatives, with critical support from the “Latino Lobby,” that is, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the United Farm Workers (UFW), blocked the passage of what became, in 1986, the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) for over ten years.<sup>2</sup> In the early 1990s, the immigration debate has had its ebbs and flows before Congress. As a central issue, it lulled after the passage of the Immigration Act of 1990. Consequently, with both success and failure, Latinos in Congress primarily fought rules, provisions, and amendments attached to larger pieces of legislation which attempted to deny rights to immigrants. As the *National Journal* reports, “the Hispanic Caucus has successfully fought several skirmishes in the House against measures caucus members say are unfair to the children of undocumented aliens.”<sup>3</sup> In other areas, however, such as health care and welfare reform, Latino members of Congress unsuccessfully battled the sentiment of Congress as well as the White House. In response to such recent legislation, Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL) says, “It’s simply targeting people because of their political vulnerability.”<sup>4</sup>

Under these hostile conditions in Washington, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus has resorted to “damage control” maneuvers, indicating a growing tendency to sacrifice the rights of undocumented immigrants in order to protect those of immigrants recognized as legal. While outspoken on the positive contributions of legal immigrants and often “troubled” by the tone of the debate in the House, the CHC’s voting record, nonetheless, displays ambivalence over the issue.<sup>5</sup> For instance, Latinos in Congress vote almost unanimously in favor of increased Border Patrol budgets and stricter enforcement, despite widespread complaints in the Latino community about Immigration and Naturalization

Service (INS) abuses. Increased enforcement at the border is framed as an effort to halt crime, a maneuver rich in political currency for the CHC. According to the *CQ Weekly Report*, "Tightening the border has become an automatic cause for most politicians—either as [a] prelude to cutbacks in legal immigration or as an attempt to forestall them."<sup>6</sup> The CHC has given uneven support Haitian immigrants as well.

In 1996, Latino lawmakers have been faced with major immigration legislation aimed at cracking down on illegal immigrants, and reversing the direction of the Immigration Act of 1990 by limiting legal immigration. Recent welfare reform legislation has also aggressively targeted all immigrants. The *National Journal* reports that "the immigration debate is likely to throw the Hispanic Caucus into a more brutal political melee that it has ever faced before."<sup>7</sup> As Rep. Bill Richardson (D-NM) states, "We're literally under attack every week with some kind of anti-immigration amendment."<sup>8</sup> To their credit, the caucus published a report in 1994 entitled *Fact and Fiction: Immigrants in the U.S.* in order to "meaningfully contribute to the current debate on immigration policy."<sup>9</sup> Latino lawmakers have also loudly contested the proposed national verification system to curtail hiring undocumented workers, which, like employer sanctions, creates an incentive for employers to distrust people of color, and discriminate against anyone who appears "foreign."

### *Community-Based Responses*

At first they asked us if we would support the immigration laws. We said we are not responsible for enforcing the immigration laws. We are strong enough that [we made them] take that out of the contract. —*Carlos Marentes, Unión de Trabajadores Arícolas Fronterizos*

The steady stream of immigrants since the late 19th century has continued to revitalize the Latino community, increasing the population, reinforcing the Spanish language, maintaining cultural traditions and keeping the issues, needs and obstacles of immigrants at the center of the Latino agenda. Latinos have always drawn from communal resources to receive, integrate, and empower arriving immigrants, from 19th century *mutualistas* to the current proliferation of Latino-sponsored naturalization campaigns. In the 1990s, Latinos and Latino community-based organizations have responded assertively to legislative

policy as well as non-legislative policy, which broadly defined, includes such impacts as private labor practices, border enforcement, and widespread anti-immigrant sentiment. As such, the Latino community-based response occurs in several sectors, and its battles in the 1990s are salient examples of the heterogeneity of Latino communities, and their potential for political change.

If there is one lens from which to analyze the Latino community's effectiveness in engaging immigration policy, it is heterogeneity. Ethnically, racially, socio-economically, by gender and sexuality, by ideology, by political access, and by individual standards such as personality, fear, and concern, the Latino community is diverse, so diverse, that the term "community" itself bears an inclusive definition, evading assumptions that Latinos are a monolithic bloc. According to writer Marta Lopez-Garza, "Geographical dispersion and varying degrees of assimilation have also prompted the diverse political consciousness within the Latino community, which has created difficulties for political organizers."<sup>10</sup> Yet in the face of the anti-immigrant backlash this decade, Latino community-based organizations have utilized the rich potential of Latino diversity and transgressed the tensions and political fragmentations that surround difference.

Since few Latino community leaders are invited to Washington to engage the machinery that creates immigration legislation, the community's most direct influence in legislation is at the ballot box. As such, Latino organizations have widened the two avenues toward this form of political voice—voter registration and naturalization assistance. Many Latino organizations are now conducting voter registration drives in their communities, and, since many Latinos are non-citizen immigrants and cannot vote, a variety of Latino organizations like the National Association for Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, the Community Association of Progressive Dominicans in New York City, and the Latino Forum are aggressively stressing naturalization to politically empower immigrants.<sup>11</sup> For example, at a May 1994 pro-immigrant demonstration in Los Angeles, Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers stated, "We must become citizens and vote so that our voices can be heard."<sup>12</sup> According to Harry Pachón of the Tomás Rivera Center, an average Latino immigrant waits 13 to 15 years before seeking naturalization, and in California, "1 out of 2 Latino adults . . . is not a U.S. citizen."<sup>13</sup> With the immigrants who qualified for amnesty under IRCA now becoming eligible for citizenship,

Latinos are demanding changes in the system, recommending an increase in the number of examiners, simplified forms, and alternative options for satisfying the civics and language exams.

Other efforts to counter legislative policies have again come from the traditional “Latino Lobby”—the UFW, NCLR, MALDEF, and LULAC—who work at the local, state and federal levels. Most notably, MALDEF successfully challenged the implementation of Proposition 187 through federal and state litigation which has resulted in the proposition being declared unconstitutional. The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF) has also pressed Congress and the White House on legislation affecting immigrants.

With the advent of Proposition 187 and other regressive proposals, Latino community-based organizations and leaders have utilized these conservative gestures to organize and politicize various sectors of the community. Journalist Michael Novick writes, “Many of these efforts demonstrate a new level of unity among U.S.-born Mexican Americans, naturalized citizens, refugees, legal resident aliens and the undocumented, regardless of their national origin.”<sup>14</sup> While Proposition 187 catalyzed the community to produce a critical mass of new activists, coalitions and programs, the recent mobilization has also revealed both the strengths and weaknesses in the infrastructure of Latino pro-immigrant resistance. For example, according to María Jiménez, a Latina activist with the American Friends Service Committee, “Currently we don’t have a strong Latino voice and coordinated strategy at the national level, especially one that is articulating a coherent policy on immigration. And this includes the Hispanic Caucus, which is sometimes divided.”<sup>15</sup> Juan José Gutiérrez of One Stop Immigration, however, counters notions of a Latino leadership void, stating, “We do have leaders of tremendous stature—they’re just not recognized by the media.”<sup>16</sup> Community-based organizations are thus “filling the vacuum that presently exists within the Latino leadership institutions.”<sup>17</sup> According to Rubén Solís of the Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice, former leaders such as MALDEF and NCLR have lost their community base of support, both for supporting the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and for failing to work equally with other Chicano groups during the anti-Proposition 187 campaign.<sup>18</sup> The multiplicity of local leaders and varying objectives, then, demonstrates the urgency for Latino individuals and organizations to propel their pro-immigrant agendas into the debate, and provides ample

justification for a new era of coalition politics formed around the pro-immigrant rights movement.

Clear examples of collaborative resistance are the well-coordinated public demonstrations held nationwide in 1994. These events were multi-ethnic, multi-generational occasions and according to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Proposition 187 is one of the rare issues on which many of the teenage opponents seem to be in sync with their parents. Parents have actually joined in some of the marches, while others have encouraged their children to participate."<sup>19</sup> Student marches and demonstrations, which mirrored the "blow-outs" by Chicana/o students in 1968, occurred frequently in the weeks prior to the California elections in 1994. As one immigrant student protester astutely stated, "I've got a lot of friends who will have to quit school if Proposition 187 passes because they're illegal. Plus classes will be smaller and some teachers will get fired. I want people to know that students disagree with this."<sup>20</sup> Some students acquired pride and awareness in their own and other cultures because of the demonstrations. One student, Stephanie Bernal, stated, "It feels great right now just to be doing something about it. When we get together to talk about it, we speak Spanish and just feel good about being Mexican."<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the 1990s, many Latino organizations and individuals have resisted the anti-immigrant backlash in areas outside of national legislation. These include border militarization, labor policies, and cutbacks in housing and public transportation. Service organizations are faced with the task of improving and formalizing their new advocacy and community empowerment duties, while still maintaining a continuous level of services. As Rubén Solís said, "The fight against 187, and the issues of migration, are presenting themselves as facilitating tools for other issues that have always existed but have historically received little attention."<sup>22</sup>

One of the most drastic impacts of the new hostile immigration policy occurs at the U.S.-Mexico border. Unexplained deaths, unlawful deportations, denial of civil rights, illegal searches and arrests, physical and mental abuse, and the Border Patrol's perception of undocumented and documented immigrants and U.S. Latinos as criminals occur frequently. In response, several organizations and coalitions monitor the border area, provide various services to immigrants, and consistently stress the importance of this pattern of incidents and the urgent need for political action. Guadalupe Castillo of the La Mesilla Orga-

nizing Project states, "Real human rights violations occur at the border day in and day out. . . . They are all connected to militarization at the border. . . . It is not a new phenomenon. When you invade a country, and you conquer people, you militarize, and maintain a certain level of militarization."<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the increased law enforcement presence creates what María Jiménez calls a "deconstitutionalized" zone, where the Border Patrol and local police have fewer limits on the exercise of authority than in non-Mexican-border areas. This is a drastic difference from the Canadian border, and a clear inconsistency with NAFTA's goals toward the creation of an equal trading partnership with Mexico and Canada.

Employment, for almost all Latino immigrants, whether they immigrate to the U.S. for family reunification, to escape political and economic persecution, or as part of a rite of migratory culture, is a necessity. Latino immigrants continue to form the backbone of industrial labor and the labor movement. Immigrant labor organizing therefore serves a critical role in combatting exploitation, INS abuses, and the economic stratification of the immigrant community. As unions benefit from the increased enrollments of immigrant workers, these workers benefit from the existing structures' resources. Unions thus enlist the support of workers who are indispensable to local economies, and who historically have been used to drive down wages and as strikebreakers. And where immigrants are not accepted into the mainstream labor movement, they have organized among themselves, promoting successful strikes and protests. Humberto Camacho, a representative of the United Electrical Workers Union, states that hardball tactics are common in immigrant-dependent industries. He writes, "Just because we speak a different language, come from another country, [and] have darker skin, doesn't mean we don't have rights or that we'll accept exploitation in silence."<sup>24</sup>

Groups like *Mujeres Unidas y Activas*, a San Francisco Bay Area Latina immigrant group, engage in non-legislative immigration policy by educating and preparing immigrant women and refugees for adaptation to U.S. society, while focusing on community involvement and social, civic, and political impact.<sup>25</sup> Founded in 1990, *Mujeres'* 200-plus members sponsor leadership training, community organizing projects, citizenship *teatros*, "Know Your Rights" workshops, parent groups, and health and English classes.

Another sector of Latino resistance is in the arts. Author and poet Rubén

Martínez, for example, responds to the “evil of Proposition 187” as a journalist, writing articles in papers nationwide, and also as a creative artist. Martínez recently joined forces with performance artist and “Border Brujo” Guillermo Gómez-Peña on a poetry-performance-lecture series to “personally settle the score with Pete Wilson.”<sup>26</sup> The 1990s version of immigration hysteria has led to a contemporary surge in artistic oppositional forms. These alternative responses to immigration policy are deliberately coded with themes and satire specific to the U.S. Latino experience to enlighten and empower Latinos, reflecting back to the artistic traditions of the Chicano Movement. Says artist and immigration satirist Lalo López, “We want people to think critically. . . . You make your enemy appear cartoonish, and it gives you a sense of empowerment.”<sup>27</sup>

According to Ed Morales of *The Village Voice*, the September 16, 1994, “Hispanics for Wilson” (HFW) hoax garnered national recognition. Conceived and enacted by *POCHO Magazine* publishers Esteban Zul and Lalo López, the HFW hoax satirically defended immigrants and *pendejo*-ized Pete Wilson, and immigrant-fearing Anglos. López states, “I was sick of hearing about how so many Latinos are for 187. We thought, let’s spoof it by creating this rabid self-deportationist movement of people so fervently for Wilson that they were willing to repatriate to Mexico.” The press release snow-balled into a spot on a nationally televised Telemundo talk show which included pro-immigrant activist Juan José Gutiérrez. The humor treaded thin ice as Gutiérrez and other panelists took López and his HFW colleagues seriously. Morales writes that this act of *pochismo* “moves political activism into a new frontier, with a full dose of mediated irony.”<sup>28</sup>

### *Collaboration and Fissure*

While stressing links to other communities, organizers leave no doubt that this is foremost a Latino movement—one designed to embrace both new immigrants and multi-generational U.S. residents, the undocumented and those with legal status. The many attacks on illegal immigrants, they say, are to be viewed as assaults on all people of Latin American ancestry. —*Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1994

The Latino response to U.S. immigration policy clearly challenges perceptions that the Latino political imagination is lethargic or homogeneous. The Latino

voice is a confluence of voices, covering a broad organizational and political horizon, from the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, to national and regional Latino civil rights and service organizations, to local immigrant self-help groups. As such, this varying awareness and level of experience with legislative and non-legislative immigration policy translates to a complex Latino response to the immigration debate, consisting of various, and sometimes contradictory, strategies toward equal access, fairness, and political empowerment. Given the different agendas, constituencies, ideologies, organizational structures, and political constraints of the Latino actors, coalition politics and collaborative strategies appear to be the model of organization that can sustain, at least temporarily, multiple and parallel fronts of resistance. In this sense, the strategy for Latinos replicates the tactics of the 1970s and 1980s. According to Juan Gómez-Quíñones, "To achieve equity, a necessary condition is the continuing development of both single-membership advocacy and confrontational groups as well as strong 'operational unity' coalitions, which can be vehicles for the national community on specific issues."<sup>29</sup> In the 1990s, we have witnessed numerous examples of simultaneous, collaborative and individual efforts within the Latino community. Yet Latinos have also experienced the limits to coalitions and collaboration. In other words, coalitions break down, especially as the multiplicity of Latino differences buoys its way to the forefront of policy debate and enactment. Besides existing political contradictions, macro forces like the economy and international stability, and shifts in political vision can affect the trajectory of Latino politics. As such, in the 1990s, Latino coalitions have focused on both coming together quickly when common ground can be found, and on maintaining individual agendas when unity does not exist.

For instance, the watershed marches and protests in 1994 exemplify the multiplicity of cultures and leadership within the pro-immigrant rights community. In May and October 1994, thousands of Latinos marched through downtown Los Angeles in "tightly organized counterattacks" against the anti-immigrant sentiment in California and the nation. The *Los Angeles Times* reported that the October 16 march consisted of 70,000 persons, making it "the largest protest gathering here [in Los Angeles] in decades, surpassing Vietnam War era demonstrations" including the National Chicano War Moratorium in 1970.<sup>30</sup> The *Times* further reported that "behind the demonstration was a newly formed statewide coalition and a corp of young Latino leaders—typically im-

migrants or the working-class offspring of immigrant parents.”<sup>31</sup> The presence of Mexican, Salvadoran, and Guatemalan flags as well as representation from South America and the Caribbean were testament to both the impact of immigration policy and the response from the Latino community.

Conferences that bring together different circles of actors in the immigration debate provide another example of collaboration between and among Latinos. In April 1994, a National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS) Foco Conference sponsored a symposium entitled “Immigration: a Call to Action” which brought together community activists, Chicano academics, and border city officials. Teresa Córdova, Chicana scholar and NACCS member, stated, “Part of what we want to do here today is talk about the way in which those of us based in institutions of higher education can become players and contribute to the community efforts around immigrant rights.”<sup>32</sup> Similar conferences have taken place throughout the country. The focus of these dialogues has been to convene grassroots activists, immigration lawyers, academics, and public officials to inform each other and develop strategies to politicize the community and oppose restrictive immigration policy.

Within the matrix of Latino responses to immigration policy, there have been several areas where Latino elites in Congress, and community-based organizations intersect in their efforts and strategies. These include opposition to Proposition 187, increased voter registration, naturalization campaigns, and opposition to blatant political opportunism in the anti-immigration hysteria. In 1993, Frank Acosta of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) wrote, “Perhaps the concerted legislative attack . . . is merely cynical political posturing. After all, several of the 21 anti-immigrant bills these lawmakers have introduced . . . would almost certainly be judged unconstitutional if enacted. Yet considerable public resources have been expended on promoting them anyway.”<sup>33</sup> Pete Wilson, for example, used the political currency of the immigration debate and Proposition 187 to support his re-election. The acts of sponsoring anti-immigrant legislation or suing the federal government on behalf of the state amount to state-funded campaign advertisements.

Unfortunately, political opportunism has led to the diminution and separation of documented and undocumented immigrants’ rights, which has been corroborated by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus and certain Latino nonprofits. Border militarization is a case in point. While both Latino lawmak-

ers as well as the NCLR have stressed the need to review the INS for its continuing abuses of authority, both groups have also supported increases in Border Patrol programs and numbers of officers. The CHC has unanimously supported such increases and NCLR has stated that "the Latino community has a very strong interest . . . in immigration control. That is controlling the border at the border."<sup>34</sup> NCLR president Raul Yzaguirre has also ambiguously and uncritically stated, "We are encouraged by recent evidence which shows that efforts to control the border are beginning to take effect, and we encourage the INS to implement its 'Operation Gatekeeper' effort in San Diego and 'Operation Hold the Line' in El Paso in a way which provides an effective deterrent without violating human rights."<sup>35</sup> These kinds of statements, despite their wobbly disclaimers, are a sign of a dangerous division of the fates of documented and undocumented immigrants, and a shallow understanding of the global economy and the often mixed status of many Latino families and communities. They set a potentially irreversible precedent for delineating between who is "entitled" to services and human respect and who is not. Unfortunately, this attitude echoes the rationale of President Clinton, that "We must say no to illegal immigration so we can say yes to legal immigration."<sup>36</sup> These dubious views are indicative of the false remedies and short-sighted interpretation within the immigration debate. In the effort to protect documented immigrants, politicians and some community organizers are, perhaps unknowingly, codifying the system of legitimacy that, along with our national compassion, stretches only to our geographic borders, preventing us as a nation from understanding the globalization of our economy and society. This attitude is in opposition to the many cross-border organizers and border residents who view themselves as part of a process of globalization. As Rufino Domínguez of the indigenous organization, Frente Indígena Oaxacaño Binacional, states, "What we are experiencing in California is part of a global political crisis."<sup>37</sup> Even former Border Patrol chief, Silvestre Reyes, who instituted Operation Blockade in El Paso, says "it is foolish not to view ourselves as part of the global economy."<sup>38</sup>

As we navigate through the 1990s, the coalitions and community mobilization set into motion by the emergence of Proposition 187, as well as the long-standing Latino infrastructure of pro-immigrant rights groups, must confront the extremely restrictive legislation moving through Congress, and its unpredictable support from the White House. The administrative policies out-

side the scope of legislation and the negative sentiment that plague the community warrant maintaining the pro-immigrant struggle in simultaneous arenas. However, as *Hispanic Link* reporter Margarita Contín writes, "Surging white voter backlash against both immigrants and Hispanics is likely to present elected Latino leaders with immense problems in their home states as well as in the nation's capital. . . . Latino legislators will have their hands so full it's unlikely they'll be able to push for new reform in matters of special concern to Latino communities."<sup>39</sup> It must be acknowledged, then, that the anti-immigrant backlash is partially fueled by increased conservatism at the national level. Some Latino organizations have targeted the Republican majority in an effort to counter restrictionist policies. For instance, the National Chicano Moratorium Committee recently held a march and protest in opposition to the 1996 Republican National Convention in San Diego.

Additionally, many Latino community activists are concerned with their role in the fight against anti-immigrant backlash. Already politicized, many Latinos are drawing connections between the pro-immigrant rights struggle, and their efforts against other forms of discrimination. According to journalist Mariana Mora, activists are "concerned that if the fight against anti-immigrant backlash is primarily manifested through the court system, it will disempower grassroots Latino community struggles."<sup>40</sup> In light of this concern, community activists are imprinting their agendas upon the immigration debate and demanding media attention. One Stop Immigration has asserted its own immigrant rights campaign entitled "Proposition One," a "non-electoral petition [that] calls for a new legalization of immigrants who have arrived . . . since the cut-off period . . . in the earlier amnesty, and agitates for citizenship for those who are already legal residents," and Juan José Gutiérrez coordinated the Latino March on Washington, D.C., in October 1996.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, the Latino community must continue to acknowledge the presence of racism that is often at the core of anti-immigrant hysteria. Restrictionist and punitive legislation signify a misguided fear that Latinos and Asians are changing the racial and cultural composition of the U.S., thus reinforcing a culture of fear. The appropriate response to that fear is yes, Latinos and Asians are transforming U.S. society. These "new immigrants" are part of worldwide system of economic and societal globalization, and are answering U.S. demands for labor. An immigration policy that is a reaction founded in fear and racism will

prevent the possibility of a sound and equitable national adjustment to global change. There is a direct line between such restrictive legislation and racist hate crimes and hate speech. The lack of parity in the policing of our national borders with Mexico and Canada is another indication of the racist trajectory of U.S. immigration policy. This policy of military enforcement intensifies harassment of Latinos, vigilantism along the border, and anti-Latino sentiment throughout the United States. As Roberto Maestas, executive director of El Centro de la Raza in Seattle said in 1995, "America is a ticking time bomb. It must confront its racism, or pay a price."<sup>42</sup>

While apprehension toward the so-called immigration "crisis" is often couched in economic reasoning, the findings from a recent Chicano/Latino Policy Project report also suggests that social beliefs are pervasive forces in the U.S. imagination. The report states, "While improving national economic conditions may reduce anti-immigration sentiment, cultural and ideological factors, as well as beliefs concerning the impact of immigration are likely to drive opinion regarding immigration policy for the foreseeable future."<sup>43</sup> This implies that there *is* a firm hierarchical structure in the U.S. that determines who is legitimate and who is not, and who has the right to social mobility. Immigration and race thus enter that hierarchical equation as critical variables. The stark differences between European and Latin American immigrant experiences, and the unequal access to social mobility afforded these two groups, are functioning examples of the race-based immigrant hierarchy we call U.S. immigration policy. And even though Latino community-based organizations and lawmakers have provided an excellent and spirited defense of immigrants in many areas, Latinos have yet to promote a national pro-active immigration policy, or set national precedents with incremental legislative *movidas* needed to induce change. In fact, many Latinos in Congress and in community organizations have used the notoriety of illegal immigration as a point of compromise to ensure the protection of legal immigrants' rights, providing "damage control" to restrictionist immigration policy, but unfortunately contributing to the delegitimization of portions of the Latino community. Sadly, this is the essence of "divide and conquer" strategy.

## NOTES

**Source Note:** *This essay is part of a larger project that examines the often unheard Latino voice on U.S. immigration policy. By examining the heterogeneity in the Latino response found in newspapers, alternative presses and organizational newsletters, the project answers the contemporary silence by illuminating Latino voices, who because of their intimacy with the immigration phenomenon, are critical players in the immigration debate. The essay utilizes the immigration terminology found in the source material, that is, "legal" and "illegal" and "documented" and "undocumented" immigration. Keep in mind that these terms are dubious, and imply a system of legitimacy that divides society and reinforces U.S. social hierarchies.*

- <sup>1</sup> Biskupic, Joan. "Sizeable Boost in Immigration OK'd in Compromise Bill," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, October 27, 1990, Vol. 48, No. 43, p. 3608.
- <sup>2</sup> Sierra, Christine Marie. "Latino Organizational Strategies on Immigration Reform: Success and Limits in Public Policymaking," in Roberto E. Villarreal and Norma G. Hernández, eds., *Latinos and Political Coalitions: Political Empowerment for the 1990s*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991, pp. 61-80.
- <sup>3</sup> Browning, Graeme. "Moving Ahead," *National Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 14, April 2, 1994, p. 779.
- <sup>4</sup> Idelson, Holly. "Immigration: Bridging Gap Between Ideas and Action," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, April 15, 1995, Vol. 53, No. 15, p. 1065.
- <sup>5</sup> "Commerce, Justice, State Bill Takes a Hit," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac*, 1993, V. XLIX, p. 558.
- <sup>6</sup> See note 4 above, pp. 1069-1070.
- <sup>7</sup> See note 3 above, p. 782.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>9</sup> "Fact and Fiction: Immigrants in the U.S.," Congressional Hispanic Caucus, October 7, 1994, pp. 1-11.
- <sup>10</sup> Lopez-Garza, Marta. "Los Angeles: Ascendant Chicano Power," *NACLA: Report on the Americas*, September 1992, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, p. 36.
- <sup>11</sup> Pachón, Harry P. "Citizenship and the Latino Community: Plan of Action," *New Visions of Aztlán*, Spring/Summer 1993, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 13. Also, see Margarita Contín, "Latino Groups Pitch In, Press INS on Naturalization Reforms," *Hispanic Today*, June/July 1995, p. 10.
- <sup>12</sup> McDonnell, Patrick J. "Marchers Assail Bias Against Immigrants," *Los Angeles Times*, Sunday, May 29, 1994, pp. A1, A26.
- <sup>13</sup> Pachón, Harry P. "Citizenship and the Latino Community: Plan of Action," *New Visions of Aztlán*, Spring/Summer 1993, Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 13. Also, see Pachón, "Prop. 187 Isn't All that's Propelling Latinos To INS," *Sacramento Bee*, May 22, 1995.

- <sup>14</sup> Novick, Michael. "As California Gets Hysterical, Immigrants Get Organized," *Third Force*, November/December 1994, Vol. 2, No. 5, p. 11.
- <sup>15</sup> Jiménez, María. Unpublished transcripts from the symposium "Immigration: A Call to Action," Rocky Mountain Foco and Committee for Political Action and Solidarity of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, April 16, 1994.
- <sup>16</sup> Gonzales, Patrisia and Roberto Rodriguez. "Latinos Plan Campaign '96 in Washington," *Albuquerque Journal*, November 6, 1995, p. A5.
- <sup>17</sup> Mora, Mariana. "Time to Hit the Trenches," *Third Force*, Vol. 3, No. 1, March/April 1995, p. 11.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> Pyle, Amy and Simon Romero. "Prop. 187 Fuels a New Campus Activism," *Los Angeles Times*, October 25, 1994, pp. B1, B8.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> See note 17 above, p. 14.
- <sup>23</sup> Castillo, Guadalupe. Unpublished transcripts from the symposium "Immigration: A Call to Action," Rocky Mountain Foco and Committee for Political Action and Solidarity of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, April 16, 1994.
- <sup>24</sup> Bacon, David. "The War Against Immigrants," *Oakland Post*, Vol. 30, No. 29, September 9, 1993, p. 1.
- <sup>25</sup> "¿Qué es Mujeres Unidas y Activas?," *La Voz de Mujeres Unidas y Activas*, October 1995, No. 3, p. 1.
- <sup>26</sup> [PochNostra@aol.com]. "The Poets of the Last Days: Gómez-Peña and Martínez on the Continental Crisis," in CHICLE, [CHICLE@unmva.unm.edu], October 28, 1995.
- <sup>27</sup> Morales, Ed. "Pocho Man: The Hispanics for Wilson Hoax," *The Village Voice*, November 9, 1994.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>29</sup> Gómez-Quíñones, Juan. *Chicano Politics: Reality & Promise, 1940-1990*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990) 214.
- <sup>30</sup> See McDonnell, Patrick J. and Robert J. Lopez. "70,000 March Through L.A. Against Prop. 187," *Los Angeles Times*, October 17, 1994, pp. A1, A19.
- <sup>31</sup> McDonnell, Patrick J. "March Just a First Step, Latino Leaders Say," *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1994, pp. B1, B2.
- <sup>32</sup> Córdova, Teresa. Unpublished transcripts from the symposium "Immigration: A Call to Action," Rocky Mountain Foco and Committee for Political Action and Solidarity of the National Association for Chicana and Chicano Studies, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, April 16, 1994.
- <sup>33</sup> Acosta, Frank and Bong Hwan Kim. "Race-Baiting in Sacramento; Anti-Immigrant Bills Ignore Reality: Our Multiracial Economy is Dependent on Workers from Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 1993, Opinion section.

- <sup>34</sup> Heller, Michelle A. "Stemming the Tide," *Hispanic*, April 1994, p. 26.
- <sup>35</sup> Yzaguirre, Raul. "Statement of NCLR President Raul Yzaguirre on the Enactment of Proposition 187," *NCLR Agenda*, Fall/Winter 1994/95, Vol. 12, No. 3, p. 8.
- <sup>36</sup> Idelson, Holly. "Clinton's Immigration Changes Aim to Stop Abuses," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, July 31, 1993, Vol. 51, No. 31, p. 2061.
- <sup>37</sup> See note 17 above, p. 14.
- <sup>38</sup> Rodriguez, Roberto. "Immigrant Bashing: Latinos Besieged by Public Policy Bias," *Black Issues in Higher Education*, Vol. 10, No. 26, February 24, 1994, p. 31.
- <sup>39</sup> Contín, Margarita. "Latino Democrats Buck The Republican Tide," *Hispanic Today*, December 1994 / January 1995, p. 12.
- <sup>40</sup> See note 17 above, p. 11.
- <sup>41</sup> See note 14 above, p. 12.
- <sup>42</sup> See note 16 above.
- <sup>43</sup> Citrin, Jack and Donald P. Green, Christopher Muste, Cara Wong. "Public Opinion Toward Immigration Reform: How Much Does the Economy Matter?," *CLPP Working Paper*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Berkeley: Chicano/Latino Policy Project, May 1995, p. vii.