Electronic Theses and Dissertations   Graduate College

2017

The civic and political engagement of Latinos in Omaha, Nebraska

Christian Israel Espinosa Torres
University of Northern Iowa

Recommended Citation

Espinosa Torres, Christian Israel, "The civic and political engagement of Latinos in Omaha, Nebraska" (2017). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 403.
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd/403

THE CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF LATINOS
IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA

An Abstract of a Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Christian Israel Espinosa Torres

University of Northern Iowa

May 2017

ABSTRACT

Prior to 2006, Latinos in this country were virtually disregarded as an active

political group. However, on May 1, 2006, thousands of immigrants and advocates

across the United States marched in major cities to protest proposed immigration laws.

In Omaha, Nebraska, alone, it was estimated that community groups energized 15,000

people to march in protest that day. Since the marches, both the number of Latinos and

public participation of that group has grown dramatically. But, that growth has not been

without its setbacks. While that first display of unity was striking in 2006, many factors

have combined to prove that numbers alone will not make the Latino voice effective.

Much more is needed for this to happen.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it explores the various ways in which

the immigrant and native-born Latino community in Omaha is organizing civically and

politically in response to public policies and actions that have not been perceived to be in

the best interest of that community. Second, it examines the degree to which Latino

immigrants now have a voice at the table where public policy is made—denoting a true

measure of power also known as a presence.

The research questions that frame this study, with specific reference to Omaha

are: (1) How do Latino leaders empower their organizations to influence others? (2) How

do these organizations shape themselves to gain political and civic presence? (3) Are the

Latino pan-ethnic organizations gaining any measurable political and civic presence? (4)

Are these organizations being recognized as equal players by the political elite?

The results of a study of the Omaha Latino community will illustrate how that community participates in the political process. By employing a grounded theory as a tool for analysis, I designed a qualitative case study that involved observation of one symposium, eight get-out-the-vote (GOTV) efforts, two workshops for leadership training, four political fundraisers and 14 in-depth interviews.

The study of civic and political engagement has often been analyzed at the micro-level by focusing on individual socio-psychological characteristics, motivations, and resources such as social capital and identity, or at the macro-level by examining political institutions and cultures. Despite a growing interest in the study of civic and political engagement at the organizational level, I found this to be an untapped area that required research attention. I found that while these Latino pan-ethnic organizations have gained visibility, Latino organizations continue to lack presence at the decision-making table.

THE CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF LATINOS
IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA

A Thesis

Submitted

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

Christian Israel Espinosa Torres

University of Northern Iowa

May 2017

This Study by: Christian Espinosa Torres

Entitled: THE CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT OF LATINOS IN OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology

_____   _____
Date   Dr. Marybeth C. Stalp, Chair, Thesis Committee

_____   _____
Date   Dr. Mark Grey, Thesis Committee Member

_____   _____
Date   Dr. Anne Woodrick, Thesis Committee Member

_____   _____
Date   Dr. Xavier Escandell (Grinnell College), Thesis
                               Committee Member

_____   _____
Date   Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would never have been able to finish my thesis without the guidance of my committee members, help from friends, and support from my family.

Over the past nine years I have received support and encouragement from a great number of individuals. I would like to thank Dr. Mark Grey for opening the doors of the University Of Northern Iowa when I was an international student looking for guidance in pursuit of a master's degree. Without his trust and encouragement, I would not have reached the position I now find myself. I would like to thank my thesis committee of Dr. Marybeth Stalp, Dr. Mark Grey, Dr. Anne Woodrick and Dr. Xavier Escandell for their support.

I would like to thank Daniel Chornet Roses, Ph.D., who, as a good friend, was always willing to help and give suggestions for improvement. I would also want to thank Paul O'Hara, a book editor, who spent countless hours proofreading and critiquing my research.

I would like to thank my sister and her husband, who were the ones who encouraged me to come to the United States, and my mother for giving me all her support.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and my children, Amelie and Matías, who always make my days better.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE   PAGE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Studies of immigration from the social sciences standpoint have been

concentrated into two dimensions: the causes of outmigration of the country of origin and

how immigrants integrate into the host society once they have arrived (Portes, Escobar

and Arana 2008). The literature of the integration of immigrants and their offspring into

their civic and political participation has been growing considerably, facilitating the

understanding of how immigrants are becoming part of the political process and their

communities (Bada, Fox and Selee 2006; Bloemraad 2006; Ebert and Okamoto 2013;

Fox and Bada 2011; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009a; Martinez 2005; Ramakrishnan

2005). One of the signs that immigrants have adapted to the host society is their degree of

engagement and participation in public life.

Over the last decade, public participation of Latinos has been more noticeable,

particularly as a result of the 2006 marches across the United States and because of the

exponential increase in the Latino[1] population. In the spring of 2006, millions (estimated

between 3.5 and 5.1) of immigrants and non-immigrants from different backgrounds, but

with the vast majority from Latin America, took to the streets across the United States to

oppose House Resolution 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal

Immigration Control Act of 2005 (Bada et al. 2006). These demonstrations are

considered the pivotal point of a new era of immigrant/Latino civic and political

---

[1] I use the term "Latino" because, during the study, it was a word commonly used by the
participants. I also use Hispanic or non-Hispanic white when referencing U.S. Census
Bureau data as this is the term that this agency uses.

participation in the U.S. Not only were they the largest ever immigrant demonstrations in many cities, but the largest public demonstrations of any kind (Fox and Gois 2010). The fact that many of these unprecedented protests took place in traditional, conservative, rural Midwestern communities heightened their impact. Their members attracted great media attention, which prompted the general public, the media, and politicians to start looking at Latinos and Latino immigrants as civic and political actors capable of representing themselves (Fox and Gois 2010). Until these marches and the Latino demographic change that could be translated into an increase in their electorate, Latinos were only portrayed as competitors for jobs, criminals, and/or threats to the English language (Fox and Gois 2010).

Although these demonstrations appeared to be a sudden reaction to a bill that was intended to criminalize undocumented immigrants, they were actually the result of a platform of immigrant-led organizations, community organizing, immigrant advocacy groups, labor unions, religious institutions, and hometown organizations, among others (Fox and Gois 2010; Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad 2008a). In Omaha, Nebraska, it was estimated that 15,000 people demonstrated, coordinated by community groups such as Omaha Together One Community (OTOC), the Chicano Awareness Center (now the Latino Center of the Midlands), the Union of Food and Commercial Workers and religious congregations from South Omaha (Benjamin-Alvarado, DeSipio and Montoya 2009).

Nationally, since the 2006 marches, Latinos have been gaining more space in the political and civic arena by creating more Latino and Latino migrant-led organizations

(Fox and Gois 2010). In some states such as Connecticut, New York, California, and even Utah, which is recognized as a very conservative state, immigrant leaders and organizations have been successful in promoting immigrant integration (Mollenkopf and Pastor 2016). However, even after the marches occurred in Omaha, the civic and political participation has been inconsistent. Gouveia et al. (2010) explain the following regarding the civic participation of Latinos in Omaha:

> It is clear that these trajectories of civic integration do not follow any sort of predictable line that goes from less to more mobilization or from less to more occupation of public spaces. As of now, we have observed an oscillation between efforts and moments of confusion and disorganization, followed by other periods of major mobilization (P. 24).

The reason for these unpredictable trajectories is partially because structural exclusionary forces that became more evident after the 2006 demonstrations, creating a climate of fear and resignation among many Latino leaders (Gouveia et al. 2010). Using these unprecedented marches as a starting point, this study investigates and reviews the status of Latino civic and political engagement with the objective of shedding light on the relationship between immigrant-Latino and native-Latino organizations and the creation of a more democratic city. It also finds different ways in which these organizations could improve or change the way they organize. In order to grasp this relationship, I address the following questions:

1. How do leaders influence their organizations in order to influence others?

2. How do organizations organize themselves to gain political and civic presence?

3. Are the Latino pan-ethnic[2] organizations in Omaha gaining substantial political and civic presence?

4. Are these organizations being recognized as equal players by political elites?

More than ever before, Latinos have become the focus of attention for both the Democratic and Republican Parties, both of which look to capture, or at least influence, this segment of the electorate. According to Barreto and Manzano (2013), the number of Latino voters in the 2012 elections increased over 1.4 million (from 9,745,000 to 11,188,000) from the 2008 elections. With birth rates and other population trends, the number of non-Hispanic whites is projected to decline, while the number of Latinos is projected to increase in the next four decades, increasing their electoral base (Barreto and Manzano 2013). In the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area, the Latino population will represent 25 percent of the total population by 2040, while the non-Hispanic white population will continue declining and will only represent 60 percent of the Omaha-Council Bluffs metropolitan area (Gouveia, Espinosa and Doku 2012). Other communities in the Midwest such as Marshalltown, Iowa, experienced a great influx of Latinos, mostly Mexicans, which have changed its dynamics (Grey and Woodrick 2005).

---

[2] Pan-ethnic identity is an idea and a term popularized by sociologist Yen Le Espiritu (1992) which refers to the grouping of various ethnicities or nationality groups that to some extent share language, culture and geography.

Despite this unremitting demographic change, as Andersen (2008) points out, politicians and political parties tend to ignore Latinos and other minority groups because of low voter turnout and lack of community organization. However, Latino influence in the political arena cannot only be measured by the degree in which this population votes, but how they are able to position themselves in rooms where decisions affecting their lives are made.

The study of civic and political engagement has been often analyzed at the micro-level – such as socio-psychological characteristics, motivations, and individual resources such as social capital and identity – or at the macro-level – such as the influences of political institutions and culture (Andersen 2008; Andrews and Edwards 2004; Landolt and Goldring 2009). Despite a growing interest in the study of civic and political engagement at the mezzo-level (organization level) of analysis, this is still an untapped area that requires research attention (Landolt and Goldring 2009). Mollenkopf (2013) explains that many political scientists understand group incorporation as the sum of the individual activities or behaviors without considering the influences of organizations. Landolt and Goldring (2009) also explain that these micro and macro analyses lead to the assumption that formal politics, such as electoral participation, is the norm for all groups, discounting that even though Latinos and other minority groups have a strong community-based organization, their participation in formal politics is minimal. Therefore, other political ways of participating in which constituencies partake, such as protesting or other types of collective action, are not considered (Okamoto and Ebert 2010). These forms of participation, although not conceptualized as being part of formal

politics, are clearly political manifestations of the population. de Graauw (2015) explains that in New York City and San Francisco, immigrant-serving non-profit organizations have been successful in making these two cities more responsive to immigrants' unique needs.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, it explores the various ways in which the immigrant and native-born Latino population in Omaha is organizing itself civically and politically in response to public policies and actions that may be deemed as contrary or favorable to their needs and interests. Second, it examines the extent to which immigrants have a voice at the decision-making table, which for this is study will be referred to as "presence." Using, Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad's (2008a) typology of civic and political stratification among organizations, I will attempt to explain the reasons why these organizations have been unable to obtain political and civic presence and influence while studying how these organizations organize themselves to gain political and civic presence.

Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008a) argue that community organizations can be classified not only by their resources but also by their presence and weight. The authors define resources in terms of money, personnel (staff, volunteer, members, and clients), physical space and equipment. Some organizations might designate part of their resources specifically to political matters and others to social actions such as protest. Presence, on the other hand, refers to the visibility and recognition either among the general population in the case of civic (latent-political) activities or government officials in the case of political activities (see Table 1). Political presence can show the degree to which these

organizations are recognized as full partners in their community. Lastly, "weight" refers

to the level of influence that these organizations have in the social and political realm.

The authors explain that civic weight is the capacity that an organization has in order to

advance its interests through actions, such as allocation of resources, or the ability to

shape and influence projects where other organizations participate. Different from civic

weight, political weight denotes the capacity and ability of the organizations to access,

shape, and influence policy and governmental resources. Table 1 displays a framework

by Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008a) that makes the distinction between presence

and weight.

<div align="center">Political Incorporation</div>

In the literature of political incorporation, an organization's presence can be

analyzed with regard to how pan-ethnic organizations are stratified in relation to

mainstream organizations. Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008b) define mainstream

organizations as those that are mostly led by U.S-born whites and that could have some

diversity in their membership and/or clientele. The authors explain that by differentiating

mainstream organizations from ethnic organizations, public officials create a dichotomy,

causing civic and political stratification. The result of this stratification, as Ramakrishnan

and Bloemraad (2008b) found, is that mainstream organizations, compared with ethnic

organizations, are civically and politically better positioned.

The extent to which immigrants incorporate into a new society depends on

variables such as individual and family characteristics, as well as the context in which

immigrants are received. In order to provide a tool to understand this diversity of

variables, Portes and Böröcz (1989) provide the concept of "modes of incorporation."

The authors define modes of incorporation as the combination of the conditions of exit,

class origins, and contexts of reception that determine whether immigrants are more or

less successful in their integration experiences. The concept of "conditions of exit" refers

to the reasons immigrants leave their country of origin. "Class origins" refer to

immigrants' attributes. "Contexts of reception" include local labor markets and

government policies, the public's attitudes toward immigrants and the strength of the co-

ethnic community. The debate of how immigrants incorporate into the U.S society is

ongoing with two major theories, segmented assimilation and mainstream-assimilation,

leading the debate. In both theories, the general measurements of immigrant

incorporation are socioeconomic status (educational attainment, occupational status and

income), language, and place of residence. However, variables such as civic and political

integration are not often included in the analysis of immigrant incorporation (Bloemraad,

Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008).

      Bloemraad et al. (2008) explain that socio-economic assimilation might be

achieved more easily if immigrants and their offspring would use political power to

challenge and change institutional barriers hindering their mobility. Although political

incorporation is paramount for immigrants' incorporation, this concept has been only

used as a variable of assimilation instead of a vehicle of it. Contrary to Bloemraad et al.

(2008), Jiménez (2011) sees political incorporation as a dimension instead of as a vehicle

of incorporation. Jimenez (2011) explains that, currently, new immigrants are navigating

and adjusting in five different dimensions: language, socioeconomic attainment,

citizenship and political participation, residential locale, and social life. He states that political participation is tied to rates of citizenship acquisition because of the eligibility to vote. Although Jimenez (2011) mentioned that political participation is divided into formal and informal, where formal incorporation refers to the participation of the formal political arena (voting and be elected), and informal incorporation, which includes the participation in community and political organizations and political activism, he pays more attention to the formal participation. He argues that although naturalization among immigrants has been increasing a faster pace, these naturalized immigrants are not registering to vote at the same rate as the native-born. In addition, Jimenez (2011), following with mainstream-assimilation theory, argues that social integration can be explained by intermarriage and perception of belonging. However, neither political nor civic engagement are central points of incorporation for Jimenez's study.

Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009a), on the other hand, provide a model that attempts to explain how political incorporation takes place. The authors explain that political incorporation is "(1) a process (2) for individuals or groups, (3) encompassing views as well as interest, (4) involving various forms of political activity, and (5) including changes caused by as well as changes to immigrants' political activity" (P. 16). The authors provide a full model for immigrant political incorporation.

However, their approach is more focused on the individual and the political opportunities (understood as the institutional inclusion-exclusion mechanism developed by the places where immigrants live) that individuals or members of a group have been given, rather than on more proactive aspects. In addition, the Hochschild and Mollenkopf

(2009a) study, similar to Jimenez (2011), tends to focus on traditional politics that involves naturalization rates, representation and voting. Political incorporation vis-á-vis immigrant concept of assimilation is an unequal phenomenon (Ramakrishnan and Bloermraad 2008b).

Ramakrishnan (2013) explains that the political incorporation studies should look at individuals as members of, or activists in, formal organizations or informal associations. Ramakrishnan (2013) makes a distinction between traditional assimilation theory and political incorporation. He explains that studies of political incorporation should focus on the interaction of political institutions with the following: interest groups, civic organizations and religious institutions that are constituted of immigrants. In this study, I attempt to look at the individual characteristics of leaders, their capacity to incorporate more Latinos into their organizations, and how these organizations' characteristics make their interaction with political institutions possible, facilitating the political incorporation of Latinos in Omaha. Mollenkopf (2013), reflecting on the question of why scholars who study immigrant incorporation should include the context, explains "we are studying places where political actors genuinely compete to form governing coalitions according to more or less settled (if evolving) political rules usually involving winning elections" (P. 108). Building into this reflection, in the U.S., and particularly in Omaha, parties or political groups compete to obtain political support that could come from this growing Latino population. Bloemraad (2015) explains that political incorporation is critical for immigrants and their descendants because a high

level of it results in greater participation in the electoral process making politicians articulate a more inclusive message.

The Pew Hispanic Center (2013), in its report "A Nation of Immigrants: A Portrait of the 40 million, Including 11 Million Unauthorized," revealed that the immigrant population reached a record of 40 million (including 11 million unauthorized immigrants) in 2011. Although these numbers have no precedents, the net migration to the U.S has declined since 2007 (Passel and Cohn 2012). One major contributor to this decline has been that the "net migration from Mexico has declined and possibly reversed" (Passel and Cohn 2012: 1). In their effort to show that immigrants tend to establish in the U.S for longer periods, Taylor et al. (2011) found that 35 percent of unauthorized immigrants live in the U.S for 15 or more years; 24 percent 10 to 14; 22 percent five to nine; and only 15 percent less than five years.

The Latino population in Omaha, as well as many other parts of the Midwest, has rapidly grown since the 1990s. In Nebraska, there were 37,000 Latinos in 1990, and by 2010 the population grew 351 percent, reaching 167,405. In contrast, during the same period, the non-Hispanic/non-Latino population grew roughly 7.5 percent in the same period (U.S. Bureau of the Census). Also in the 2010 Census, Latinos accounted for 63 percent of the 115,078 people added in Nebraska from 2000 to 2010. In Omaha, the largest city in the state, the Latino population grew 421%, from 10,288 to 53,553, in the twenty-year period from 1990 to 2010. According to the 2010 Census, 32 percent of the Latino population in Nebraska lived in Omaha. Moreover, the Latino population in 1990

represented only three percent of the total population (335,795) in the city. By 2010 the

Latino population accounted for 13 percent of Omaha's population (408,958).

This demographic change and population trend will hardly be enough to expect a

seat at the decision-making tables. The formal and informal Latino organizations need to

be active entities that involve greater numbers and more politically-sophisticated

members to be sufficiently politically and civically engaged in order to incite change with

regard to the interaction and policies and make Omaha a more welcoming city for the

Latino population.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING CIVIC AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Citizen engagement is fundamental to an operating democracy. However, there are many forms of citizen participation, and this term might mean different things to different people. It is important to note that the definition of citizenship is more than the limited notion of a nation state and that only involves the membership in a political and geographic community[3] (Bloemraad et al. 2008). I refer to engagement instead as participation, because as Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008b) explain "[engagement] reflects the aspects of involvement that go beyond the individual level, giving a more explicit role to government and organizational actors in producing engaged communities" (P. 16). Citizenship should encompass a more global idea where basic rights such as political, economic, social, and cultural are granted (Munck 2005). Nevertheless, as Munck (2005) explains, these rights are denied for many immigrants. Thus, for Latinos and Latino immigrants, in order to influence policy and regain the rights from which they have been stripped, it is important to organize civically and politically using formal and informal political channels.

Scholars and the general population tend to use the term civic engagement when referring to both civic and political engagement. However, there are some differences that are important to specify and that would provide a better understanding of how Latinos engage civically and politically (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

---

[3] For a discussion of Citizenship, review "Citizenship: Discourse, Theory, and Transnational Prospects." Peter Kivisto and Thomas Faist (2007).

The release of the book *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Putnam 2001) opened a discussion about civic engagement. Putnam explains that civic engagement in the United States has declined, affecting interpersonal trust, trust in government institutions and many other social and economic factors. However, because Putnam (2001) avoids providing a definition of "civic engagement," and instead lists activities such as reading newspapers, political participation, and interpersonal trust, it is problematic to analyze what part of civic engagement has declined (Ekman and Amnå 2012). Ekman and Amnå (2012) explain that Putnam (2001), by providing this broad list of activities, was more focused on the "engagement" component as a way to explain the importance of "social capital" rather than "civic." Among other critiques of Putnam's work, one of the most important is that his analysis might be adequate for the white population who participate in bowling leagues, but might not be suitable for minority groups such as Latinos (Portes and Vickstrom 2011). Although the term is used broadly, there is no consensus on the definition of civic engagement. Alder and Goggin (2005) discuss how scholars have differed in their definitions of the term. The authors provide examples of definitions for a specific purpose: civic engagement as community service, civic engagement as collective action, civic engagement as political involvement and civic engagement as social change. Similar to Putnam (2001), other authors have used a broad list of informal social and political activities to describe civic engagement (Adler and Goggin 2005). Looking for a functional definition, Alder and Goggin (2005) define the concept as follows: "civic engagement describes how an active citizen participates in the life of the community in order to improve conditions for others or to

shape the community's future" (P. 241). However, this definition involves the "rational choice" of an individual to participate in the community arena without considering other structural forces that might influence or hinder her or his decision of becoming civically engaged. For example, the fact that a city does not provide adequate snow removal for a neighborhood might trigger the participation of a person. Likewise, structures and ideological forces such as stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice play an important role in hindering Latino participation. Also, this definition embodies civic and political engagement in one category.

The many definitions and overuses of this term have made academic analysis and measurement difficult (Berger 2009). Berger (2009) argues that it is better to stop using the term "civic engagement" and substitute it with "social engagement" or "moral engagement" depending on the case. Alternative options have emerged. For example, Ekman and Amnå (2012), refers to civic engagement as "latent" or "pre-political" participation. In their typology, the authors differ from Berger (2009) with regard to the term "engagement." While Berger (2009) explains that engagement involves a combination of attentiveness and action, Ekman and Amnå (2012), make a distinction between attentiveness and action. The authors introduce the concept of "social involvement" to evaluate the level of attentiveness. Ekman and Amnå (2012) describe "social involvement" as the curiosity or interest of citizens in political and societal affairs. In social involvement, citizens do not take actions in either realm. Through this concept, the authors discount the list of activities such as reading the newspaper or talking to friends about political matters that many authors such as Putnam (2001)

provide as a way of "civic engagement." In addition, the authors not only introduce a new term but provide a way to measure it: the interest in politics and societal affairs and the importance of politics for the group being studied. Similar to Ekman and Amnå (2012), I believe that there are two separate components (social involvement and social engagement) that make up the concept of latent-political engagement. Ekman and Amnå (2012) explain that latent-political engagement is important for future analysis because even though many people engage in informal activities, these activities do not necessarily result in direct political engagement. Also, during the present study, I have noticed that the term "civic engagement" hinders the development of a workable political agenda in the Latino community and continuing to use it will reinforce its ambiguity. Latino organizations use their programs or activities as examples of civic engagement without making a distinction of which activities or programs are oriented to influence government. Although Ekman and Amnå (2012) continue using the term of "civic engagement" to describe the actions taken by citizens, in this study, I will use the term "social engagement," drawing from Berger (2009), to describe this action.

Political engagement can be differentiated from latent-political engagement by determining purpose of the engagement. According to Ekman and Amnå (2012), political engagement refers to all the actual (manifest) activities where the main purpose is to influence governmental decisions and political outcomes. The authors explain that while formal politics should be considering, including the following: voting in elections, recalls, or referenda; running for office; and belonging to a political party. However, others forms such as protest, boycotts, and signing petitions should be considered as well.

It is important to emphasize that many Latino immigrants are excluded from most of these types of participation because they lack U.S citizenship. Thus, participation outside of formal politics is imperative to gain rights or to maintain the rights that already exist. Ekman and Amnå (2012), Okamoto and Ebert (2010), and Ramakrishnan and Bloermraad (2008b) explain that other forms of social and political engagement such as protest or boycotts should be included when analyzing immigrant political and latent-political engagement. Ekman and Amnå (2012) present a typology that provides examples of activities or actions at the individual and collective level. While the individual level includes signing petitions or political consumption, the collective forms involve demonstrations, strikes, and protest. The authors also include legal and illegal forms of participation such as rioting, squatting in buildings, damaging property and confronting the police. Ebert and Okamoto (2013) and Okamoto and Ebert (2010) provide two examples of social engagement and political engagement respectively in their collective form. Okamoto and Ebert (2010) looked at how immigrants incorporate into the political process as a group by focusing on protests in 52 metropolitan areas across the U.S., including Omaha. The authors explored the effects of structural opportunities, organizational funding, and how certain conditions such a threat intensifies group boundaries between immigrants and natives. Okamoto and Ebert (2010) found that political opportunities are a double-edged sword for collective action. On the one hand, the authors found that in metropolitan areas that are (1) less segregated, (2) offer more access to formal political channels such bilingual ballots, or (3) have high levels of citizenship acquisition, the probability to use protest as a strategy for social change

decreased. On the other hand, the authors found that metropolitan areas with anti-immigrant environments and with immigrant-native segregations increase the participation of protest, contrary to theoretical frameworks. Ebert and Okamoto (2013), while analyzing 1,009 civic (social) events in 52 metropolitan areas, including Omaha, also use the context of reception to measure collective forms of civic engagement. The authors divided civic engagement events into solidarity events and improvements events that represent collective efforts. The authors define solidarity events as ones that focus on celebrating culture, such as ethnic festivals or film festivals, while improvement events refer to meetings or workshops to address relevant issues affecting the community. The authors found that a large foreign-born population in a community has a stronger effect in predicting solidarity events than improvement events. Also, a more welcoming atmosphere and an active ethnic newspaper and radio station increase the participation on both types of events, whereas restrictive laws and ordinances decrease the participation in these events. Similar to Okamoto and Ebert (2010), Ebert and Okamoto (2013) found that places with a high percentage of voter registration and a high level of citizenship acquisition *decrease* the participation in improvement events. This same condition had no effect on solidarity events. Continuing in the same line of study, Bada et al. (2006) found that Mexicans living in Chicago tend to use more informal channels to change policy than formal channels. The authors hypothesize that one of the reasons could be because half of all Mexicans living in Chicago are undocumented. However, Bada et al. (2006) acknowledge that as a result of the 2006 marches, Mexicans seem to have an extraordinary level of informal political engagement.

Contrary to previous research that concludes that minority groups tend to participate in informal politics because many, as explained above, have been deprived of such rights, Martinez (2011) found that Latinos are less likely than non-Latinos to participate in informal political activities such as protest, despite the 2006 marches. Also, Martinez (2005) argues that this gap of participation in informal politics emulates the gap in formal politics such as voting. Martinez (2011) explains that after the 2006 marches, many organizations in Denver, Colorado, and their leaders, found it difficult to maintain the Latino engagement or translate it into a more durable social change that could benefit these immigrants. The author explains that one of the issues hindering these continuous mobilizations was that many organizations were competing for the same funding and constituency. In line with Martinez's studies, Ramakrishnan (2005) found that the formal and informal political participation across Latino and other immigrant groups is lower compared to non-Latino whites. Ramakrishnan (2005) also explains that many Latino leaders and their organizations too often have relied on just encouraging foreign-born members to become naturalized citizens or inviting them to register to vote. Although crucial, Ramakrishnan (2005) concludes that these two types of political incorporations need to be accompanied by civic education that make politics compelling for the first and second generation as well as the immigrants who cannot participate in formal politics. Ramakrishnan (2005) asserts that knowing how to contact a public official or to recruit an ethnic candidate in immigrant-heavy areas could increase immigrant political participation.

Bloemraad (2006) provides a broader understanding of how government involvement facilitates immigrants' political incorporation. Bloemraad (2006) found, by comparing the U.S and Canadian policies towards immigrants, that when the governments in the receiving countries take a more proactive role and provide funding to organizations that help immigrants, the immigrant population develops a sense of responsibility to participate in politics. By analyzing citizenship as the product of cost/benefit calculations, Bloemraad (2006) explains that during her interviews, immigrants in the U.S. were more likely to acquire citizenship to ensure rights or economic security rather than to become involved in the political process. Bloemraad (2006) explains that because the U.S policies are not as welcoming as Canadian policies, immigrants do not see a direct relationship between becoming a citizen and engaging on political activities or voting. Conversely, immigrants in Canada, with its more welcoming policies, develop a sense of responsibility to be involved in politics including through voting. Bloemraad (2006) recognizes that leaders in the immigrant community play an important catalytic role in involving other immigrants to participate more in the political process by including them in community events. Also, the lack of a U.S. policy that recognizes the diversity and value of immigrants has encouraged immigrant leaders to define the community in terms of race.

Continuing with the analysis regarding how government policies shape immigrant political incorporation, Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009b) conclude that even though western countries have been enthusiastic about promoting free trade and information, they have been less enthusiastic about free mobility of people. As Hochschild and

Mollenkopf (2009b) explain, governments should seek to find a balance in controlling their borders, validating their residents' skills and loyalties and maximizing the benefits of immigration. However, the authors found that these states have been unable to find that balance because of opposition within their population. Hochschild and Mollenkopf (2009b) explain that, with exception of Canada, the citizens of western societies would like immigration to be stabilized or to decrease. Fraga (2009) explains that a particular political party – in the case of the U.S., the Republican Party – can use the anti-immigrant sentiment to gain political legitimacy and define national identity by promoting anti-immigrant policies that could be interpreted as an anti-Latino agenda. Fraga (2009) calls this practice *identity-community trade-off.* Identity-community trade-off has been a common practice throughout the history of the U.S. where the exclusion of some segments of the population has been used for the benefit of political gain. These nativist practices have deterred the political engagement of immigrants, making it difficult for organizations to motivate more immigrants to be involved in the political process.

The literature of immigrant political incorporation, including the theoretical frameworks, mainly focuses on individual characteristics or looks at how groups incorporate by creating and promoting events that are social in nature or seek to solve a community issue. However, there is a dearth of studies exploring the role of Latino leaders in their affiliated organizations and how they influence other leaders and organizations. Even though Martinez (2011) does not focus on the role of leaders, but through her research, one can see how Latino leaders, during the 2006 marches, tried to influence other community-based organizations (CBO) to merge into one around the

mobilizations. In this case, some Latino leaders were trying to influence other leaders to encourage them to share information about clients or constituents to move forward and try to influence policy. Martinez (2011) discusses a case where a leader of a particular organization was unsuccessful in his quest to attract other organizations to a cause. Many of this organization's members realized that march participants viewed marches as the end of their participation. Because of the lack of cooperation, the leader of this organization, while discussing future steps with her 250 members, found that not all of its members wanted to march, rather, some wanted to meet to the Colorado Speaker of the House. In this case, the leader was acting as an organizer and as interlocutor for the members of the organization, whose role was to carry the message to elected officials and bring back the response. Fox and Bada (2011), while explaining the importance of bi-nationalism in the political incorporation of Latinos in Chicago, found that leaders look for political opportunities to influence elections and policies. Fox and Bada (2011) mention the case of a group of leaders who created a nonpartisan political action committee, recruited 150 people to be part of this committee, and organized a get-out-the-vote campaign on election day to support the candidate who was more sympathetic to their demands. In addition, Dominguez (2016) explains that the organization of immigrants, particularly Latinos in Chicago, resulted in the mayor creating an office called "New Americans" that seeks to:

1) establish a centralized language access policy for the City of Chicago; 2) expand opportunities for immigrant business owners and entrepreneurs; 3) enhance coordination between city government and community organizations; 4) expand immigrant parent engagement throughout the Chicago Public Schools; 5) expand English-language educational resources and opportunities in community settings; 6) support the launch of the Illinois DREAM Act; and 7) promote U.S. citizenship (P. 94)

Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008b) explain that the study of latent-political engagement and political engagement has to focus on the individual, organizational and ethnic level. Because the present study focuses on how Latino leaders influence their organizations in order to impact the Latino population, the general population, and other organizations; therefore, it is important to discuss the political and latent-political engagement not only at the organizational and group level but also at the individual level. For the purpose of this study, the individual analysis is about leaders of organizations. Rather than focus on psychological indicators or structural policies, this study looks into the leaders' behavioral indicators and the influence that Latino organizations have in the political behavior of individuals. For this study, the political behavioral indicators are: attending public forums, voting, writing to elected officials, donating campaign money, doing campaign work, signing a petition, and participating or organizing protests, rallies, marches, or boycotts. Although the present study does not include disengagement in the analysis, it is important to mention its two forms. Disengagement is differentiated between passive or active, where the passive form is found in people who see politics as irrelevant, and the active form refers not only those who view politics as irrelevant, but also those who find politics repulsive (Ekman and Amnå 2012).

Organizations, as Portes et al. (2008) explain, are a decisive venue for an immigrant to enter into American politics. Many immigrants are exposed to the political arena when they join mobilizations organized by activists from their own or other communities to confront issues or achieve goals (Portes et al. 2008). Bloemraad and Terriquez (2016) argue that organizations are also capable of empowering individuals by providing civic training, fostering solidarity, and mobilizing their population. Bloemraad and Terriquez (2016) found that when these immigrant organizations are effective in involving the community they serve, the health of the immigrant community improves, children in these communities have more safe spaces to play, and organizations are able to secure more funding. Fox and Gois (2010) explain that immigrant communities have become social and political actors on their own by creating immigrant-led organizations such as hometown associations, non-profits, faith-based organizations, indigenous rights groups, community media, and workers' organizations in addition to joining non-Latino-led organizations.

Latinos in Omaha have created these types of organizations, making them active social and political actors. Before assessing the role of advocacy organizations in Omaha, I will define what "advocacy organizations" means for this study. Andrews and Edward (2004) explain that: "Advocacy organizations make public interest claims either promoting or resisting social change that, if implemented, would conflict with the social, cultural, political, or economical interest or values of other constituencies and groups" (P. 481).

Andrew and Edwards (2004) state that there are three main lines of research in advocacy organizations: public interest groups, social movement organizations, and more general nonprofit advocacy organizations. In the case of international migration studies, there has been an emphasis on the analysis of hometown associations, their involvement with both their sending and receiving countries and how their participation in two countries can reinforce their transnational political engagement (Escala-Rabadán, Bada and Rivera-Salgado 2006; Portes et al. 2008). In order to better understand the kinds of organizations operating in Omaha, I will briefly define these types of advocacy organizations.

<u>Public Interest Groups</u>

Definitions of public interest groups are similar to other advocacy organizations look for the collective good (Andrews and Edwards 2004). Interest groups have been defined as voluntary groups that seek to influence government both in the electoral process and in the political system, usually by providing electoral campaigns with contributions (usually monetary), votes, and information about what the voters want (Andrews and Edwards 2004; Han et al. 2011). However, using this definition runs the risk of focusing only on groups that represent the interests of the for-profit sector or organizations that represent the interests of some government agencies such as the National Association of Counties (Han et al. 2011; Knoke and Zhu 2012). Andrew and Edwards (2004) explain that a subset of interest groups are those founded around individual membership and organized by ideas or causes, such as opposition to the death penalty. Andrew and Edwards (2004) utilize Berry's (1977) definition of "public interest

group" as "one that seeks a collective good, the achievement of which will not selectively and materially benefit the membership or activists of the organization" (P. 481).

Public interest groups, as Knoke and Zhu (2012) explain, are usually formal organizations with name recognition and often with a high number of members. The majority of these groups tend to be formed by affluent individuals, and example of one such group is the Koch brothers' Americans for Prosperity Foundation (Knoke and Zhu 2012). Knoke and Zhu (2012) explain how public interest groups defined by Berry (1977) and other interest groups with focus on the for-profit sector grew in response to the increase of government activities. Although many of these organizations focus on federal policy issues, there has been more attention directed to the state and local level where the issues are more immediate and the results more attainable (Knoke and Zhu 2012).[4] It is important to stress that the number of interest groups is greater than the number of public interest groups and the agenda of interest groups is, predictably, that which benefit their members, rather than that which promote the common good. In order to determine the success of interest groups, studies of these organizations have focused on the amount of resources, either monetary or human, these organizations have (Han et al. 2011). Therefore, many studies focus on the power of political action committees (PACs).[5] A momentous impact on the American electoral system occurred with the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* case, which

---

[4] As former Speaker of the U.S House of Representatives, Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill famously said, "all politics is local."
[5] PACs are election committees, founded by interest groups, which serve to fund the electoral campaigns of candidates who support their agenda, and ballot issues on which they maintain a position.

allows interest groups to spend money on candidates for office without disclosing the

source of the contributions (Knoke and Zhu 2012). Although the analysis of PACs is

outside the scope of this study, it should prompt future studies on how this decision

affects the efforts to increase the number of Latinos elected to public office.

<u>Social Movement Organizations</u>

Social movement organizations and public interest groups often overlap in their

goals, member characteristics, tactics, scope of operation, and organizational form

(Andrews and Edwards 2004). Authors such as Burstein (1998) and Knoke and Zhu

(2012) agree that these two organizations are equivalent political actors studied by two

disciplines: interest groups by political scientists and social movement groups by

sociologists. Andrews and Edwards (2004) explain that probably the more significant

difference is the "greater institutionalization of interest groups" (P. 483). In sum, both

public interest groups and social movement organizations attempt to influence

policymaking, democratic rights, the electoral process, legal decisions, political parties

and state bureaucracies, and represent marginal and/or excluded groups (Knoke and Zhu

2012), but social movement groups do so in a less institutionalized fashion. The third area

of organization, according to Andrews and Edwards (2004) is the nonprofit.

<u>Nonprofit Organizations</u>

Nonprofit organizations[6] often have been characterized as those that essentially

provide public services. However, their role as political, representative, and advocacy

organizations is less commonly known (Andrews and Edwards 2004). Recent research on

---

[6] Nonprofit organizations for this study refer to those organizations that have 501(c) (3)
status by the Internal Revenue Service.

nonprofits has focused on how these organizations influence public policy through the following: lobbying, disseminating information toward social objectives and the collective good, policy advocacy, and social and political engagement (Andrews and Edwards 2004; Sandfort 2011). de Graauw (2008) explains that since the 1970's, the privatization of U.S welfare providers has increased. Therefore, the government relies more on nonprofits by providing contracts or grants, so disadvantaged groups, including immigrants, can access social services (de Graauw 2008). Local nonprofit organizations often face constraints in their efforts to devote enough time and resources to advocacy (Smith and Pekkanen 2012). Smith and Pekkanen (2012) explain that nonprofit organizations may face the dilemma of limiting their advocacy actions in favor of simply delivering services because of resource constraints or because they fear that their advocacy activities may affect their ability to raise money. In addition to these limitations, nonprofits face governmental restrictions and regulations. According to de Graauw (2008), these organizations are prohibited from endorsing or directly campaigning for a candidate or party, donating money to a candidate or party, or distributing material that would seek to influence the result of an election. However, as the author explains, these organizations are permitted some flexibility in the amount of money they can spend to influence legislation[7] but it should be an insubstantial part of their activities.

---

[7] According to the Internal Revenue Service, under section 501(h), nonprofit organizations can spend up to $1,000,000 depending on their annual expenditures. Small nonprofits with annual expenditures of less than $500,000 can spend 20 percent on lobbying.

Despite these limitations, nonprofits can participate in many political activities. These activities included "advocacy with administrative departments, city commissions and boards, and the judiciary; [provide] nonparticipant analysis and research on all the sides of a policy or legislative issue; [provide] invited public testimony before any government body; and instances when a nonprofit organization engages with stakeholders in discussions of broad social, economic and political problems" (de Graauw 2008:331). It is important to mention that a subgroup of nonprofits is grassroots organizations, defined for this study as "locally based, significantly autonomous, volunteer-run formal nonprofit (i.e., voluntary) groups that manifest substantial voluntary altruism and use the associational form of organization" Andrews and Edwards (2004:485). Another type of organization that it is not mentioned in the study of advocacy organizations, but clearly is a grassroots effort, is that of hometown association.

<u>Hometown Associations (HTAs)</u>

The literature surrounding immigrant hometown associations (HTAs) has focused on how immigrants in the United States develop structural projects that help with the urbanization of their rural communities and how they work as intermediaries between immigrants and the government. In the U.S, according to Orozco and Lapointe (2004), there are approximately 2,000 hometown associations from traditional sending states in Mexico (Zacatecas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Puebla, and Michoacán). HTAs work as a connection between community needs and the government, contributing to social exchange between two nations. When researching HTAs discussion groups and member decision-making practices have indicated that HTAs politically impact in their home

communities, organizing themselves to create low-scale projects such as road

construction and pavement, electrification, health facilities, and scholarly

institutions(Orozco 2004). This form of organization, along with the support of other

groups and immigrants, allows HTAs' leaders to identify projects, allocate resources, and

plan the implementation of new projects (Orozco and Lapointe 2004). According to

Orozco (2004), hometown associations work with the government on three different

levels: local, state, and federal. The combination of these three levels of government

with HTAs promotes a considerable outflow of money to rural areas in Mexico.[8]

     HTAs are more popular in states with a great flow of migration such as Texas,

California, and Illinois (Orozco 2004). However, more immigrants have moved into

nontraditional destinations in the Midwest, such as Nebraska. The idea that HTAs only

participate in their home communities has changed with the recent incorporation of the

term "transnationalism" (Portes at al. 2008). Today, immigrants not only participate in

social and political matters in their countries of origin, but also in their countries of

residence. Terms such as "civic binationality" have helped to better understand the

transnational engagement and at the same time refute arguments that claim that social and

political engagement in two countries slows or hinders immigrant political incorporation

(Portes et al. 2008), although it should be mentioned that HTAs, compared to other

grassroots organizations in the U.S, are disadvantaged in terms of fulltime staff and

nonprofit status (Ramakrishnan and Viramontes 2010).

---

[8] This "3x1 Program," adopted by the Mexican Government, requires each of the three
levels of their government to contribute one dollar for each dollar contributed by HTAs.

In sum, advocacy organizations (public interest groups, social movements organizations, nonprofit and hometown associations) seek to promote or resist social change by making public interest claims. According to Knoke and Zhu (2012), public interest groups and social movement organizations, in theory, are equal political actors, although studied in two different disciplines. As de Graauw (2008) explains, nonprofit organizations not only provide services but also participate in social change and are vehicles, especially for immigrants, of incorporation into politics. Lastly, hometown associations, although excluded from the literature of advocacy organizations, play an important role in social change and the political incorporation of immigrants in the country of residence while actively engaging socially and politically in their home country. It is important to note that organizations that provide resources such as foundations, or which represent the for-profit sector, are excluded from this analysis.

Taking the previous conceptualizations of advocacy organizations as a starting point, the question that remains is how many of the Latino organizations fall into each category not only because they are listed as non-profit or hometown associations, but for the work they do to make a change.

<u>Community Organizations in Omaha</u>

In Omaha, Nebraska, according to the University of Nebraska-Omaha's Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS) inventory, there are approximately 57 community organizations. Eleven of those are hometown associations from Latin America countries, including Mexico, Colombia, Panama, and Peru, one indigenous group, seven faith-based organizations, five community media, one worker organization,

one senior center, one chamber of commerce,[9] and the rest organizations which provide

different services such as legal assistance, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes,

citizenship classes, and other social services mainly to Latinos and Latino immigrants.[10]

Moving to the central question of how these organizations influence Latinos and other

organizations, I turn to the Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008a) typology of "civic" and

"political" stratification applied to organizations. It is important to clarify that many of

these organizations, except the HTAs, are registered as non-profits. As explained above,

the non-profit organizations face fiscal limitations when they are trying to influence

political policy.

<div align="center">Leadership</div>

Leaders' influence in the organization's civic and political presence is paramount.

In order to understand leaders' role and influence it is necessary to review the leadership

literature. For the purpose of this study, leadership is going to be viewed through the lens

of the leaders' role in social movements. I chose to use leadership from this perspective

because social movements contribute to the creation of public spaces –which refers to

social settings other than the ones already pre-established by the government– and

attempt to change power and create a more democratic society (Tilly 1993). Leadership

in social movements, as Ganz (2010) explains, "is accepting responsibility to create

conditions that enable others to achieve shared purpose in the face of uncertainty" (P. 1).

This definition of leadership attempts to go beyond of the often-used Weberian

---

[9] The Nebraska Hispanic Chamber of Commerce is registered as a 501(c)(6).
[10] For more information on the community organization go to
http://www.unomaha.edu/ollas/commorgs.php

characterization of the charismatic leader in which the leader possesses a personality gift (charisma) so powerful that she or he creates a power dominance over followers, making them believe the leader can change their lives (Allen 2004). Therefore, in the Weberian approach, the social relationship between the leader and the follower is avoided. Ganz's (2010) approach to leadership differs from Max Weber because, instead of only creating idealist expectations or having full control of followers, for Ganz, the leader moves into more practical responsibilities that involve identifying, recruiting, and developing leaders to construct a social movement community and mobilizing its resources. By taking these responsibilities, the leader gains legitimacy in the community.

Andrews et al. (2010) explain that many scholars, while describing how a community can have a voice or presence, only focus on the external factors, such as the accessibility of allies and political opportunities or how effective the organizational practices and characteristics are. Andrews et al. (2010) found that the political and social context, whether favorable or not, is not completely determinative for organizations to be effective in shaping social and political change. They found that developing programs that effectively engage the public have more weight in social and political change. Andres et al. also found that when leaders work as a team, their organizations are more prone to secure monetary resources and have better programing, resulting in greater participation of members and activists.

Andrews et al. (2010) argue that some studies such as Morris and Staggenborg (2004) have expanded on this analysis, including the leaders' influence on organizations. Morris and Staggenborg (2004) explain that leaders are crucial for advocacy and social

organizations because "they inspire commitment, mobilize resources, create and recognize opportunities, devise strategies, frame demands, and influence outcomes" (P. 171). Morris and Staggenborg (2004) explain that it is not only that leaders influence the organization, but the organizations or the movements influence the way leaders act. Therefore, leaders' constant interaction with social structures and the environment might change the strategy and idea of social change. Similarly, Andrews et al. (2010) warns that scholars who focus solely on the person avoid seeing the context in which leaders develop, and therefore ignore the collective action. Furthermore, focusing on the structural environment diminishes the leaders' capabilities to create the conditions for others to participate. In an inclusive approach, the authors explain that an over-focus on leaders might ignore the important participation of the followers or activists. Consequently, the role of the leaders should be analyzed from the individual perspective within the structural context and include the different levels of leadership. In conceptualizing the social characteristics of leaders, Morris and Staggenborg (2004) explain that the majority of the leaders usually come from educated middle and upper classes, share the race or ethnicity of their supporters and are predominately men.

Women, on the other hand, have been relegated to secondary leadership positions, acting as a "bridge leader," or liaison, between former leaders or constituents and the social movement (Morris and Staggenborg 2004). Morris and Staggenborg (2004) specify that, because in many social movements the leadership is vertically oriented, the concept of "bridge leader" might hinder leadership power struggles and exclude women from top positions. For the authors, to expand the definition of leader or to call all the participants

leaders has the potential to thwart the analysis of leadership or focus on an erroneous idea of what a leader is. Morris and Staggenborg (2004) amplify this distinction when discussing the difference between leadership and a movement spokesperson. While a leader is a person who sets goals, drafts strategies and tactics, and shapes outcomes, they maintain that a movement spokesperson could be someone who was selected by the mass media or by the persons who put themselves forward. Andrews et al. (2010) and Morris and Staggenborg (2004) concur that it is important to make a distinction between roles in social movements. Andrews et al. (2010) make the distinction between core activists and leaders. For these authors, core activists are highly-committed people who help to coordinate volunteers, motivate others to participate in the movement by showing their own commitment, and provide administrative support to the group or organization. For this research, I focus on the leaders and their influence in the organizations. Morris and Staggenborg (2004) mention that several scholars have argued that leaders, in some instances, specifically when there is apathy from the followers, can become part of the power elites, putting forward their personal goals instead of those of the community. Therefore, these leaders can become oligarchical and focus more on the maintenance of their organizations than true improvement in the community.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT IN OMAHA THROUGH THE YEARS

Social and political incorporation depends on the socio-political context of the nation, state, or community of residence (Bloemraad et al. 2008; Fox and Bada 2011; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009a). The expansion of Latin American immigrants and their descendants in Nebraska has been accompanied with an increase of hostility toward them (Gouveia et al. 2010). In recent years, Nebraska governors, some senators, public officials, and nativist groups such as the Nebraskans Advisory Group have attempted, with various degrees of success, to make the context of reception difficult for immigrants. An example of these unwelcoming policies was the decision of Governor David Heinemann (ultimately reversed by the Nebraska unicameral) to stop providing Medicaid coverage for prenatal care for low-income, pregnant immigrant women because, according to the governor, it primarily benefited undocumented immigrants rather than a future citizen child (Knapp 2012). Furthermore, during the first session of the 102nd Legislature (2011/2012) in Nebraska, there were approximately 10 legislative bills and/or legislative resolutions that would have affected, directly or indirectly, the Latino population. One of them, the LB48, introduced by Senator Charles Janssen from District 15 – which includes Fremont, Nebraska – was the most controversial of these bills (Nebraska Legislation 2011a). LB48 attempted to imitate Arizona SB1070 and the primary purpose of the legislation was to "work together to discourage and deter the unlawful entry and presence of aliens and economic activity by persons unlawfully present in the United States" (Arizona Legislation 2010). The City of Fremont also

proposed Ordinance 5165 that prohibited housing or hiring an "illegal" migrant (City of Fremont 2010). In addition, in the spring of 2012, the Douglas County Commissioner decided to close polling places in areas with high concentrations of Latinos. In a letter from Senator Benjamin Nelson (D-Nebraska) to the Attorney General of the United States, he stated that the Douglas County Election Commissioner closed more than one hundred polls for the 2012 general election, disproportionately affecting seniors and minority groups (Nelson 2012).

Massey and Sanchez (2010) argue that the context in which immigrants are received determines their identity and integration. Unfortunately, with these new policies and ordinances, the context has been unwelcoming for many immigrants, especially Latinos. The popular belief that Latino immigrants do not "assimilate" at the same pace as former European migrants might explain the way they are received. For example, although Latino immigrants, especially Mexicans, have a long history of presence in the U.S., they are perceived as the eternal migrants (Saenz 2010). This association might make the Latino population feel like outsiders even if they were born in the U.S. and are third or fourth generation Americans.

Through the years, the context of reception in Nebraska has been a paradox (Gouveia 2006). Although there have been anti-immigrant proposals, Nebraska has also seen legislation that has helped the integration of immigrants, such as LB 239 from the second session of the 99th Legislature in 2005, which granted qualified children of immigrants, regardless their immigration status, the right to pay in-state tuition. Known as the "Dream Act," the bill was passed by the Legislature and became law after

Governor Heinemann's veto was overridden (Gouveia 2006). Gouveia (2006), in her analysis of Nebraska state policies, concluded that they have lacked the clarity to address the challenges and opportunities that come with this increase of the Latino population.

Immigrant political assimilation and incorporation studies generally have focused on traditional immigrant gateways, and only a few have analyzed the non-traditional destinations such as Gouveia et al. (2010) and Grey and Woodrick (2005). Gouveia et al. (2010) not only provides historical background information on immigrant settlement, but the authors also explains how the dynamics of local "migration-inclusion-exclusion" structures and how they function in this Midwestern city. The authors explain that Omaha has had a continuous Latino (mainly Mexican) presence since the 1880's. Due to this presence, the authors typify Omaha as a re-emerging destination for Mexicans and a new destination for Central and South Americans. In this report, Gouveia et al. (2010) explain how this new wave of Latino immigration has revitalized South Omaha and how, because of the closure of the stockyards and some old meatpacking plants, South Omaha had become a moribund community. As a part of this revitalization, immigrant and non-immigrant organizations have rapidly appeared, such as the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Midlands Latino Community Development Corporation, and the Juan Diego Center (part of Catholic Charities). These new organizations joined already established Chicano Awareness Center, now the Latino Center of the Midlands, and the Nebraska Mexican-American Commission, now the Latino American Commission, that developed as a result of the Chicano movement in the 1960's and 1970's (Gouveia et al. 2010).

Gouveia explains that Omaha has had three formative periods in its recent history of Latino immigration.

In the first period, which Gouveia et al. (2010) called "Old Civil Organizations and New Migrant Leaders," ranges from 1990 to 1999. During this time, established organizations were caught by surprise with the needs of new immigrants with little English fluency. This period is marked by the involvement of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church and its Spanish-speaking progressive priest, who was an advocate for migrant's labor rights. A high point of this period was the appointment of the first Latin American organizer for the Omaha Together One Community (OTOC), an interfaith and multicultural organization that developed considerable political and civic strength since its incorporation in 1992. This new leader played an important role in organizing immigrants working in the meatpacking plants, creating soccer leagues, and campaigning for the dignified and effective treatment of workers. Another important event during this period was when meatpacking workers met with Republican Governor Mike Johanns in the basement of the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in 1999 to make clear demands for better treatment of Latino workers by the meatpacking companies. As a result, Governor Johanns proposed the "Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights," which included a list of eleven workers' rights, to be voluntarily distributed by employers to meatpacking workers in a language they understood (Nebraska Appleseed 2006).

The second period which Gouveia et al. (2010) called "Multiethnic Advances and Precursors to Nativist Backlashes," is measured from 2000 to 2006, and is a juxtaposition of immigrant achievements and the creation of nativist groups. During this time, several

actions occurred that had a positive effect on immigrants, including the following: the end of Operation Vanguard, an immigration pilot program implemented in Nebraska by the Immigration and Naturalization Service that focused on immigration control inside the U.S.; passage of the Non-English-Speakers Workers Protection Act, which included the Nebraska Meatpacking Industry Workers Bill of Rights implemented in 2003; and the local version of the Dream Act, noted above. Simultaneously, because of the increased physical presence of Latinos, the federal and state elections of 2004 and 2006 were characterized by increased attention paid to nativist groups by candidates who at some point fought for immigrant rights. The third period, called "Marches and Local Anti-Immigrant Policies—A Return to Invisibility?," ranges from 2006 to 2012. Undoubtedly, this period is marked by the 2006 marches and the backlash that followed them. Although the marches were expected to be the turning point for more migrant-led organizations, the reality was that many of the organizers returned to work and faced the risk of losing their jobs because of their participation in these events (Gouveia et al. 2010).

The Omaha Site: Migrant Civil Society Under Construction report (Gouveia et al. 2010) is the springboard for this study. However, this study attempts to go beyond the parameters of the report, and dig deeper into the analysis of leaders' influence in their organization and other organizations, and their interaction with the local, state, and federal governments.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

This chapter includes a description of the methods I utilized in the study

conducted from November 2011 to September 2013. The chapter is organized into

several sections to provide a framework within which to describe the research plan. A

statement on the purpose of the study is provided, followed by the particular research

questions that guided data collection and analysis procedures. The chapter ends with a

summary to illustrate the linkages among the main sections presented as part of the

research design methodology for this study. This chapter describes the process by which I

conducted a case study on the phenomenon of political participation of Latinos in Omaha.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, I explored the various ways in which

the immigrant and native-born Latino population in Omaha is organizing itself civically

and politically in response to public policies and actions that may be deemed as contrary

or favorable to their needs and interests. Second, I examined the extent into which

immigrants have a voice at the decision-making table which for terms of this study will

be referred as "presence." For the purpose of this study, specific research questions were

formulated and are detailed in the following section.

<u>Research Questions</u>

1. How do leaders influence their organizations in order to influence others?

2. How do organizations organize themselves to gain political and civic presence?

3. Are the Latino pan-ethnic organizations in Omaha gaining substantial political and civic presence?

4. Are these organizations being recognized as equal players by political elites?

In order to address the research questions put forth for this study, I chose a qualitative approach because I wanted to capture how Latinos and Latino organizations in Omaha construct their political reality while interacting among themselves and with other non-Latino-led institutions. The purpose of using qualitative research is, as Merriam explains (2009), to "achieve an understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process (rather than the outcome or product) of meaning - making, and describe how people interpret what they experience" (P. 14). Merriam (2009) explains that there are seven types of qualitative research: Basic Qualitative Research, Phenomenology, Ethnography, Grounded Theory, Narrative Analysis, Critical Research and Case Study. The type of qualitative research chosen will depend on the research question(s), the sample, the way the data is collected and analyzed, and finally how it is presented to the readers (Merriam 2009). I chose case study to address the research question.

The following sections consist of an outline for this qualitative study. It begins with an explanation of the reasoning for using a case study, why Omaha was chosen as a setting, gaining access, the role of the researcher. This information is followed by

descriptions of sampling procedures, data collection and analysis procedures, and procedures to establish the trustworthiness of results.

Case Study

In a qualitative case study, like other types of qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis. This type of research seeks to understand how participants construct reality in their social life, also referred as social constructionism (Merriam 2009; Warren and Karner 2005). Yin (2003) explains, "a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (P.13). Also, Yin (2003) explains that case studies should be used when the research attempts to answer "how" and "why" questions, when the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of the participants, when contextual conditions need to be included, and when the boundaries of the study are not clear between the phenomenon and the study. The case can be focused on a single person who is a case example of some phenomenon, a program, a group, an institution, a community, a policy or a process (Baxter and Jack 2008). In order to determine if a qualitative case study is the best suitable technique to answer the research questions, first the researcher needs to identify the unit of analysis, which is the case being studied. As explained above, the focus of the research might vary, as it will depends upon what the researcher wants to investigate. In this study, the unit of analysis is the process in which pan-ethnic Latino organizations organize themselves, and whether this Latino way of organization has been sufficient to gain substantial civic and political presence, resulting in the organizations being perceived as equal partners in Omaha. In order to prevent the case from being too broad

or to have too many objectives, it has to be delimited. Baxter and Jack (2008) suggest that case studies can be distinguished by the time and place of the study; by time and activity; and by definition or context. This study is indeed bounded by time, place and context, so case study is a suitable method to answer the research questions.

Merriam (2009) explains that there are three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental and collective. Intrinsic case studies seek to examine the particularity of the case – whether it is a particular person, program or institution. Collective case studies are the conjunction of multiple case studies that attempt "to investigate a phenomenon, population or general condition" (Merriam 2009:48). In contrast, instrumental case studies are "examined mainly to provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization. The case is of secondary interest, it plays a supportive role, and it facilitates our understanding of something else" (Merriam 2009:48). Considering the characteristics of the types of case studies, for this research I chose to conduct an instrumental case study.

<u>Why Omaha?</u>

As explained before, Omaha is the largest city in the State of Nebraska. Included in its Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area is Council Bluffs, Iowa. Omaha is a low-density city, which has a clear division of race and ethnicity groups. For example, according to the American Community Survey 3-year Estimate (2010-2012), 43 percent of Latinos live in the zip codes 68105 and 68107, which comprise the area known as "South Omaha." On the other hand, the 44 percent black population lives in the zip codes 68104 and 68111, which comprise the area known as "North Omaha."

Omaha has also experienced a significant Latino demographic increase in the last

20 years as well as having the biggest concentration of Latinos in the state. This situation

not only creates more presence of the Latino population as a potential electorate, but also

has the possibility of creating strong social capital. Furthermore, Omaha, before the

1990's Latino immigration wave, had experienced immigration from Germany, the Czech

Republic, Poland, Ireland, Lithuania, Italy and Mexico (Gouveia et al. 2010). Because

Omaha has an extensive history with immigration, and because of the insinuation of the

Latino organizations into the local civic and political process, it provides an opportunity

to examine the evolution of the Latino community embedded in a context that

alternatively provides and thwarts opportunities for social and political mobility.

<u>The Role of the Researcher</u>

Warren and Karner (2005) explain that the term "role" refers to the position of the

researcher in the setting. The participants in the setting also can assign the role. In this

case my role was somewhat complex. Participants perceived me as part of the Latino

community. This assigned role was given to me in part because I am an immigrant from

Mexico, and I have been working closely with this community as part of my work at the

Mexican Consulate and as a community engagement associate in the Office of

Latino/Latin American Studies' (OLLAS) of the University of Nebraska-Omaha. Even

though I consider myself part of the community, I am responsible for reducing any

personal biases that I might have. For example, I consciously avoided influencing

participants in such a way as to suggest responses that I believed an interviewee should

have given.

<u>Sample Procedures</u>

A purposeful nonprobability sampling was the utilized method for this qualitative research. This type of sampling is used in qualitative data because, instead of searching for generality, as it is the case for quantitative analysis, qualitative analysis attempts to discover occurrences and their relationships (Merriam 2009). As part of the purposeful nonprobability sampling, I used snowball sampling. The first step of this type of sampling is to locate a few key participants and ask each of them to refer other potential participants.

Upon Internal Review Board approval, I began to contact potential participants by telephone and found their contact information through OLLAS electronic public inventory of Latino organizations.[11] If the participants answered the phone, I introduced myself if they did not know me, explained the purpose of the study and then asked if they would like to participate in the study. If the response was affirmative, I followed up by email. The emails detailed the purpose of the study and a request for one hour of their time. Most of the emails were in Spanish, with some in English, depending on the preference of the participants. Many of the participants used both English and Spanish during the interviews. After each interview, I asked the participants to refer another person who they perceived as a leader. My sample criteria involved Latinos or Latin American immigrants recognized as leaders or as influential persons in the community by one or more interviewees or that the participant was a member of a Latino organization or

---

[11] See at http://www.unomaha.edu/ollas/commorgs.php

an organization that serves Latinos.[12] This type of criteria is called "elite interviewing."

Elite interviewing focuses on individuals who are considered influential, prominent and

well-informed people, and who belong either to an organization or a community

(Marshall and Rossman 2010). In addition, these interviews are appropriate to study the

role and the perception of political and social activity (Hochschild 2009). The recognized

leaders, as Hochschild (2009), explains, are elite people who have been chosen because

of the position she or he occupied. She emphasizes that elite people "do not necessarily

mean someone of high social, economic, or political standing; the term indicates a person

who is chosen by name or position for a particular reason, rather than randomly or

anonymously." She also states that these types of interviews:

> process-tracing studies of policy enactment or implementation, the role of
> memory and perception in political or social activity, and the role of elites
> (broadly defined) in a political, social, or economic process. Second, elite
> interviews can function as a sort of pre-test to help one discern which institutions
> or processes should be carefully studied through some other means such as
> content analysis, formal modeling, or statistical manipulation. Third and most
> generally, elite interviews can give substance and meaning to prior analyses of
> institutions, structures, rule-making, or procedural controls (Hochschild 2009:1).

Nonetheless, by using elite interviewing, some of the disadvantages of this

method emerged. For example, several people contacted were willing to participate, but

because of their busy schedule, we were unable to find a convenient time for them to be

interviewed. Even when I talked to them during community meetings, they still

---

[12] It is important to note that the even though I tried to contact HTAs, the members listed
on the inventory did not return my calls. Also, during the meetings I attended, none of the
participants identified as part of these organizations.

responded that they wanted to participate in the study but were too busy to participate. For this reason, many eligible leaders were left out of this study.

Establishing Contact

In order to make certain that each interviews proceeded properly, I secured and verified with the participant a meeting place with adequate space, necessary equipment (such as the tape recorder and batteries) and confirmed that all was in order the day prior to the set interview date. During each interview, I again introduced myself, orally reviewed the purpose of the study, and read and recorded the consent form (Appendix B and C) to the participant in order to verify willing participation by the interviewee. The initial interview then proceeded with the collection of demographics. I explained to each participant my intent to create participant profiles.

Taking into consideration that previous studies (Escobar 2004; Vertovec 2004) have identified that transnational organizations have a major role in the political incorporation of immigrants, I started contacting the Hometown Associations (HTA's) listed in the inventory. However, as I was unable to reach any member of these associations, I moved to other organizations so listed in the inventory. I could not find any link between HTA's and the Latino community social and political engagement. During the observation, none of the participants were identified as part of an HTA.

Participants

In case studies, the size of the sample is linked to the unit of analysis that in this case is the process in which pan-ethnic Latino organizations organize themselves. Considering the unit of analysis and that the nature of qualitative analysis is an in-depth

exploration of the individual's experiences, 13 Latinos and one non-Latino white were

identified and participated in this study. Among the interviewed Latinos, three were first

generation migrants, three one-half generation, six second-generation migrants, and one

third-generation migrant. Respondents ranged between 22 to 65 years of age. There were

eight men and six women. I tried to include the same number of men and women because

as Sprague (2005 P. 3) explains, "gender, in interaction with many other areas like

race/ethnicity, class, ability, and nation, is a key organizer of social life." Six of the

participants were leading a Latino organization, four were members of an organization

that serves Latinos, one was a leader of a student organization, one was a member of a

political party, and one was member of an academic institution. Ten were either of

Mexican heritage or were born in Mexico, one was from Central America and two were

born in two different South American countries. For those with Mexican heritage, just

two were from traditional sending states in Central Mexico. Several of them were from

Mexico City and one from a border state in Mexico. Two of the participants were college

students, four had bachelor's degrees, and seven had graduate degrees, either a master of

arts or science, a doctorate, a Juris doctor, or a doctor of medicine. Also an elected

official who has spent his political career in an area with a big concentration of Latinos

was interviewed.

<p align="center">Data Collection</p>

Upon Internal Review Board approval, I began the data collection. According to

Merriam (2009) qualitative research is about "asking, watching and reviewing" (P.84).

Therefore, the data collection techniques used in this study are: (1) semi-structured face-

to-face interviews, (2) observer as participant, and (3) review of documents (E-

newsletters and E-mails).

Interviews

Face-to-face qualitative research interviews are used as a part of fieldwork or as a

standalone method of research (Warren and Karner 2005). The main purpose of the

interview is to obtain information that we cannot observe, such as feeling, intentions and

thoughts (Merriam 2009). Therefore, in order to obtain that information, the researcher

has to inquire what the participant is thinking or feeling. In addition to obtaining

information about these subjective sensations, face-to-face interviews also allow the

researcher to grasp nonverbal data such as facial expressions, postures, and gestures, cues

which are not able to be noticed through other types of interviews such as those

conducted by telephone (Knox and Burkard 2009). To gain a detailed depiction of

participants' perspectives related to Latino political participation, I conducted a total of

13 individual semi-structured interviews, each lasting approximately one hour. I

conducted the interviews in the language in which the participants felt the most

comfortable. As a result, I conducted four interviews in English, four in Spanish and in

the other six the participants went back and forth between both languages. These

interviews were semi-structured and audio recorded. At the beginning of each interview, I

reiterated the purpose of the study and asked participants if they had any questions. I then

collected participant demographic information. The specific questions explored were

included in an interview guide and are summarized in the following paragraph.

The interview questions were arranged with the intention of making participants build their narrative about the issue. I started by asking: (1) What is your perception about the levels of civic and/or political participation within Omaha's Latino community? (2) What kind of political opportunities are available for the Latino community, and how do they take advantage of it? (3) What kinds of benefits are available for the Latino population in Omaha, and how do they best take advantage of them? An interview protocol was utilized for the interviews. Although I followed the interview protocol, I could be flexible in the order of the questions and I was also able to ask questions to either clarify or expand on their answers. Once the interviews were concluded, the audio was transcribed to facilitate analysis. Although interviews are the most utilized as a primary source of data, observations are also as an equally valuable resource of data (Merriam 2009).

<u>Observer as Participant and Ethnographic Conversations</u>

Observations are vital for the research as long as they are done systematically and look to address the research questions. Observations, as a qualitative research tool, can be done by becoming a complete participant, complete observer, participant observer, or observer as participant (Merriam 2009). In qualitative research it is important to establish what to observe. For the purpose of this study, I used observer as participant. In this type of observation, the researcher focuses on observing the activities of the group while maintaining a secondary role (Merriam 2009). By using this method, the researcher might have access to many people and broader information. However, the information unveiled would be not under the researcher's control. Adler and Adler (1994) identify this role of

the researcher as "peripheral member" in which the researcher interacts with members of the group through acquaintanceship or close friendship. In this role, the researchers participate closely with the group without interfering with the activities.

I began my observation in Omaha in November 2011, and continued until June 2012. Observations included: One symposium, eight "get-out-the-vote" (GOTV) efforts; two workshops/trainings pertaining to leadership; and four political fundraisers. Because I was a participant observer in these events, I wrote my fieldnotes right after each event in order to be as unobtrusive as possible. After several of these events, I had casual ethnographic conversations with those who partook in the events in order to follow up on some patterns and behaviors that I had noticed in my observations. In addition to the interviews and observations, and in order to create a foundation for creditability and transferability, I also included the review of documents in this study.

Review of Documents

According to Marshall and Rossman (2010), "the review of documents is an unobtrusive method, rich in portraying the values and beliefs of participants in the setting" (P. 116). I started gathering newsletters and public hearing information from the Nebraska Legislature database from January 2012 to May 2013. I also was added to an email discussion list controlled by a central emailer sent to the people on the list. Through this list, members of the community discussed current issues in the Latino community and shared community events. I decided not collect data from this source to avoid potential ethical issues (Chen, Hall, and Johns 2004). I did not know who was included in this blind-carbon-copy email list and it would have been difficult to ask every single

participant for her or his consent. However, it helps me to understand more about the events that I was observing. Furthermore, the use of newsletter allowed me to obtain an idea of what kind of events where being organized and about their main purpose.

<div align="center">Trustworthiness</div>

When conducting qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the one who interprets the multiples realities, the changing realities and the participant's reality; a researcher must exercise credibility and transferability (Merriam 2002). In order to establish this credibility and transferability, what Merriam (2009) refers to as "trustworthiness," the researcher has to demonstrate a thoughtful description of the events of the study. According to Merriam (2009), there are several strategies to create trustworthiness.

One of the commonly used strategies that qualitative research employs is triangulation. The use of triangulation is an effective way of enhancing the credibility and transferability in a qualitative study (Warren and Karner 2005). The term refers to the combination of different sets of data, types of methods, theoretical perspectives and the use of different researchers. According to Denzin (1970) cited in Merriam (2002), there are four types of triangulations: (1) multiple investigators; (2) multiple theories; (3) multiple sources of data; and (4) multiple methods to confirm the emerging finding. One of the most used and implemented in this study is multiple source of data collection. In this type of triangulation, I used a combination of in-depth interviews, observations, ethnographic conversations and document analysis. Merriam (2002) explains that by using this strategy a researcher can check what a participant says and means with the

field observation and the document analysis. Source data triangulation refers to the comparison and the cross-checking of the data collected (Merriam 2009).

Procedures of Data Analysis

The analysis of this case study is an embedded one (i.e., analysis of a specific aspect of the case) (Yin 2003). I opted for an embedded analysis of the process in which pan-ethnic Latino organizations organize themselves and whether this Latino way of organization has been effective to gain substantial civic and political presence. The reason for this is because I am focusing on leaders of the community and their ability or inability to have increased Latino presence in the politic realm. The analytic goals of this study are: (1) to provide a contextual description of the case; (2) to analyze the emerging themes and issues that rise in the Latino community; and (3) to report the lessons learned.

Coding

Before I started coding, I transcribed all the interviews and then I translated the interviews in Spanish into English. I used pseudonymous for each participant and took out any potential identifiers. Next, I compiled and organized the various sources of information I used in this research. Once they were compiled, I used MAXQDA as software for analysis. This software allowed me to have more control over the data, and therefore facilitated the analysis. The coding proceedings followed grounded theory methodology. Glaser and Strauss (1964) explain that the development of theory should be grounded on the data collected to develop theory. Although this method focuses on the development of theory that can be empirical testing, in this study, I did not intend to develop substantive theory, but instead to achieve a level of theorizing that could help analyze the processes involved with

respect to the political participation of Latinos in Omaha. To achieve this following grounded theory methodology, I first started with open coding to see and understand what themes and patterns were occurring in the data. As grounded theorists recommend, I read the interviews and file notes line-by-line to construct codes that reflected the interviewees' perspectives of their social and political engagement. At this stage in the process, I started using descriptive codes such as giving back to the community and helping others. These types of coding allowed me to identify the motives of leaders to participate in social organizations or in the political community. During this process, I wrote memos that helped me to remember why I created such code and to help me with the process of creating categories. Throughout this level of coding, patterns started emerging. I then started creating and naming categories to organize these emerging patterns. Merriam (2009) explains that naming categories can come from different sources such as the researcher, the participants (in vivo), or the literature. In this study, I used a mixture of sources. For example, for the participants' answers to the question: "What motivates you to be politically and civically active in the Latino population?," I borrowed some categories from the unpublished *"Coding Manual for Civic Engagement Motives"*[13] created by Dr. Lene Arnett Jensen. Although this manual was helpful, I also formulated my own categories more geared toward the purpose of this study.

Dr. Jensen divides her manual into three categories: (1) Ethic of Autonomy, which refers to the individual's self-benefit in civic involvement; (2) Community, which refers to the civic participation for the benefit of the community of ethnic group; and (3)

---

[13] Dr. Lene Arnett Jensen provided the manual.

Divinity, which implies that God has indicated or exemplified participation. Participation in this case is seen as pleasing to God.

Second, I looked at the mezzo level (organizations) and I adapted the *"Components of Civic and Political Stratification Among Organizations"* developed by Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008a) and the typology developed by de Graauw (2008), to explore the level of social and political presence and weight of the Latino organizations. During the open coding, I realized that not only do the leaders' motives increase the probability of having presence and weight of their organizations, but also the leaders' skills and strategies. Therefore, skills and strategies were used as categories.

In the third level of analysis, I started making the connections between motivations for leaders to become involved, the activities that they organized, and how they tried to influence their organizations and other leaders. I also started reviewing how they interacted with outside groups or political players.

<u>Issues Encountered During Data Collection and Analysis</u>

Because I was dealing with a small group of people, many of the participants became the source of other community members considered leaders. As a result, all the respondents knew each other. Therefore, I decided to use pseudonyms and remove any signifiers such as age that could potentially identify the participants. As explained before, I decided to be an observer as participant to maintain my role as a researcher rather than as an advocate. For the purpose of this study, I maintained the basic aim of this research, which is to develop an in-depth case study about the political participation of the Latino community.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

This chapter addresses the research questions and examines the role of the

leaders' characteristics and motives to be civically and politically active, how they shape

their organizations and how these organizations foster political participation. The

Findings section are divided into five sections: (1) Selective Socioeconomic

Characteristics, (2) Leaders (their motives for being involved, their political participation

and their influence in their organizations), (3) Latino Organizations (and the way these

organization collaborate to gain political and civic presence), (4) how leaders foster

political interest, and (5) how leaders mobilize their followers. In order to contextualize

the answers to my research questions, I will present some socioeconomic characteristics

of Latinos in Omaha such as family income, educational attainment, occupation, and

citizenship status.

Selective Socioeconomic Characteristics

Latinos in Omaha and across the U.S. face social and economic challenges. For

example, according to the American Community Survey's 3-year-Estimate 2010-2012,

the median family income for Latinos in Omaha was $35,981, $5,000 less than Latinos at

the national level ($40,387) and $17,000 less than not-Latino whites in Omaha ($53,287).

With regard to Latinos' educational attainment, of the 26,012 Latinos in Omaha, 32

percent have less than 9th grade education, 20 percent finished 9th to 12th grade with no

diploma, 24 percent obtained a high school diploma or GED, and 12 percent have a

college degree: 2 percent an associate's degree, 8 percent a bachelor's degree, and 2

percent have a graduate degree. Although it is outside of the scope of this study, I realize

that the gap between the participants and the broader Latino population is significant. To put this in perspective, most of the participants have post-secondary education. Half of them have a graduate degree or more. This situation raises a concern because, as Morris and Staggenborg (2004) maintain, some leaders can lead in an oligarchic way. Table 3 shows the educational attainment of the three main groups in Omaha.

According to the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate (2008-2012), the Latino civilian employed population (ages 16 and older) in Omaha represented 10 percent (22,818) of the total civilian employed population of 227,776. Although Latinos are present in all the sectors, there is a concentration in the service sector (6,377), and production, transportation and material moving sectors (5,881). In the same survey, under the "Service" sector, 78 percent of Latinos worked in food preparation and serving-related occupations, and in building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations. In the "Production, Transportation and Material moving" sector, 68 percent of Latinos worked in production occupations. It should be noted that, under "Production," the majority of the Latinos work as slaughterers and meatpackers, work that involves unskilled labor. Figure 1 shows the distribution of Latinos occupations
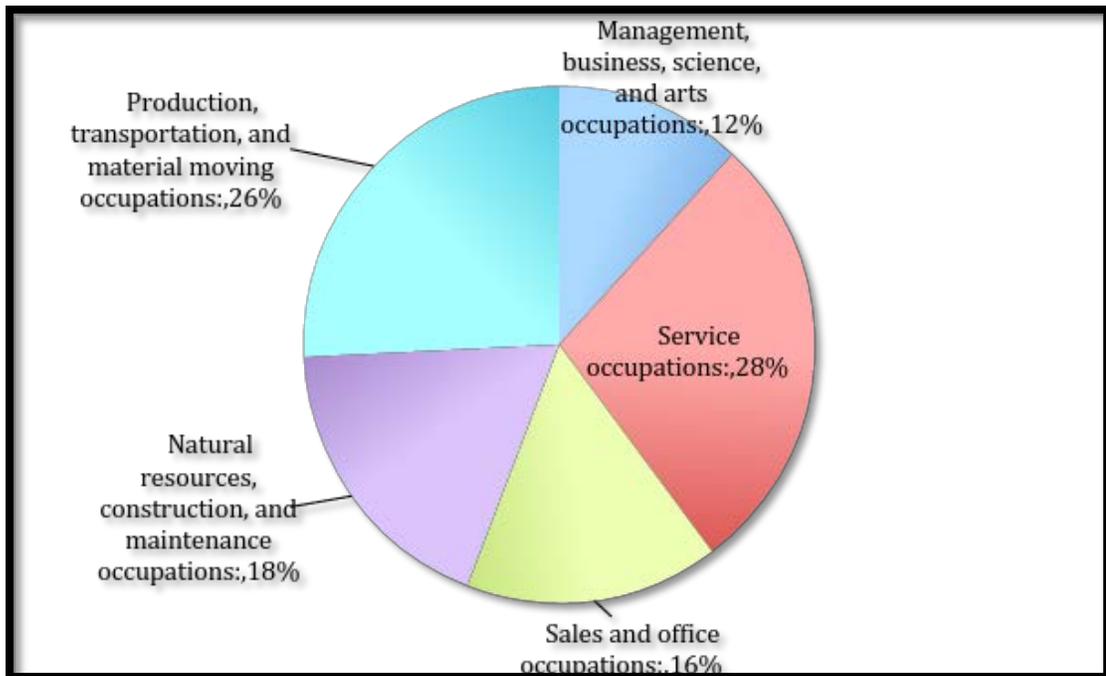
Figure 1. Latino Occupations For the Civilian Employed Population 16 Years And Over

Source: Own calculations from the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

The rapid Latino growth in Omaha, as discussed in the introduction, is partially due to the migration during the 90's. Foreign-born Latino immigrants (foreign born) represented 43 percent of total Latino population of 53,313, and only 38 percent of this group were 18 years and older. Of the total Latino foreign born population of 22,663, only 20 percent have become naturalized U.S citizens. Table 4 summarizes the composition of Latinos by nativity and citizenship.

With this socioeconomic data in mind, I turn to the research questions. How do leaders influence their organizations in order to influence others? How do organizations organize themselves to gain political and civic presence? Are the Latino pan-ethnic

organizations in Omaha gaining substantial political and civic presence? Are these organizations being recognized as equal players by political elites?

I will address the research questions at two levels: individual (leaders) and organizational. This two-level analysis helps to understand how Latino leaders' motives and skills influence both their organizations and other community members to gain political presence.

<u>Leaders</u>

In this section, I present the process through which participants identified others who were considered leaders. I will also discuss what motivates leaders to be civically and politically involved, and their interactions with other leaders, and opportunities and barriers they encountered while participating in the community. These findings come from the theme called "Leaders Motives and Skills." During the interviews, I found four main leaders' motivations: (1) giving back to the community, (2) sense of injustice, (3) lack of Latino representation in the Omaha organizations and (4) changing structures of power.

<u>Leader Motivations</u>

<u>Giving Back to the Community</u>

The motivation of all 14 participants was to give back to their community. One of the words most often repeated was "obligation." Valeria explained that her motivation came from her family and her personal beliefs:

> My motivation comes from my family, twofold, my mother and father have always been active in the community, and so that, I felt that it was my divine obligation to continue with being active in the community. Not just on a superficial level, but on a sincere and true level.

On the other hand, Javier explained that his obligation is to display his leadership by being involved in the community, prompting others to see this participation and decide to get involved.

> I would say that my motivation comes from, I guess, a feeling of obligation to my community. I feel obliged to, not necessarily be the leader, but to provide people with an example of what it means to be actively participating in community service, and so that's really kind of why I do it.

Sense of Injustice

This sense of giving back to the community comes from a perception of injustice that they personally experienced, or their parents experienced. Even though only one participant used the word "*injusticia*" – or injustice - all of the participants provided an explanation that encapsulated the injustice feeling. Gustavo explained how, as a son of sugar beat farmers, he experienced injustice during his lifetime.

> Well I think just my background, my experience, my life's experience, and what I had to go through in my life, I'm 65 years old now. And being born and raised to sugar beet workers, out in western Nebraska, the road from there to where I ultimately ended up was a road that had a lot of peaks and valleys, and so knowing the struggles that people like me went through and being able to understand the system, the political system, the educational, and somewhat the legal system, I could see where there has been many, many wrongdoings, or wrong things, perpetrated on people of color. And so, God gave me certain gifts. One of them was the ability to speak, and when I speak, I try to speak the truth and represent my viewpoints as an American, and how I think that the Constitution or the laws have been violated against a certain group of people, and that's what compels me to get involved. It's just basically, my experience and my knowledge of the system, and being an American.

Pamela sees that because she is an educated person, her participation in the community together with other people, can start a change.

> *Bueno, a nivel personal es un derecho y me gusta ejercerlo por ser ciudadana americana y lo otro es que como injusticia social… y entonces pienso que debo de tener participación activa porque soy una persona preparada y a través de mi participación podemos generar el cambio con otras personas. No como única participación si no trabajando conjuntamente con otras personas. Y, de otro lado, nunca he participado directamente en política. La razón es que he tenido otras prioridades en mi vida personal pero me parece un campo interesante también. o sea me encante me parece interesante la política.*

> Well, at a personal level, it is a right and I like to exercise it because I am an American citizen. Also, because of social justice… so I think that I have to actively participate because I am an educated person and through my participation, we can start a change not by myself but together with other people. And, other hand, I have never participated directly in politics. The reason is that I have had other priorities in my personal life, but I think it is an interesting field. I mean, I like it. I think politics are interesting.

The third major reason why these Latino leaders were involved was the lack of organizations that help the Latino community.

Lack of Latino Service Organizations

While participant one expressed the lack of organizations that serve Latinos and the need for more Latino organizations, participant three went further, explaining that Latinos have to access the structures of power to influence policy. Participant Andres and Fabiola expressed their motives to be involved.

Andres: Si prefiero cuidar más a los latinos que a otra raza porque no hay muchos que los están haciendo. Hay pocos, si los hay pero hay pocos.

Andres: I'd rather take care of Latinos than other races because there are not many [organizations] that are doing it. There are, but just few of them.

Fabiola: Um, there is a lack of services available to the Latino community on how to vote and how to be civically involved.

It is important to note that many of the participants associated directors of organizations with leaders. Because of this association, leaders of more grassroots organizations were not interviewed. Also, participants recognized Latino leaders with those Latinos/as who have accomplished individual success. For example, Javier named several Latinas as leaders. He stated:

> If you look at the efforts that have been undertaken by [director of a senior center] and [director of a Latino organization] and [director of a business organization], and if you look at [successful Latina who is board member of many organizations] and a number of other Latina women in the community, they're actually doing a lot of really impressive work. They're in positions of leadership in the community. They're very adamant about helping the community move forward.

Changing Structures of Power

Even though these leaders might be in a position of influence, their actions are uncorrelated to their motives of involvement. During the interviews, all of the participants except the elected official mentioned that their motives for participation were to benefit the community. However, most were limited in scope to activities that correlated directly with the organization mission. This limited participation contributes to precarious collaborations among organizations to achieve common goals or set agendas

that could benefit the Latino population. One of the reasons why, as Javier said, is that

the participants perceive leadership with service providers. Therefore, the community has

yet to perceive leaders as those who can mobilize or involve others into action to be in a

position of influence.

I found that all the 14 participants agreed that they want to change the Latinos'

status quo, but they diverged on how to achieved this goal. The suggestions ranged from

creating more organizations with Latino leadership, being more vocal in the political

arena, and changing the way people exercise power. Simon mentioned that before and

during the time when the Latino population increased, the majority of the organizations

and their leaders were white:

> *Cuando yo vengo a los EUA en el 98 o 97 me parece, había pocas organizaciones o casi ninguna organización hispana. Solo el Latino Center of the Midland que era chicano.*
> *Antes y eran mas organizaciones con liderazgo blanco y eso me motiva a como se llama a organizar sindicatos y meterme a trabajar, como se llama con la justicia social y hasta que terminamos formando esta organizacion.*
>
> When I came to the U.S. in 98 or 97, I believe, there were little or no Hispanic organizations. Only the Latino Center of the Midlands that before was named the Chicano [Awareness Center]. The majority of the organizations had more white leadership and that encouraged me to organize unions and I started working in favor of social justice resulting in the formation of this organization.

Alan and Fabiola expressed their desire for the Latino community to be more vocal in the political arena.

Alan: Yo creo que lo mas me motiva es la realidad actual de los hispanos o latinos en esta nación, somos aproximadamente como 50 millones parece. Estamos creciendo y es una fuerza poderosa en el futuro político. Posiblemente, nosotros somos tan importantes ahora, inclusive en estas elecciones actuales. Inclusive vamos a ser mucho mas importantes en las futuras elecciones ya es tiempo de que el latino tiene que sentar cabeza y prepararse para participar en esta nación como ciudadanos americanos y eso es lo que mas motiva interviniéndose en lo que se puede para poder conseguir lo que nosotros queremos que es la participación política, el respeto hacia esta población que esta creciendo y eso. Obviamente los derechos civiles del latino que es tan importante.

Alan: What motivates me is the current Latino situation in this country. I think we are 50 million… We are growing and gaining strength and that it is a powerful force for the political future. Possibly we are so important – even right now for these upcoming elections… and we are going to be more important in future elections. It is time for the Latino to settle down and be prepared to participate in this nation as citizens, and that is what motivates me… intervening in order to achieve what we want which is political participation, respect for this population that is growing and, of course, the civil rights, which are so important.

Fabiola: I really want to see the [Latino] community that I work with grow and have some sort of a voice in the legislation that affects them. And, I'm assuming that other people that are involved with the Latino community also are involved and motivated by just the fact that Latinos can have the power to change anti-immigrant legislation.

Adriana, with a tone of frustration, expressed that she has seen how people in positions of power exercise it without being aware of cultural differences. She argued that in order to change this practice and help with the Latino political incorporation, more Latinos need to occupy positions of power to learn how the system works and then change and use it for the Latino advantage.

Adriana: my reason for being politically and civically motivated, both in who I am as an individual and in what I do professionally, is the fact that I realize that the way people exercise power, obviously it's different. It's different among different cultures, and with Latinos, there's a different… we have different "palancas" [ways of influence] we use, as I like to say.

But I guess what I'm trying to say is that in order for Latino communities to be able to integrate fully into the American landscape, the American social landscape, we have to use the existing power structures. So we have to know how the structures are formed, what the ways are to get to those structures, and how to use the same language in order to be able to use those resources, and use them to our advantage.

Barriers to Organizing

As seen in the above quotes, the interviewed leaders, regardless of their specific motivations, want to challenge power structures and therefore have more Latino political presence. However, during the time of this study, I noted that leaders' capacity to involve and mobilize others was precarious.

Leaders' capacities to involve others and create an established base of followers are important to not only have visibility but also to create a pathway to gain civic and political presence. Ganz (2010) explains that in order to catapult social change, leadership has to go beyond the stereotypical charismatic leader. Omaha Latino non-profit organizations serve a large number of people, putting them in a position to not only advocate for Latinos, but also to identify, recruit, and develop leadership at all levels. During the interviews and observations, there were few indications that this type of development of leadership and organization was happening. Simon, in an upset tone, said:

Hay poca formación de procesos organizativos y hay mucha información o adoctrinamiento de procesos de servicios y pues el mismo director o directora que viene a reuniones y llegan acciones y hablan y dicen cosas pero no se logra diseminar la información a la gente que ellos representan o no se tiene tiempo para participar en esas cosas o realmente las organizaciones sociales o noprofit, prestan servicios pero no tienen claridad de que hay que organizar a la gente para la que le están prestando servicios. por eso a la hora de tener una reunión por ejemplo nosotros podemos traer a 10 20 gentes a una reunión como líderes pero hay organizaciones de que en la misma persona viene representando a la misma organización pero no tiene ninguna base detrás de ellos, ese el problema.

There is little training on organizational processes and too much information, indoctrination, and services. The same executive director who comes to meetings and proposes actions and talks and mentions things, but there is no dissemination to the people that they represent or they don't have time to participate in these types of things. Actually, these social organizations or [as called in English] non-profit [only] provide services, but they are not clear about why [it is important] to organize the people who they provide services. That's the reason that when we have a meeting, we can bring 10 to 20 people as leaders. However, there are organizations that send the same person without a base behind them. That's the problem.

This lack of organizational clarity, as Simon mentioned, contributes to Latino organizations' lack of political presence. I also observed that Latino leaders in Omaha are more oriented to a mission of service rather than social change because of the nature of their organizations. I found that most of the interviewed and observed Latino leaders are educated, committed to their work, and to some extent strategic. While for many, their service orientation also allows them to transfer their skills into a social presence, however most have been unable to transfer these skills into political presence. I found that this lack of transferability of skills is attributed to two factors. One is the gender dynamics where men feel entitled to set the agenda, relegating women to a more supportive role. The second is the fact that many leaders have a nonexistent record of participation in political activities.

<u>Who is Calling the Shots?</u>

Contrary to the leadership literature, most of the respondents named more women as leaders than men. While asking why this was so, Valeria and Adriana said:

Valeria: The women are the ones who get things done. Especially dealing with groups who are recent immigrants, when I say recent, I usually mean, like, people who have immigrated here in the last 5 years. First generation, recent immigrant and first generation, 99% of the time it's the women who get the work done, and the guys are just having a pissing contest, basically. Like, inter-fighting amongst them, over what? I don't know. Always, always happens. Every group that I've been a member of that has those types of members…

Adriana: I think that the leadership, let me put it in a different way, I think that the leadership of Latinas is crucial. I just don't think that it's recognized, so when we talk about political and civic participation, we're really talking about women's leadership. Because it's the way that women exert their influence, not only in the family unit, but also in the social sphere. I hate to sound like… I mean, that's political, to me, that's political, right. So, I think that mothers exert huge political influence because they're able to organize their families and they're able to express and convince, for example, why it's important to volunteer for something. I think that it is what drives our community honestly. And maybe it's because I'm a woman that I'm saying this, but it's what drives community change, I think it's the role that women play. Because for the most part, they're behind the scenes, getting all of it done, laying the groundwork. I think the ones who take credit for it are the males. The hombres, the Latinos, who are the ones who are more apt because it's more culturally accepted…

Even though Latinas were identified and recognized as leaders and, as Valeria and Adriana mentioned, they are the ones who get things done, this recognition has not been transform into practice. During the interviews, the male participants talk highly of the leadership of women, but as Adriana mentions, men are still the ones who call the shots.

Here is the dynamic. You'll see it in the dynamic of meetings, where men are calling the shots, men are setting the agenda. Physically there's posturing, there's a very visible leadership of men. Women are on the board. But women are playing a supportive role. So it's, but that doesn't mean, that although there's no

real visibility in the way that they're exerting leadership, in that small group of professionals. Which is a group that's emerging and that's evolving. It doesn't' mean they're not exerting political power, because I think that with the dynamics, with the gender dynamics, you have different ways of how power is exerted in the relationship, so I think visibly, you will see it much more in men, men will more than likely be the ones to step up and run for office, although here in Omaha, I mean, the truth is, the only Latino elected official that is representing any kind of statewide office here in Omaha, is a woman.

Fabiola goes further in explaining how she has been hindered in her efforts to advance politically and bring her ideas to the table in both the white and Latino communities.

The biggest struggle that I've experienced firsthand is opposition from male Latinos. I think that's one of the biggest problems that I have faced. Because I think Latinas are starting to be really competitive, you know, Latinos getting educated, they're getting involved, but there seems to be that opposition from the traditional, like… gender oriented kind of way of thinking, so men have predominately been in control, especially in the white community, but I think you also see that a lot in the Latino community just because of the culture, and I think there's that opposition, that struggle between females, and just like the males who assume that they have the power because they're male (laughing).

Although Latinas are part of the conversation, it seems that they have not been involved in the decision-making. By marginalizing Latinas, Latinos are not allowing Latinas to transfer their knowledge and skills to move their agenda and therefore not exhibit political presence.

Latino Involvement in Social and Political Engagement and their Influence on their Organizations

Throughout the interviews and observations, I was asked how to engage more of the Latino population into social and political matters. The collected data shows that, outside of the leaders' job, many Latino leaders' participation in latent-political and political activities is minimal. John illustrates with this observation:

> Political leadership, whether for an individual or for a group of individuals, always starts at the local level. For many years, I attended neighborhood association meetings in South Omaha. Elected leaders often attend these meetings to hear directly from their constituents. Even though many of these neighborhoods have significant Latino populations, I rarely saw any Latinos at the meeting. The Latino community needs to start engaging their neighbors right in their neighborhoods to make change. The leadership can grow from there, and neighborhood leaders can become community and city leaders.

These findings illustrate how the use of the term "civic engagement" works as a safeguard for leaders to say that they participate in both arenas while focusing just in the latent part. I found that for Latino leaders it is difficult to separate the social and political activities and therefore differentiate activities that involve more advocacy with activities that are part of their organization services. For example, when asked in what kinds of "civic" and political activities they participate, Adriana explained:

> I think engagement has to be defined, and so is engagement offering social services? Is engagement offering education? Does engagement mean convening? Does engagement mean organizing? So, it means all of those things for us, and I think that we are doing it a lot more in certain areas, and not as much in some other areas, but we want to. So we want to be more engaged when it comes to civic activities, when it comes to advocacy activities, which, at the end of the day, that's political. Those are political activities…

The clichéd term "civic engagement" has become problematic in terms of organizing because, as seen in the above quotation, the participant attempts to include all the activities in which her organization participates. When she explains that the Latino organizations or her organization is doing more in some areas and no so much in others, I noticed that it was unclear how to disaggregate the term to clarify the activities and concentrate in the areas where her organization is lacking participation.

I also observed that the leaders' social and political engagement is more a reaction to the social and political environment than a propositional plan to create a social change. Some leaders and organizations have taken the initiative to write weekly columns in one of the two Spanish newspapers to inform about current events and legislative bills that could affect the Latino population. In regard to leaders' participation in formal and informal politics, throughout the interviews and in my observations, I detected that most of the leaders engage in more non-formal political activities such as signing petitions and demonstrating rather than formal political activities such as contributing, attending, or hosting political fundraisers for public office, or running for office. Only five participants mentioned that they had attended political fundraisers, but each said that they did not see other Latino leaders or Latinos from the community in attendance. When I have personally attended political fundraisers, I have also noticed the absence of Latinos. I discovered that this lack of participation has affected both the social and political presence of Latinos. In every political fundraiser I attended, many influential people that contribute to foundations were present which could have been an opportunity for Latino leaders to talk about their organization and the work they do. In addition, by attending

these political events, it is more likely that one would be perceived as a political player. However, although these leaders have gained visibility and recognition among the general population (latent-political presence) because of the work they do in their organizations, their visibility and recognition among government officials (political presence) has been discreet.

Besides the lack of Latino participation in formal politics, I also learned that one of the reasons for this understated political presence is the small-established base of followers that the leaders and organizations have. It is important to note that followers are different from clients. Clients can be invited to a one-time event such as a political rally and then stop participating, while followers more frequently participate in social and political activities. Although Latino organizations have gained visibility and recognition in the general Latino population, I observed that just one leader and his organization was able to involve Latinos/as from other than their own organization's staff and therefore inspire a small but well-established base of followers. During the events I attended, many participants were identified as part of the organization that hosted the event or that organized the meeting, but very few of them mentioned any other memberships. Throughout the interviews, many participants referred to the Legislative Symposium, organized by several community organizations to show their involvement as participants or organizers of a political event. Adriana illustrated this occurrence.

> Well, here in Nebraska, I've attended candidate forums, I've attended legislative symposiums, I've helped to organize a legislative symposium. Other than that, I have not participated in anything that's outwardly a partisan or for any one particular candidate, like a rally for a candidate, have not done so.

This interviewee's response illustrates the recurring issue that these leaders were marginally involved in the political process, but were not invested. In regard to their engagement in social events, all the participants have organized and/or attended a nonprofit or charity fundraiser. Regarding engagement in the community, there were mixed responses. The younger participants expressed that not only did they organize events where they encouraged high school students to go to college, but they are also volunteered at the senior center. On the other hand, the older participants mentioned that, because of the lack of resources in their organizations, they have to volunteer much of their time just to keep their organizations running. Assessing the Latino leaders' civic and political participation, I found that the majority of their efforts are more focused on promoting their organizations' services and providing information about politics rather than engaging their followers and other organizations, or the Latino populace, into investing their time and resources into the political life. This individual behavior and attitude results in having their organizations focused more on services than on civic and political engagement.

In sum, in Omaha, a leader is perceived as someone who is an executive director of an organization, usually a non-profit, instead of someone who organizes the population and has a base of followers. Also, the ambiguity of the term "civic engagement" makes Latino leaders justify their social services as part of political participation without thinking of getting Latinos more involved in formal and informal organizations. Although they want to challenge the social structures and see more participation of Latinos in latent-political and political activities, the Latino leaders, outside of their work activities,

do not participate in such extracurricular events. Considering that the ability of advocacy organizations to achieve political presence is dependent on the quality of its leaders, as Han et al. (2011) states, most of the Latino leaders in Omaha have yet to transform their organizations' clients into followers so more Latinos could participate in informal and formal mechanisms of policymaking.

<div align="center">Latino Organizations</div>

Even though the literature of immigrant organizations includes studies of transnational Hometown Associations, none of the organizations in this study indicated an international relationship. However, during this study, Simon stated that he and other community members were creating an organization to involve most of the Omaha Latino organizations into a political process called *Organizaciones Latinas Aliadas* (Allied Latino Organizations [OLA]). The idea was to create an umbrella organization that would produce concrete tasks for the member organizations and cover different spectrums of the Omaha Latino community. This idea evolved because some leaders were in contact with National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC), now called Alianza Americas. This is a national and international umbrella organization based in Chicago, Illinois, which looks to shape public policies in the U.S and in many Latin American countries. The first meeting of OLA was on January of 2011, when many members of the Latino community and some of the African-American community participated. Even though the meetings were vibrant and many leaders and people from the community were present, once there was a plan with obligations for each participant, most of them eventually withdrew from the initiative.

In informal conversations I had with some of the participants, they explained that although they thought it was necessary to create this type of umbrella group, they were afraid that too much involvement would distract them from their daily service activities. Also, other participants insinuated that this organization might turn too political and could affect their ability of getting funding. This fear of losing funding was primarily because many of the leaders were unfamiliar with the scope of what a formal non-profit organization can do in order to be more politically active. Because allocation of resources was not part of this analysis, I was unable to determine if their organizations' funding sources prohibited participating in political activities or it was just an unsupported fear. Based on the comments from most of the leaders that they have to invest most of their personal time to keep running their organizations, inhibiting them from participating in other activities, it can be safely assumed that formal organizations have limited funding. On the other hand, there have been signs of a couple of informal organizations who have applied for funding to become a formal organization.

Despite this fear, many organizations participated together in political activities such as meetings with the Omaha mayor, with three state senators, and a rally outside the Douglas County Election Commission for the closing of polling places serving minorities and the elderly in 2012. Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008b) argue that one way to evaluate civic and political presence is by looking at the degree of isolation or connection with other organizations. During the time that OLA was active, the Latino community gained some civic and political presence. Although this presence was temporary, it gave the community more visibility and access to power structures. For example, during the

2012 protests in front of the Douglas County Election Commission, mainstream and local organizations such as Omaha NAACP, Nebraska League of Women Voters, North Omaha Voter Coalition, Nebraska ACLU, Latino American Commission, Black Men United, Nebraska AARP, and Nebraska Appleseed joined the efforts of the Latino organizations. The visibility and recognition of the Latino organizations was such that the NBC affiliate in Omaha looked for a representative of the OLA coalition for a quote on the closing of the polling places. This public demonstration gave a sense that the Latino organizations were creating a base that could serve as a catalyst in which more effort would lead to more active participation in the political spectrum. However, once the commissioner agreed to open more polling places and further inform voters by mail this collective action folded. It is important to note that during this process, neither the political parties nor the Mexican Consulate in Omaha participated. Although it is probable that the Mexican Consulate could not directly interfere, it could have expressed concerns to the federal and state governments about voter suppression, convened community organizations or provided information.

The Latino organizations' political participation has also been affected in part because of the lack of the political parties' interest or involvement with them, their 501(c)(3) designation and their informal status. de Graauw (2008) argues that nonprofit organizations work as advocates and representatives of a particular group and help to shape the agenda by articulating the group needs with government officials. Although this is partially true in the case of Omaha, the Latino organizations have to reach the level of maturity of mainline organizations in places with more immigrant or Latino presence.

de Graauw (2008) explains that the 45 nonprofit organizations that she studied gained a level of maturity when these organizations understood in what type of political activities they could engage and how to engage to be successful. Mirroring de Graauw's criteria (Developing Skills and Resources,[14] Fostering Political Interest, and Mobilizing Participation), I evaluate and to some degree compare and contrast the organizations in San Francisco, the site of de Graauw's study, with the Omaha organizations.

Developing Skills

Latino organizations in Omaha provide a great variety of services including the following: GED classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, computer literacy, Spanish literacy, youth development, immigration legal services, workers' rights, citizenship classes, and other services that contribute to integration into the U.S. life. Even though these services reduce the isolation of Latinos, specifically of Latino immigrants, they need to be translated into more participation in politics in which they have either civic or political presence. de Graauw's (2008) study found that some organizations voluntary incorporate their daily service activities into political activities because they realize that in order to achieve their mission, they have to get involved in political activities. In contrast, Latino organizations in Omaha have been taciturn to the need to have their members or clients volunteer, contribute, and otherwise participate in the electoral political process. This reluctance has resulted in a lack of connectivity between services and civic and political incorporation. Omaha Latino organizations have focused primarily on providing services. Even the organizations that have after-school

---

[14] Resources were not included in this study.

programs to reduce absenteeism for high school students only focus on monitoring grades and attendance instead of actually addressing the causes by developing leadership skills that could result in social change. The organization-client relationship has been an active-passive interaction where the organization is actively giving services and the clients passively receiving them without support to the organizations' events.

<u>Fostering Political Interest</u>

  de Graauw (2008) explains that organizations also help to develop interest in political affairs by making sure their clients understand that, regardless of their immigration situation, they are eligible to receive some public services. These services could be delivered through a non-profit organization if funded by the government or through the government. In order to keep receiving these services, organizations encourage their clients to engage in advocacy. de Graauw (2008) provides an example of an ESL instructor who stated to her that during class time his organization emphasizes the importance of testifying to secure government funding to keep providing ESL and citizenship classes. In Omaha, the only Latino organization that received government funding was the Latino Center of the Midlands for a drug and alcoholism rehabilitation program. However, when the State of Nebraska required information about the immigration status of its clients, the organization decided to decline the funding. Regarding the fostering of political interest, as mentioned before, because the organizations have been more reactive than proactive, there has been a lack of proposals orchestrated by the Latino organizations for involvement at either the state or municipal level. It is clear that many organizations are eager to cultivate political interest. However,

events such as the Legislative Forum have shown two problems: First, the audience had

not expanded beyond the people who are already political involved. Adriana and Valeria

made it clear when asked who attends the events of the organizations.

> Adriana: Primarily, it's activists, people you would consider as activists, folks
> who are already involved. At the grassroots level, trying to affect change. So if I
> can be a little bit crass about it, I'll say it's the usual suspects. People who are
> already, in certain ways, advocating for a certain position. But I've also seen the
> real grassroots not participate to the degree that I think I would like to see, but for
> example at that rally that was held last week in front of the election
> commissioner's office, three of us local organizations actually organized some of
> our clients to attend. So that was really important for them to be there, for them to
> see, for them to get involved and to have, really, a voice, to the degree that they
> really had a quote-unquote "voice" directly, outside of what we expressed. A
> couple of them were interviewed by a news station, so there was that. But by and
> large, it's, I would say, the activists that mostly attend these events. It's also a
> couple of the politicians.

> Valeria: Well, you have different levels of events,…. For instance, a lot of the
> community events, like fairs or festivals, they're your everyday, lay-person
> population, and when it comes to more organized events, that are more focused on
> a particular event or topic, it usually is core leadership, or those who are
> extremely interested, or the academics who attend these functions. There's
> different levels, you know if it's something like a rally, and these leaders usually
> recruit people who normally wouldn't be involved in these rallies, now you have
> to get your support, but usually the main, focused events are attended by a core
> group of people who are usually leaders, or the people have time, or the education
> to focus on those particular issues.

Adriana and Valeria concur that most of the event's attendees were the leaders of

the organizations with a few people who received services. This lack of reciprocity from

the clients and the organizations' inability to involve their clients into action has thwarted

the translation of the services into leadership development.

Second, the focus of these events has been more instructive, explaining how the legislative process works, than advocating change involving government problems or candidate positions relevant to the Omaha Latino community. Although it is important to know the legislative process, it is also pivotal that the organizations verbalize and analyze the government and candidate positions to stimulate a dialogue between Latinos and government officials as well as to create a channel where the community can expresses their concerns to elected officials. One way to start this process to get constituents registered to vote and motivated to go to the polls. Latino organizations have yet to cultivate civic and political participation among the larger Latino population.

Mobilizing Participation

A different way to cultivate political interest is by involving the Latino community in formal politics such as participating in the election process or in informal politics such as participating in demonstrations, protest, marches and GOTV efforts. One of the OLA's main purposes was to involve all the Latino organizations in a GOTV campaign for the 2012 elections. However, because this initiative faded, only the Heartland Workers Center organized the GOTV campaign. This 2012 GOTV effort was a continuation of the project "*Animate*" started by a professor at the University of Nebraska-Omaha in the winter of 2007 and continued in the general elections of 2008 (Benjamin-Alvarado 2009). Although the 2012 effort was the first time that the Heartland Workers Center was doing this by itself, it was able to energize a significant group of people to knock on doors during the three weekends prior to the 2012 elections. This effort involved immigrants from different educational, labor and immigration

backgrounds. Even though one of the first motives of this organization was to defend workers' rights, they progressively integrated political participation into its daily activities. In addition to the GOTV efforts, the Heartland Workers Center had recruited clienteles to participate in public hearings, provide public testimony and share with elected officials and candidates their personal experience living in Nebraska. An example of this political mobilization was a cooperative effort between that the Heartland Workers Center and Nebraska Appleseed, an advocacy program that among other goals tries to create a welcoming environment for immigrants. Together, they were able to involve many Latinos to oppose LB 239, a bill that sought to require valid, government-issued identification, such as a driver's license or passport, in order for citizens to cast their vote. The mobilization was such that the bill was pulled from the legislative agenda after "Lobby Day for Voting Rights," in which more than 25 organizations and its members participated.

It is clearly understood that the political and civic participation of the Latino organizations could be influential in the legislative process. However, it would take a sustained, coordinated effort. For example, although some Latino organizations have participated in protests and forums to engage the larger Latino community, there have been legislative bills such as LB 704, which was designed to permit a form of gerrymandering in setting the "district boundaries of the Representatives in the Congress of the United States" (Nebraska Legislature 2011b). During the public hearings of on LB 704, there was not as much indignation or animus as with the Voter ID or the closing of

the polling places, and the bill became law. The result of the passing of the LB 704, as

Benjamin-Alvarado (2011) explains:

> favors the Republican Party by removing a portion of eastern Sarpy County that is
> demographically Democrat and Latino relative to surrounding districts. While
> Sarpy County is only 15% minority, the city of Bellevue and the adjacent Offutt
> Air Force Base are much more diverse (25% and 30% respectively).

This lack of participation in one important legislative bill provides a glance at

how the Latino organizations have yet to reach political influence. Valeria, while talking

about the level of political involvement of the Latino population, explains, with

exasperation, her indignation of the lack of organization against LB 704.

> Like for instance, the splitting of the South Omaha district between Nordquist
> [Senator, District 7] and Heath Mello [Senator, District 5], that should have been
> prevented, but nothing was said by any organization. And I also say knowledge.
> We have so many different organizations, but I don't think a lot of them have
> reached, or maybe they have lost, a certain sense of political savvy, *como un
> entendimiento de lo polemico* [as an understanding of something controversial].
> That they just don't know. Like, they don't realize how important that was, when it
> happened. I recognized it because of my line of work that I used to be in. I'm like,
> where's the organizations? And I don't think they truly understood the importance
> of that happening. You know that basically divided that district. So, you lose
> power, the people who were calling those shots knew exactly what they were
> doing. *Ellos mismos saben lo que están haciendo* [They know exactly what they
> are doing]. *Cuando ellos dividen un distrito así, ello mismos saben están como
> dicen, dividiendo el poder* [When they divide a district in that particular way, they
> know that they are dividing power].

The political participation of these Latino organizations in Omaha, thus far, is in

the process of maturity. Regarding non-profit organizations, it is important that these

organizations start creating a relationship that emphasizes reciprocity while developing

leadership. Non-profits, as well as informal organizations, could better serve the

community by fostering political interest among their clients or members in order to start

creating more political awareness and therefore participation. However, Latino

organizations should be careful to not overemphasize their clients' participation solely on

their groups' issues. de Graauw (2008) explains that when an organization only

concentrates on their own issues, these organizations are not incorporating their clients or

members into the political process, but they are incorporating them into the

organization's culture. De Graauw (2008) would argue that clients and members might

only participate in civic and political activities just when the organizations call for them.

In the Omaha case, the Latino organizations have yet to incorporate their clients into the

organization's culture and then create a reciprocal dynamic in which their clientele is

allowed to give back and participate more fully in the organizational process. Many of

the Latino organizations have recognized that they have fallen short in their attempts to

incorporate Latinos in the social and political life, although they expressed this dearth of

incorporation as a result of lack of organization. Adriana exemplifies this belief when

asked about the Latino political incorporation.

> I mean, ideally, that would be the case, to give them a platform where they're
> directly informing the legislators, the decision-makers about their experience. A
> lot of it has to do with the fact that we weren't very well organized, we didn't
> really have a lot of time to convene. Maybe one of your questions will get to this,
> but many times there are, unless we're really well-organized here in the
> organization, there are, one of the obstacles is that, at the last minute, you can't
> really get people. You have to constantly let people know what's going on. You
> have to constantly groom relationships with your client base so that when you do
> need to call someone or a couple of people at a moment's notice, "tomorrow
> there's a rally and we gotta get people," that you know those two or three people
> will organize another ten or fifteen that will show up, so...

This lack of organization and political incorporation has delayed the Latino community from gaining political presence. As a result, only Rebecca Valdez (Nebraska Board of Education 2008-2012) has been elected or appointed in the Omaha area. Andersen (2008) explains that an important component of political incorporation and representation is to elect officials with similar backgrounds or experiences as their constituents. In the case of Omaha, more Latino representation will ensure that their concerns are placed on the public agenda and more resources can be allocated to areas where there is a high concentration of Latinos. However, there have been few Latinos who have run for office and mainly for down-ballot offices. For example, two of the interviewees unsuccessfully ran for the local community college seat and the other for the board of Omaha Public Schools. With regard to public servants, only the Omaha City Community Liaison for South Omaha was Latino. Such a dearth of Latino candidates caused many participants during their interviews to stop for a prolong period of time to try to remember anyone who had run. The reason for the absence of Latino candidates appears to be twofold: First, there seems to be no plan or interest on the part of political parties or local government to incorporate Latinos into the political and social arena. Second, considering that political elections are driven by monetary contributions and voter turnout, Latinos have long way to go to become a force that can make noticeable monetary campaign contributions or to turn out more of the population to vote. Nayeli illustrates why it is difficult to have a Latino(a) candidate in Omaha.

Well, there's various factors, I mean, there's various reasons. Well, support from the parties, be Democrat or Republican, money, the fact that you're basically putting your whole life out there and media is going to go in there, and they're going to check everything out, time, you know, you have a family, and they're doing everything else, and you're so busy. I mean, there are just so many different reasons why. But I think money and politics is one of the reasons why many have not gone into that yet.

John states and predicts that in 10 years there will be more political representation of Latinos in Nebraska, but emphasizes that Latinos citizen and non-citizens have to participate more in the political life.

John: With a growing Latino population in the Omaha area and in the state of Nebraska, there will be growing political opportunities, including electing Latino leaders at all levels of government. The Latino population is becoming a more significant force in South Omaha every election cycle. They key is to make sure everyone knows they can have an impact. Even undocumented immigrants can help mobilize and organize for their community. Within ten years, there will be successful Latino candidates for City Council, County Board, State Legislature and other local/regional offices.[15]
The opportunities that are available to the Latino population also go beyond running for office. Political change also happens by raising awareness about issues to current elected officials. The more people that come together behind a cause, the more likely change will happen.

Considering the lack of political and social incorporation, Latino organizations would better serve the community if they were to create a bridge between Latinos and public offices, political parties and campaign contributors that support Latino candidates. Also, considering that, in general, Latinos have a lower income compared to whites, Latino organizations and groups should create an organizational culture in which

[15] In 2016 Anthony Vargas was elected to the Nebraska Legislature, defeating a gubernatorial appointee and a formal state senator. He is only the second Latino member in Legislature's history and the first from South Omaha and eastern Nebraska.

members of the same community could participate in the organization to make the process more inclusive. The reason for making this process more inclusive is to challenge the social and political structures. This hypothetical organization could add to their list of areas of focus two major objectives: (1) raising money for Latino candidates and (2) providing political education to the general Latino population. First, by raising money, Latinos who want to run for office would know that there is monetary support from the community. Second, by providing political education and making them aware of community issues, Latinos could become more politically sophisticated and have social and political presence. In this regard, community groups would be helping to shape the agenda that the candidate would bring to the body in which she or he would be serving. Javier explains the importance of having a candidate who represents the Latino agenda.

> I mean, yeah I have, and I think that that's one of the most obvious strategies for political visibility, but you also have to remember that a candidate represents a system. Systems never represent a candidate. So I think that in order for there to be a " Latino " candidate, we have to make sure that as a community, not only are we grooming our own leadership, that we don't allow, for example the Republican Party to do it. OK, because if that happens, and they get a Latino face in power, how is that really changing systems?

The demographic change in Omaha as well as the concentration of Latinos in the southeast part of the city, particularly in the Nebraska Legislature District 7, makes it possible to have a Latino representative. According to the ACS 5-year-estimate (2008-2013), in 2012, 49% (18,289) of the district population was Latino. However, because the context of reception for Latinos in the city is somehow noxious toward Latinos,

particularly males, can be seen as a threat. Javier explains this concept when asked if a

male would be a potential candidate.

> It's not going to be a male, it's going to be a female also because it's less
> threatening to the mainstream population. So if we get a bright, energetic, good-
> looking Latina candidate, *nos vamos a la chingada* We'll go fast.

Valeria discusses the perception that the mainstream population has of Latina

women.

> I think that as Latinas, in a male-dominated-in a white, male-dominated culture,
> we are exotic, and I still think that there is an equalization that is going on.

In addition to the gender hurdle, Latinos/as have to prove that they are capable of

governing, something a white male does not have pressure to address. Valeria states the

following:

> So I always believe that that's always on the table, as far as I'm concerned. So,
> what do you do? Well, you have to do everything better than they do. Plus, do it
> in two languages, you know. That's what I believe has to happen. I think what
> you're gonna do then, [it] is you will encourage a lot of excitement in the
> community. So if we have, say for instance, a Latino candidate going for city
> council, or for state legislature, that would get on Radio Lobo or get on QPadre.
> If they were to get on and talk with those folks about their campaigns and their
> issues, people in the Latino community are gonna take notice of that individual. If
> they get up there, talking to the people at the newspapers, they're going to take
> notice of that individual. Because he's articulate not in one, but in two languages.
> I mean, he could speak more directly to those constituencies, you know. I think
> what the fear is, is that some Anglos feel that if they have a Latino candidate, he's
> only going to take care of Latinos. Well, you know, we're not that stupid.

In sum, for Latinos to have more presence in the social and political arena, it is

important for Latino organizations to include activities that lead to social and political

involvement. Although organizations are fulfilling many Latino needs by providing

services, they have to become more connected to the community and promote gains in political presence to eventually have stronger influence in politics. I found that most of organizations are service-oriented and are afraid of being politically involved because there is an assumption that they might lose funding. If the Omaha Latino organizations can become more connected and more participatory, they have the potential to influence Latino representation in any level of the government that has district representation. This representation can come in the form of a candidate who could bring Latino issues to the table. However, because the context of reception and the male dominant society, any Latino who wants to run for office would might face challenges in raising money and if a Latino man were running for office, he would need to overcome any perception that he was a threat. Although Latinos and Latino organizations are on the right path to have both social and political presence, they have cultural and institutional problems to overcome. Javier provided an analogy of what the Latino community in Omaha reflects:

> I think the Latino community right now is a 17 year old boy….
> They're almost ready to be considered an adult, but they're not fully developed. And I don't think they're fully developed intellectually. I don't think they're fully developed in terms of what strength that 17-year old boy will have when they are 21. Intellectually, I think that that's a probably a bright young man, or bright young lady. But they're going to be much brighter ten years from now. And I believe that this is the kind of young person that you would devote some resources to because they're going to make contributions to society. That's where I see the Latino community in Omaha right now. *Como dicen los Cubanos, un joven con talento* [As the Cubans say: a young man with talent]. I think that's where we're at right now. I mean, we're seeing more and more here. I'm meeting all these young Latino kids. "I'm from Lexington" "I'm from Schuyler" "I'm from Lincoln" "I'm from Omaha". But who are very bright and are going to do very, very well.

As Javier explained, the Latino community is in the process of maturity. It is clear that the energy that Latino leaders and their organizations have is slowly gaining more visibility that could result in a seat at the decision-making table.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In this concluding chapter, I divide the discussion into three sections. First, I provide a summary of the study. Second, I discuss some insights on Latino leadership in Omaha and how they influence others to facilitate the political incorporation of the Latino community. Finally, I underscore the potential impact of this study for future research regarding the political incorporation of Latinos and the role that leaders have in this process.

Summary

Briefly, this study investigates and reviews how Latinos and Latino organizations have advanced in the process of political incorporation since the 2006 marches. It attempts to extend the political incorporation literature that focuses either on the individual or the community without considering the role of the leaders in their organizations. Also, this study brings awareness about the relationship of Latino organizations and the creation of a more democratic city by looking at the social and political engagement. It was made clear during the study that Latino leaders wanted to give back to their community, partially because they have seen and experienced injustice throughout their lives. Therefore, they would like to change the status quo and gain entrance to the decision-making forums at the local and state level. However, there have been two challenges to this end. First, those identified as Latino leaders are directors of organizations or programs, but they are not necessarily people who accept responsibility during uncertain times and have the capacity to identify, recruit, and develop leaders to

create social change. Second, because these leaders mostly head nonprofit organizations, their social and political engagement goes beyond their job duties, and these Latino leaders may require skills where they are able to identify, recruit, and develop leadership at all levels. This type of leadership has made organizations more reactionary and conservative to the unfavorable environment than putting forward plans that could potentially lead these organizations and the community they serve to have presence.

Research Problem

This study focused on Latino leadership in Omaha, how it is perceived, how the leaders view themselves, how effective they are in their roles, and what needs to evolve to improve lives of people in their community. I asked four research questions: (1) How do leaders influence their organizations in order to influence others? (2) How do organizations organize themselves to gain political and civic presence? (3) Are the Latino pan-ethnic organizations in Omaha gaining substantial political and civic presence? And (4) Are these organizations being recognized as equal players by political elites?

Methods

To address these research questions, I pursued a qualitative research methodology as a way to analyze Omaha's Latino leadership as they attempt to be socially and politically involved in the community. Using a constructionist approach, I focus on the process in which Latino leaders influence their own organization and other pan-ethnic Latino organizations, and if this culturally-based way of organizing has been effective in gaining civic and political presence. I use a case study design to organize the data

collection and analysis. Data sources included 14 face-to-face semi-structured interviews.

I combined the interviews with secondary information from observations and documents.

<u>Key Findings</u>

Using *The Omaha Site: Migrant Society Under Construction* report as a catalyst,

this research generated findings that help to understand the process in which Latinos

organize themselves to have a seat at the decision-making table, also known as presence.

The themes and concepts which emerged from the data were discussed in Chapter 5. In

this section, I highlight the broader findings of each theme under the two main categories:

Leaders and Organizations.

Under Leaders, I found that among their motivations to lead were the following:

to be involved in the community, to give back to the community, due to a sense of

injustice, due to the lack of Latino representation in the Omaha organizations, and to

change structures of power. All the interviewees expressed a desire to give back to the

community because they perceived that there are not many organizations that serve the

Latino population. Many of them wanted to be involved because they have seen or

experienced injustice. Some others wanted to have more Latino representation in the

Omaha organizations. Other participants were clearer about why they were involved:

because they want to change the structures of power in Omaha either by creating more

Latino organizations or placing Latinos in existing organization, in order to have a voice

in the legislative process. These participants wanted to use established institutions to

make these changes happen, or to capitalize on the change in demographics and help

increase the Latino vote. Although these motivations have not yet translated into political

presence, some barriers have hindered this goal such as male dominance in setting the agenda and the lack of political involvement of leaders.

I evaluated the Omaha Latino organizations, using de Graauw's (2008) criteria (Developing Skills, Fostering Political Interest, and Mobilizing Participation) to see if Latino organizations had gained presence. Latino organizations have been shown as an extension of the people who lead them. While looking at the dimension of developing skills, organizations are often concerned about providing English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or educating their clients on how the local government works to solve any particular issue they might have with the government. I found that only one Latino-led organization that provided ESL classes, and none have materials or classes it would need to truly resolve the issue in the community. In regard to fostering political interest, there is a dearth of political awareness integrated in their daily activities as leaders. Although the Legislative Forum was important to describe the legislative process, similar information could be shared during the GED or ESL classes, and could emphasize the importance of clients' attention to, and participation in, legislative hearings and public meetings to start shaping policy that will benefit the organizations and Latinos. Also, I found that most of those who attended events such as the legislative symposium were other executive directors and their staff. In order for organizations to effectively foster political interest, the mobilization needs to follow as a natural consequence. During this study, I found that only one Latino-led organization was able to mobilize their members to participate in hearings and GOTV efforts.

It is clear that the 2006 marches and the rapid growth of the Latino population have contributed to the expansion of more Latino organizations and the emergence of new leaders. However, these occurrences have not provided sufficient incentive to even approach the desired political presence. Evidently, the Latino organizations that have become politically active mostly did so as a reaction to policies that were unfavorable for the Latino community.

Although the growing number of Latino organizations in Omaha has helped with the acculturation of Latinos, they have not yet matured sufficiently to recognize the necessity of helping their clients understand their roles as members of the political system which governs their lives., regardless of their immigration status. For example, when the Latino Center of the Midlands declined funding from the government, their clients could have appealed to keep the funding through public and political pressure without releasing anyone's immigration status. If the leaders of these organizations keep avoiding the incorporation of political activities into their daily services, Latinos will not received as constituents, or given the considerations they deserve, and they will not, as a voting bloc, receive attention from their elected representatives. It is important for Latinos to start to see themselves as political actors and to feel invested in their governance. However, there is not a pipeline to nurture qualified Latino candidates for public office. Ideally, on every ballot for local and state offices in which the election is city-wide, county-wide, or by district, a Latino candidate's name should appear. Early unsuccessful attempts will eventually be successful and provide more local representation.

The combination of data sources utilized in this report reveals that the leaders' motivation, skills and level of participation can affect the political incorporation of Latinos in Omaha, as well as the probability of an increase in their presence. The data also shows that all the interviewed leaders and their organizations want to challenge the social structure and change the status quo of the Latino community. However, these organizational efforts are still in their emerging stages. As I examined the influence of the leader in her or his organization, I found that overuse of the term "civic engagement" has made it difficult to separate the social and political arenas and to concentrate in areas where these organizations could focus their efforts. Also, I found that leaders outside their work duties have minimal participation in latent-political and political activities that might be beneficial to their organizations and the Latino community. The failure appears to be the inability and unwillingness of leaders to create and maintain followers. I discovered that only one organization has been successful in creating and maintaining leaders. Others have been successful in creating a base of clients or students, depending on the services they provide. On the other hand, other informal organizations have focused on providing information to the Latino community without becoming a social movement organization. Finally, apart from nonprofit fundraiser events and legislative forums, there have been only marginal attempts to organize social and political events of sufficient interest to engage the broader Latino community. Although the Latino community in Omaha has been unable to be recognized as an equal partner by the political elites or to be invited to sit at the decision-making table, their efforts are on an inexorable path of growth.

The present study attempts to contribute to the literature of political incorporation of Latinos, especially in non-traditional gateway communities for Latinos such as Omaha, Nebraska. The study also attempts to explain and evaluate political involvement of the Latino leaders in Omaha, their influences in their organization and in the broader Latino community. Also, it documents how Latinos are in the process of occupying decision-making positions. Latinos in Omaha have shown progress in integrating into this city. This progress is changing both the perception and the reality of this community. However, failure to become part of political fabric, or be more involved in the neighborhood meetings and gathering where elected officials seek their constituents' concerns, continue to hinder this progress for Latinos living in the city. In this caldron of progressive growth, new leadership must emerge in order to connect the organizations to create common goals and set the agenda for the future generation of Latinos.

This research was able to capture Latino leaders' perceptions, something that is sometimes is difficult to obtain because of their tight schedules. I was also able to capture how gender dynamics influence the participation of Latinas who have been marginalized to support roles. I also examined interactions of the organizations and how these organizations reflected their leaders. I discovered that the political parties and the Mexican Consulate play no role in facilitating the incorporating of Latinos into the political system.

Based on the insights of this research, I have identified some areas that need to be explored in future studies. First, an attempt could be made to look at the monetary resources and structural composition of each organization. Second, an exploration could

be done into the source of their funding and whether it has any positive or negative

implications that might help or hinder political activity. Third, an analysis could b done

about gender dynamics and its repercussion in political integrating Latinos. Finally,

considering the hostile environment towards immigrants and minorities from the new

administration, studies should focus and how this environment impacts the Latino

community.

REFERENCES

Adler, Patricia A., and Peter Adler. 1994. "Observational Techniques." Pp. 361-376 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research,* edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Adler, Richard P., and Judy Goggin. 2005. "What Do We Mean by "Civic Engagement"?" *Journal of Transformative Education* 3(3):236-53.

Allen, Kieran. 2004. *Max Weber: A Critical Introduction*. Michigan: Pluto Books.

Andersen, Kristi. 2008. "Parties, Organizations, and Political Incorporation: Immigrants in Six Us Cities." Pp. 77-106 in *Civic Hopes and Political Realities: Immigrants, Community Organizations, and Political Engagement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Andrews, Kenneth T., and Bob Edwards. 2004. "Advocacy Organizations in the U.S. Political Process." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30(1):479-506. doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110542.

Andrews, Kenneth T., Marshall Ganz, Matthew Baggetta, Hahrie Han, and Chaeyoon Lim. 2010. "Leadership, Membership, and Voice: Civic Associations That Work." *American Journal of Sociology*. Retrieved June 11, 2012 http://scholar.harvard.edu/hahrie/files/AndrewsEtAl2010.pdf

Arizona Legislature. 2010. *Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act.* SB 1070, 49th Legislature, 2nd Session.

Bada, Xóchitl, Jonathan Fox, and Andrew D. Selee. 2006. *Invisible No More: Mexican Migrant Civic Participation in the United States.* Washington DC: Mexico Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Retrieved May 5, 2013 https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/Invisible%20No%20More_0.pdf

Barreto, Matt, and Sylvia Manzano. 2013. "Census 2012 Vote Data Highlight Dramatic Shift in Racial Diversity of American Electorate." Retrieved July 24, 2013 http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2013/05/09/census-2012-vote-data-highlight-dramatic-shift-in-racial-diversity-of-american-electorate/

Baxter, Pamela, and Susan Jack. 2008. "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers." *The Qualitative Report*, *13*(4). Retrieved August 13, 2014 http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol13/iss4/2

Benjamin-Alvarado, Jonathan. 2009. *Project Animate: Promoting Student Civic Participation through Latino Voter Mobilization*. Retrieved July 14, 2013 http://www.unomaha.edu/ollas/ProyectoAnimate/ProjectAnimateReport.pdf

Benjamin-Alvarado, Jonathan. 2011. "Redistricting and the Latino Boom in Nebraska." *Latino Decisions* Blog. Retrieved December 12, 2011 http://www.latinodecisions.com/blog/2011/06/01/redistricting-and-the-latino-boom-in-nebraska/

Benjamin-Alvarado, Jonathan, Louis DeSipio and Celeste Montoya. 2009. "Latino Mobilization in New Immigrant Destinations the Anti—Hr 4437 Protest in Nebraska's Cities." *Urban Affairs Review* 44(5): 718-735.

Berger, Ben. 2009. "Political Theory, Political Science and the End of Civic Engagement." *Perspectives on Politics* 7(02): 335-350. doi: 10.1017/s153759270909080x.

Berry, M. Jeffrey. 1977. *Lobbying for the People*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Bloemraad, Irene. 2006. "Becoming a Citizen in the United States and Canada: Structured Mobilization and Immigrant Political Incorporation." *Social Forces* 85(2). Retrieved September 14, 2012 http://www.jstor.org/stable/4494935.

Bloemraad, Irene. 2015. "Re-imagining the Nation in a World of Migration: Legitimacy, Political Claims-making and Membership in Comparative Perspective." Pp. 59-80 in *Fear and Anxiety over National Identity,* edited by N. Foner and P. Simon. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

Bloemraad, Irene, Anna Korteweg, and Gökce Yurdakul. 2008. "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34(8): 153-179.

Bloemraad, Irene, and Veronica Terriquez. 2016. "Cultures of Engagement: The Organizational Foundations of Advancing Health in Low-Income Communities of Color." *Social Science and Medicine* 165(2016). Retrieved on February 17, 2017 http://ac.els-cdn.com/S0277953616300582/1-s2.0-S0277953616300582-main.pdf?_tid=c733f3f4-f7eb-11e6-8f23-00000aab0f27&acdnat=1487650451_8102d28d9328141644263a860c73d060

Burstein, Paul. 1998. "Bringing the Public Back In: Should Sociologists Consider the Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy?" *Social Forces* 77(1): 27-62.

Chen, Shing-Ling Sarina, Jon Hall, and Mark D. Johns. 2004. "Research paparazzi in cyberspace: The voices of the researched." Pp. 157-175 in *Online social research: Methods, Issues, and Ethics*, edited by M. D. Johns, S. Chen, and G. J. Hall. New York: Peter Lang.

de Graauw, Els. 2008. "Nonprofit Organizations: Agents of Immigrant Political Incorporation in Urban America." Pp. 323-350 in *Civic Hopes and Political Realities: Immigrants, Community Organizations, and Political Engagement*, edited by K. Ramakrishnan and I. Bloemraad. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

de Graauw, Els. 2015. "Polyglot Bureaucracies: Nonprofit Advocacy to Create Inclusive City Governments." *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies* 13(2): 156-178.

Dominguez, Jaime. 2016. "Machine Matters: The Politics of Immigrant Integration in the Chicago Metro Area" Pp. 76-101in *Unsettled Americans: Metropolitan Context and Civic Leadership for Immigrant Integration,* edited by J. H. Mollenkopf and M. Pastor Jr. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Ebert, Kim, and Dina Okamoto. 2013. "Social Citizenship, Integration, and Collective Action: Immigrant Civic Engagement in the U.S." *Social Forces* 91(4): 1267-1292.

Ekman, Joakim, and Erik Amnå. 2012. "Political Participation and Civic Engagement: Towards a New Typology." *Human Affairs* 22(3) doi:10.2478/s13374-012-0024-1.

Escala-Rabadán, Luis, Xóchitl Bada, and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. 2006. "Mexican Migrant Civic and Political Participation in the U.S.: The Case of Hometown Associations in Los Angeles and Chicago." *Norteamérica Academic Journal* 1(2): 127- 172.

Escobar, Cristina. 2004. "Dual Citizenship and Political Participation: Migrants in the Interplay of United States and Colombian Politics." *Latino Studies* 2(1): 45-69.

Espiritu, Yen Le. 1992. *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Fox, Jonathan and Xóchitl Bada. 2011. "Migrant Civic Engagement" Pp. 142-160 in *Rallying for Immigrant Rights*, edited by I. Bloemraad and K. Voss. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Fox, Jonathan A., and William Gois. 2010. "Migrant Civil Society: Ten Propositions for Discussion." *Center for Global, International and Regional Studies*. UC Santa Cruz: Center for Global, International and Regional Studies. Retrieved August 13, 2012 http://escholarship.org/uc/item/89m7b03q.

Fraga, Luis Ricardo. 2009. "Building through Exclusion: Anti-immigrant Politics in the United States." Pp. 176-193 in *Bringing Outsiders in: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*, edited by J. L. Hochschild, and J. H. Mollenkopf. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Fremont, City of. 2010. "Ordinance 5165 " in *3139*, *City of Fremont*.

Ganz, Marshall. 2010. "Leading Change: Leadership, Organization, and Social Movements." Pp. 509-50 in *Handbook of Leadership Theory and Practice: a Harvard Business School Centennial Colloquium*, edited by N. Nohria and R. Khurana. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Press.

Glaser, Barney, and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Chicago, IL: Aldine.

Gouveia, Lourdes. 2006. "Nebraska's Responses to Immigration." Pp. 143-198 in *Immigration's New Frontiers: Experiences from the Nation's Emerging Gateway States*, edited by G. Anring Jr. and T. A. Wang. New York: Century Foundation.

Gouveia, Lourdes, Jonathan Benjamin-Alvarado, Yuriko Doku, Alejandra Toledo and Sergio Sosa. 2010. *The Omaha Site: Migrant Civil Society Under Construction.* Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Washington DC. Retrieved June 9, 2012 http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/ollas/_files/pdfs/publications-presentations/report-the-omaha-site-english.pdf

Gouveia, Lourdes, Christian Espinosa, and Yuriko Doku. 2012. *Demographic Characteristics of the Latino Population in the Omaha-Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area*. Office of Latino/Latin American Studies (OLLAS), University of Nebraska at Omaha. Retrieved January 13, 2013 http://www.unomaha.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences/ollas/_files/pdfs/publications-presentations/fact-sheet-demographic-characteristics-2012-english.pdf

Grey, Mark, and Anne Woodrick. 2005. "Latinos Have Revitalized Our Community: Mexican Migration and Anglo Responses in Marshalltown, Iowa." Pp. 133-154 in *New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States*, edited by V. Zuniga and R. Hernandez-Leon. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Han, Hahrie, Kenneth T. Andrews, Marshall Ganz, Matthew Baggetta and Chaeyoon Lim. 2011. "The Relationship of Leadership Quality to the Political Presence of Civic Associations." *Perspectives on Politics* 9(01):45-59. doi: 10.1017/s1537592710004081.

Hochschild, Jennifer L. 2009. Conducting Intensive Interviews and Elite Interviews. Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research Retrieved October 30, 2014 http://scholar.harvard.edu/jlhochschild/publications/conducting-intensive-interviews-and-elite-interviews.

Hochschild, Jennifer L., and John Mollenkopf, 2009a. *Bringing Outsiders In: Transatlantic Perspectives on Immigrant Political Incorporation*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press.

Hochschild, Jennifer L., and John Mollenkopf. 2009b. "The Complexities of Immigration: Why Western Countries Struggle with Immigration Politics and Policies." in *Delivering Citizenship*. Berlin, Germany: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Jiménez, Tomás R. 2011. *Immigrants in the United States: How Well are they Integrating into Society?* Migration Policy Institute, Washington, DC. Retrieved July 22, 2012 http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrants-united-states-how-well-are-they-integrating-society

Kivisto, Peter, and Thomas Faist. (2007). *Citizenship: Discourse, Theory, and Transnational Prospects*. London: Wiley-Blackwell

Knapp, Fred. 2012, "Unusual Alliances Form in Nebraska's Prenatal Care Debate": *National Public Radio*. Retrieved July 14, 2013. http://www.npr.org/blogs/health/2012/04/18/150839788/unusual-alliances-form-in-nebraskas-prenatal-care-debate).

Knoke, David, and Xi Zhu. 2012. "Interest Groups and Pluralism." Pp. 158-167 in *The Wiley- Blackwell Companion to Political Sociology*, First Edition, edited by E. Amenta, K. Nash and A. Scott. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

Knox, Sarah, and Alan Burkard. 2009. "Qualitative research interviews. *Psychotherapy Research*, 19(4-5) 566-575. doi.org/10.1080/10503300802702105

Landolt, Patricia and Luin Goldring. 2009. "Immigrant Political Socialization as Bridging and Boundary Work: Mapping the Multi-Layered Incorporation of Latin American Immigrants in Toronto." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 32(7): 1226-1247. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870802604016

Marshall, Catherine and Gretchen B. Rossman. 2010. *Designing Qualitative Research*. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Inc.

Martinez, Lisa M. 2005. "Yes We Can: Latino Participation in Unconventional Politics." *Social Forces* 84(1). Retrieved October 23, 2011. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3598298

Martinez, Lisa M. 2011. "Mobilizing Marchers in the Mile-High City: The Role of Community Based Organizations." Pp. 123–141 in *Rallying for Immigrant Rights: The Fight for Inclusion in 21st Century America*, edited by K. Voss and I. Bloemraad. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Massey, Douglas S., and Magaly R Sanchez. 2010. *Brokered Boundaries: Creating Immigrant Identity in Anti-Immigrant Times*. New York, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Merriam, Sharan B. 2002. *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Merriam, Sharan B. 2009. *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Mollenkopf, John, 2013. "Dimensions of Immigrant Political Incorporation" Pp. 107-118 in *Outsiders No More? Models of Immigrant Political Incorporation*. Edited by J. Hochschild, J. Chattopadhyay, C. Gay, and M. Jones-Correa. London: Oxford University Press.

Mollenkopf, John and Manuel Pastor. 2016. "The Ethnic Mosaic: Immigrant Integration at the Metropolitan Scale" Pp. 1-16 in *Unsettled Americans: Metropolitan Context and Civic Leadership for Immigrant Integration,* edited by J. H. Mollenkopf and M. Pastor Jr. Ithaca: Cornell University Press

Morris, Aldon, and Suzanne Staggenborg. 2004. "Leadership in Social Movements." Pp. 171-196 in *The Blackwell companion to social movements,* edited by D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, and H. Kriesi. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Munck, Ronaldo. 2005. "Social Exclusion: New Inequality Paradigm for the Era of Globalization?" Pp. 31-59 in *The Blackwell companion of social inequalities,* edited by M. Romero and E. Margolis. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Nebraska Appleseed. 2006. "Dignity On The Line: An Evaluation of the Nebraska
    Meatpacking Workers Bill of Rights." Retrieved October 15, 2012
    https://neappleseed.org/download/17896/

Nebraska Legislature . 2011a. *Adopt the Illegal Immigration Enforcement Act.*
    LB 48, 102nd Congress, First Session.

Nebraska Legislature. 2011b. *Change boundaries of the Representatives in the Congress
    of the United States districts.* LB 704, 102nd Congress, First
     Session.

Nelson, Benjamin E. (D-NE). 2012. *Letter to Attorney General Holder.* Congress:1-10.

Okamoto, Dina, and Kim Ebert. 2010. "Beyond the Ballot: Immigrant Collective Action
    in Gateways and New Destinations." *Social Problems* 57(4). Retrieved May 13,
    2013 https://socant.chass.ncsu.edu/documents/Ebert_1.pdf

Orozco, Manuel. 2004. *The Remittance Marketplace: Prices, Policy and Financial
    Institutions*. Pew Hispanic Center Washington, DC. Retrieved September 24,
    2012 http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/28.pdf

Orozco, Manuel, and Michelle Lapointe. 2004. "Mexican Hometown Associations and
    Development Opportunities." *Journal of International Affairs-Columbia
    University* 57(2):31-52.

Passel, Jeffrey S., and D'Vera Cohn. 2012. "Unauthorized Immigrants: 11.1 Million in
    2011." Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center Retrieved May 5, 2013
    http://www.pewhispanic.org/2012/12/06/unauthorized-immigrants-11-1-million-
    in-2011/

Pew Hispanic Center. (2013). "A nation of immigrants: A portrait of the 40 million,
    including 11 million unauthorized." Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center
    Retrieved February 14, 2013 http://www.pewhispanic.org/2013/01/29/a-nation-
    of-immigrants

Portes, Alejandro and Jozsef Böröcz. 1989. "Contemporary immigration: Theoretical
    Perspectives on its Determinants and Modes of Incorporation." *International
    Migration Review*, 23(3):606-630. doi:10.2307/2546431.

Portes, Alejandro, Cristina Escobar, and Renelinda Arana. 2008. "Bridging the Gap:
    Transnational and Ethnic Organizations in the Political Incorporation of
    Immigrants in the United States." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 31(6) 1056-1090.
    doi: 10.1080/01419870701874827.

Portes, Alejandro, and Erik Vickstrom. 2011. "Diversity, Social Capital, and Cohesion." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37(1):461-79. doi: 10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150022.

Putnam, Robert D. 2001. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*: New York, New York: Simon and Schuster.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick. 2005. *Democracy in Immigrant America: Changing Demographics and Political Participation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick. 2013. "Incorporation versus Assimilation: The Need for Conceptual Differentiation," in *Outsiders No More? Models of Immigrant Political Incorporation.* Edited by J. Hochschild, J. Chattopadhyay, C. Gay, and M. Jones-Correa. London: Oxford University Press.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Irene Bloemraad. 2008a. "Making Organizations Count: Immigrant Civic Engagement in California Cities." Pp. 45-76 in *Civic Hopes and Political Realities: Immigrants, Community Organizations, and Political Engagement*, edited by K. Ramakrishnan and I. Bloemraad. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Irene Bloemraad. 2008b. "Introduction: Civic and Political Inequalities." Pp. 1-44 in *Civic Hopes and Political Realities: Immigrants, Community Organizations, and Political Engagement,* edited by K. Ramakrishnan and I. Bloemraad. New York: Russell Sage Foundation Press.

Ramakrishnan, S. Karthick, and Celia Viramontes. 2010. "Civic Spaces: Mexican Hometown Associations and Immigrant Participation." *Journal of Social Issues* 66(1):155-73. doi10.1111/j.1540-4560.2009.01638.x

Saenz, Rogelio. 2010. "Population Bulletin Update: Latinos in the United States 2010." *Population Reference Bureau.* Retrieved October 28, 2013 http://www.*prb.org*.

Sandfort, Jodi. 2011. "Deepening Our Understanding of Nonprofit Policy Advocacy Accomplished by Networks." In ARNOVA Annual Conference, Toronto, Canada. Retrieved September 14, 2014 http://www.incommons.org/sites/www.incommons.org/files/changemakers_resource/jodi_sandfort_1-27_.pdf.

Smith, Steven Rathgeb, and Robert Pekkanen. 2012. "Revisiting Advocacy by Non-Profit Organisations." *Voluntary Sector Review* 3(1):35-49. https://doi.org/10.1332/204080512X632719

Sprague, Joey. 2005. *Feminist Methodologies for Critical Researchers: Bridging Differences.* Walnut Creek, CA: Rowman and Littlefield.

Taylor, Paul, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jeffrey S. Passel, and Seth Motel 2011. *Unauthorized Immigrants: Length of Residency, Patterns of Parenthood*. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. Retrieved March 15, 2012. http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/12/01/unauthorized-immigrants-length-of-residency-patterns-of-parenthood

Tilly, Charles. 1993. "Social Movements as Historically Specific Clusters of Political Performances." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. Retrieved September 15, 2014 (http://www.jstor.org/stable/41035464).

U.S. Bureau of the Census. 2010. Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010 Census Summary File 1. Washington D.C. Available at https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=DEC_10_SF1_SF1DP1&prodType=table

Vertovec, Steven. 2004. "Migrant Transnationalism and Modes of Transformation." *International migration review* 38(3). Retrieved April 13, 2013 http://www.jstor.org/stable/27645423

Warren, Carol, and Tracy X. Karner. 2005. *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Field Research, Interviews, and Analysis*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company.

Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed. Vol. 5, *Applied Social Research Series.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1. Civic and Political Stratification

	Civic	Political
Resources	--Budget --Personnel (staff, volunteers, members, clients) --Physical space, equipment	--Expenditures, personnel, physical space, and equipment devoted to political activities
Presence	--Visibility and recognition among general population, mainstream media --Degree of isolation or connection to other organizations in civic activities Legitimacy—formal incorporation or state recognition --Legitimacy—perceived as having a role in local governance	--Visibility and recognition among government officials --Organizational affiliations with elected and appointed officials --Degree of isolation or connection to other organizations in political activities
Weight	--Ability to advance interests in the civic realm --Ability to influence allocations of resources to other organizations --Ability to shape and influence civic projects involving multiple organizations	--Ability to gain access to public officials --Ability to have interests represented in agenda-setting policy decision-making and policy implementation --Ability to influence allocations of power to other organizations

Source: Ramakrishnan and Bloemraad (2008a)

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Generation	Level of education	Type of organization
Andres	29	Male	First	Bachelors	Formal (non-profit/business owner)
Simon	49	Male	First	Masters	Formal (non-profit)
Adriana	38	Female	Second	Masters	Formal (non-profit)
Nayeli	47	Female	1.5	Masters	Formal (non-profit)
Daniel	24	Male	1.5	Bachelors	Student organization
Gustavo	65	Male	Third	Technical training	Informal
Javier	55	Male	Second	P.H.D	Academic
Alan	55	Male	First	M.D.	Informal
Pamela	55	Female	Second	Masters	Formal (non-profit
Fabiola	22	Female	Second	Bachelors	Political party
Valeria	39	Female	Second	Bachelors	Informal
Fabio	32	Male	1.5	Bachelors	Formal (non-profit)
Cecilia	56	Female	Second	JD	Formal (non-profit)
John	33	Male	Non-Latino white	Bachelors	Elected official

Table 3. Educational Attainment for the Population 25 years and over by Race and Ethnicity

	Latinos		Whites		Blacks	
	Estimate	Percentage	Estimate	Percentage	Estimate	Percentage
Less than 9th grade	8,334	32.04	3,040	1.53	1,895	6.12
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	5,100	19.61	7,630	3.85	3,786	12.22
Regular high school diploma	4,964	19.08	40,306	20.31	6,617	21.36
GED or alternative credential	1,164	4.47	6,904	3.48	1,662	5.37
Some college, no degree	3,062	11.77	50,254	25.33	10,729	34.64
Associate's degree	580	2.23	14,737	7.43	1,633	5.27
Bachelor's degree	2,192	8.43	50,685	25.54	2,858	9.23
Graduate degree	616	2.37	24,869	12.53	1,796	5.80
Total:	26,012	100.00	198,425	100.00	30,976	100.00

Source: Own calculations based on the 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate

Table 4. Nativity and Citizenship of Latinos, under and over 18 years of age, in Omaha

	Estimate	Percentage of total Latinos
Under 18 years:	21,800	40.89
Native	19,631	90.05
Foreign born:	2,169	9.95
Naturalized U.S. citizen	92	4.24
Not a U.S. citizen	2,077	95.76
18 years and over:	31,513	59.11
Native	11,019	34.97
Foreign born:	20,494	65.03
Naturalized U.S. citizen	4,452	21.72
Not a U.S. citizen	16,042	78.28
Total:	53,313	100.00

Source: Own calculations based on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

APPENDIX B

ORAL CONSENT IN ENGLISH

University of Northern Iowa
Participant Oral Consent Script for Ethnographic Research

Project Title: Latino Political and Civic Activism and the New Wave of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

Name of Principal Investigator: Christian Espinosa Torres
Name of Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mark Grey

My name is Christian Espinosa. I am working on my master's thesis to obtain a master in arts in sociology from the University of Northern Iowa. The following information is provided to help you make an oral decision whether or not to participate. I am conducting a study of the Latino community in Omaha, Nebraska, how it is organized civically and politically, and how they are responding to the anti-immigrant atmosphere.

As a participant in this research you will be asked a series of interview questions. Your interview will take approximately 45 minutes, and to insure accuracy, it will be audiotape. To protect your privacy, your actual name will not be used in transcripts made from the interview, or in any presentation or publication. Information obtained during this study, which identifies you, will be kept strictly confidential. The general information obtained may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw at any time and choose not to participate. After the audiotapes are transcribed, I will destroy them and keep the transcriptions. I will not reveal the content of our conversation to anyone besides my academic advisors who will keep your identity confidential. You will receive no benefits from participating in this study and the only foreseeable risk to your participation could be that someone might find out about our conversation. However, I will attempt to protect your privacy the best I can.

If you have questions about the study, or if you want more information regarding your participation in the study, you can contact Mark Grey, Professor and Director, Iowa Center on Immigrant Leadership and Integration, at 319-273-3029. You can also contact the office of the Human Participants Coordinator at the University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about the rights of research participants and the participant review process.

APPENDIX C

ORAL CONSENT IN SPANISH

University of Northern Iowa

Texto de Autorización Oral de Participación para Investigación Etnográfica

Título del Estudio: Latino Political and Civic Activism and the New Wave of Anti-Immigrant Sentiment

Nombre del Investigador Principal: Christian Espinosa Torres
Nombre del Asesor: Dr. Mark Grey

Mi nombre es Christian Espinosa y estoy trabajando en mi tesis para obtener mi maestría en artes en sociología de la Universidad del Norte de Iowa. La siguiente información se proporciona para ayudarle en su decisión de participar en el presente estudio. Estoy interesado en explorar cómo la población latina se organiza en Omaha, Nebraska y cómo responden a la atmósfera anti-inmigrante que se vive en el estado.

Como participante de este estudio, se le realizará a usted una serie de preguntas que durará aproximadamente 45 minutos y será audio-grabada. Para proteger su privacidad, su verdadero nombre no será utilizado en las transcripciones que se harán de está entrevista, tampoco en ninguna presentación o publicación. La información obtenida de está investigación, que lo identifica, será estrictamente confidencial y guardada. La información general que se obtenga de está entrevista puede ser publicada en una revista académica o presentada en una conferencia. Su participación es totalmente voluntaria y usted es libre de parar está entrevista a cualquier tiempo y decidir no participar. Después de que la entrevista sea transcrita, destruiré dicha entrevista y mantendré las transcripciones. No revelaré el contenido de nuestra conversación a nadie sólo a mi asesor quien mantendrá su identidad confidencial. Usted no recibirá ningún beneficio por participar en este estudio y el único riesgo previsible de su participación podría ser que alguien encontrará nuestra conversación. Sin embargo, trataré de proteger su identidad lo mejor que pueda.

Si tienes dudas o preguntas sobre este estudio, o si usted requiere mayor información sobre su participación, por favor no dudes en contactar a Mark Grey 319-273- 3029, quien es Profesor y Director, del Iowa Center on Immigrant Leadership and Integration. También, usted puede contactar la oficina de Human Participants Coordinator, de la Universidad del Norte de Iowa, al teléfono 319-273-6148 por cualquier duda o aclaración acerca de esta investigación.