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The Civic Engagement Of Latino Immigrants In The United States

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THE CIVIC ENGAGMENT OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my husband, Peter Tucker, and my children, Gabriela, Ethan and Samuel for their love and support as I spent countless hours working on this project. I would also like to dedicate this to my parents, Larry and Carole Tibbitts, for their tireless encouragement to reach my dreams.

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PREFACE

This study examines the factors that contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States, how Latino immigrants experience barriers to engagement, and whether or not acculturation and trust in government increase their engagement. It employs acculturation and civic engagement theories to explain the incorporation and engagement of Latino immigrants in American society by examining the influence of contextual factors, such as age, gender, marital status, skin color, religious affiliation, employment status, educational attainment, household income, homeownership, birth place, reason for immigrating, number of years in the United States, and permanency plans as moderated by acculturation and trust in government on their civic engagement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Latino immigrant population in the United States has seen steady increases in the past four decades and is becoming ever more present in a broader range of geographic locations throughout the country (Fischer & Tienda, 2006; Passel, 2005, 2009; Pew, 2007; Smith, 2008; U.S. Census, 2000). Latinos, both immigrants and those born in the United States, will soon become the majority in several states and estimated to reach 25% of the total United States population by the year 2050 (Passel, 2005, 2009; Pew, 2007; U.S. Census, 2000, 2009; Wampler, et al., 2009). However, the Latino immigrant population has been continually marginalized and their needs and interests have not been adequately represented by the U.S. government (Moore & Pinderhughes, 1993; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Of equal concern, Latino immigrants often are not accepted in some segments of American society, such as middle class suburbs; skilled and white collar employment sectors; historically white schools; and many social and community groups (Berry, 2002; Fischer & Mattson, 2009; Fischer & Tienda, 2006; Golash-Boza; 2006; Muñoz, 2008; O'Brien, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Piore, 1979; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Moreover, Latino immigrants are often victims of harmful stereotypes, discrimination, unwarranted police intervention, labor market exclusion, and racial profiling (Muñoz, 2008; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; O'Brien, 2008; Rumbaut, 2006). In the interest of a just society, it is important to understand how Latino immigrants struggle to integrate into American society and become engaged, as well as what maintains their underrepresentation in valued positions of the economy and the polity (DiSipio, 2006; García, 2003; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Portney & Berry, 1997; Stokes, 2003).

There has been a palpable anti-immigrant sentiment surrounding the current wave of Latino immigrants in the United States that heavily overshadows the difficulties experienced by

20th century European immigrants (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999). In many cases, Latino immigrants have become the scapegoats for any maladies or criticisms of the American society and economy. There are several avenues for the scapegoating of Latino immigrants, all culminating on poor, uneducated, physically dissimilar people who are rumored to be taking jobs away from native born white Americans (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Wilson, 1999). The anger that emanates from the economic recession, loss of employment, diminishing state and national coffers, and the removal of many public services that has grown in the American public and has been fostered by the media has heightened the unwelcoming atmosphere and targeting of undocumented immigrants (Bacon, 2008; Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996; Espinosa, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1999). Thus there is a contemporary ambiance of dislike and poor treatment in which any Latino immigrants reside in the United States, which makes their experience difficult and their reticence to become involved in American society and civic affairs understandable (Santa Ana, 1999). In line with a renewed nativism, a particularly vocal piece of the American public has focused their efforts on vilifying undocumented immigrants, their family members, and those who help them (Perea, 1997). This new nativism has spawned into increasing examples of anti-immigrant legislation that aim to prosecute undocumented immigrants and engage in mass deportation. One such example was Proposition 187, passed in 1994 by a 3-2 margin, subsequently overturned by the supreme court, which denied public schooling, health care, and social services to undocumented immigrants, and required public employees to report them to immigration authorities (Espenshade & Hempstead, 1996). Another such piece of anti-immigrant legislation is the most recent law passed in the state of Arizona which requires police officers to detain anyone suspected to be undocumented and makes it illegal to not carry immigration papers. Many of the contested provisions in this law have been

halted by a federal judge. The passage of said anti-immigrant legislation leads to a clear need for the millions of Latino immigrants to be better represented in American policy.

The United States as a representative democracy chooses the polity to represent them and their interests in the government. The polity is selected by democratic vote, presumably based on the issues that are to become policy. As a representative democracy, the polity should represent all segments of the American public (Van Horn et al., 2001). Democracy is a deliberation - a negotiation of what is best for all stakeholders (de Souza Briggs, 2008). In so being, all stakeholders must be present or represented in the deliberation. However, some individuals and groups in American society are excluded from the democratic process. With Latino immigrants, this lack of inclusion is an issue linked to acculturation, citizenship, and anti-immigrant legislation (García, 2003; Hero et al., 2000; Michelson, 2003; Perea, 1997). When particular groups are excluded from the decision-making process and have limited representation, there may be biased decisions and consequently unjust policy (Putnam, 1995). Without access to certain resources, such as education, social services, and community organizations, excluded groups will have few opportunities for participation in the democracy.

Because approximately 44% of the Latinos residing in the United States are foreign born (U.S. Census, 2009), it is necessary to address issues of immigration directly as well as to help integrate newcomers into American society and civic life. A representative democracy might differ vastly from the form of government of which foreign born individuals have most intimate knowledge (Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Uslaner, 2008; Uslaner & Conley, 2003; Vedder, et al., 2009). They may not realize that they have a voice in the American government and in policy. They may not have experience with electing representatives to hear their stories and fight for their needs. To enable greater representation, it is paramount that Latino immigrants have the

opportunity to be engaged in their local, state, and national communities in order to have their voices reflected in all levels of policy (DiSipio, 2006; García, 2003; Massey, et al., 2002; Muñoz, 2008; Putnam, 2005a; Saito, 2009). However, emotions towards the U. S. government can be mixed due to difficulties with immigration or conflictual relationships between the United States and their country of origin (Bacon, 2008; Muñoz, 2008). Thus, integration into American society and trust in government are important factors in their involvement in civic life and representation of their interests in American policy.

Statement of Purpose

This study addresses civic engagement, acculturation, and trust in government within the context of Latino immigration. The study examines issues of social and political exclusion using a social work perspective that focuses on the needs of a vulnerable population and compliments the extant multidisciplinary studies in the fields of immigration and civic engagement. The research uncovers some of the factors that contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States, how Latino immigrants might experience barriers to engagement, and whether acculturation and trust in government increase their engagement. Acculturation and civic engagement theories were employed to explain the incorporation and engagement of Latino immigrants in American society. In addition, the study utilizes a deductive mixed methods QUAN → qual explanatory design to examine the influence of multiple factors facing Latino immigrants, including experiences with discrimination, country of origin, reason for immigrating, skin color, level of education, and access to bilingual-bicultural services, on their engagement in the civic life of their community and nation. The core component of the study is a secondary data analysis of the 2006 Latino National Survey (Fraga et al., 2008). A sequential qualitative study was conducted with two pilot focus groups and two

core focus groups on a small purposive sample of Latino immigrants in the metropolitan Detroit area. This component of the study was developed to provide a deeper understanding of the context in which Latino immigrants are engaged in American society and the processes of said engagement.

Research Questions

The following questions are the focus of this research:

1. How do contextual factors, such as age, gender, marital status, skin color, religious affiliation, employment status, educational attainment, household income, homeownership, birth place, reason for immigrating, number of years in the United States, and permanency plans contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States?
2. How does acculturation contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States?
3. How does trust in government contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States?
4. How does trust in government moderate the contextual factors in their prediction of Latino civic engagement in the United States?
5. How does acculturation moderate the contextual factors and trust in government in their prediction of Latino civic engagement in the United States?

Relevance to Social Work Practice and Policy

The knowledge to be gained by this research involves understanding the factors that influence the level of civic engagement of Latino immigrants in American society, and how their trust in the U.S. government and their integration into the American culture can moderate these

factors. It will illuminate the barriers Latino immigrants in particular experience in becoming engaged in American social and political affairs.

As civic engagement is a broad term, it has broad applications as well. It spans the breadth of community development activities, from empowering people to take action, to educating communities and individuals of their democratic rights, to building emotional ties and support systems that will lead to healthier happier lives. Civic engagement highlights the need for human connection and bestows upon many a sense of community and voice. It empowers the people by giving them access to the decision making arena and to help shape policy to their community's needs. It complements the competitive nature of politics and brings the people who are to be represented in policy to the forefront of the issues. If it is curtailed by discriminatory practices then growth will be impeded as well. Thus this study can uncover the appropriate areas for community practitioners and the polity alike to target for renewed growth and development of excluded groups. The findings from this research illuminate reasons for the lack of representation of the values and needs of Latino immigrants in American policy. It assists in directing community practitioners in breaking the identified barriers to engagement for their Latino immigrant clients. This study can help policy makers, community practitioners and constituents alike strive for a more representative democracy.

Social workers are one of the helping professionals who address the daily needs of Latino immigrant clients, they facilitate access to social services, welfare, schools, health care, mental health services, job placements, immigration services and Spanish language translators. Social workers empower their Latino immigrant clients to improve their lives within a racialized society. But how can they reduce the need for such help? How can they step back and

ameliorate an entire system and the struggle of an entire community? How can they close the gaps in labor, pay, education, and political representation?

Social workers can address these issues from a community practice and policy perspective. They can represent the marginalized Latino immigrant community and advocate on their behalf in the fight for economic and social justice. They can speak directly to policy makers and convey their needs and struggles with poignant stories that policy makers need in order to write compelling legislation. Additionally, community social workers can use the knowledge gained in this research to directly address barriers to civic engagement so that Latino immigrants themselves may fight for just policy. They can work to build programs that would facilitate integration into American society and representation in American policy.

This research is significant because it illuminates the obstacles Latino immigrants face in incorporating themselves into American society and becoming civically engaged. It documents the factors that inhibit such engagement as well as underscores the factors that can minimize these barriers. As social workers address these barriers, they can help the Latino immigrant community to become a more integral part of the larger society as well as to have their interests more accurately reflected in future policy.

Chapter 2: Review of Relevant Literature

Civic Engagement Literature

Civic engagement can be understood as individual and community level involvement in social and political activities that attach people to society and can influence multiple levels of policy (Putnam, 2000). The outcome of civic engagement is more representative public policy (Putnam, 2000). The more collective the decisions become, the more inclusive the society will be, and the more enthusiasm will be seen for continued compromise and participation. According to Putnam (1995), civic engagement is "people's connection to the life of their community" (p.2). It is considered the active voice of participation in a representative government in addition to being a route to understanding American democracy (Borden & Serido, 2009; Putnam, 2000). Furthermore, it is a "hallmark for democracy, the space of freedom where citizens exercise rights, voice, and conscience" (McBride et al., 2006). Civic engagement integrates multiple components of communities and the political landscape in which individuals and groups can get involved in order to adequately connect with decision makers (García, 2003).

Civic engagement has come to be somewhat of a buzzword in the past decade since Putnam (1995, 2000) began examining the decline in participation in American community life (Berger, 2009). However, not all agree on the exact meaning of the term, nor are all fond of its use. Berger (2009) suggests separating the main elements at play in the term civic engagement to render a truer meaning and more measurable outcomes in academic work. He proposes using "political engagement", "social engagement", and "moral engagement" as three separate variables to capture what most researchers seem to identify as civic engagement (Berger, 2009).

He argues that this separation or categorization of civic activities would create more reliable terms.

Despite these recommendations, I argue that civic engagement is the best term for the purposes of this research. It is appropriately vague in order to accommodate multiple cultural interpretations of what it means to be involved in one's community and democracy. It is not precluded by legal residence as it incorporates social involvement as well as political. Social clubs, religious organizations, school groups, non-profit organizations, causes, and informal networks play an important role in building bonds in the Latino immigrant community as well as bridges to the dominant culture and the polity (Fraga, et al., 2006b; Levitt, 2008; McGarvey, 2005; Putnam, 2000; Stoll & Wong, 2007). The civic engagement of Latino immigrants has been shown to build relationships, foster the acquisition of important skills, increase self-esteem, and teach problem-solving and community building strategies (Keidan, 2008). Also of critical importance in the political realm is activism. Participation in marches, boycotts, and town hall meetings are activities that have become an important part of the Latino community's mode of communicating injustice, but not captured in the counts of vote or those registered to vote (Warren, 2001).

Each researcher can define civic engagement according to the characteristics of his or her project. In this manner it can be uniquely representative of the local population studied, their differing needs, values, and agenda. According to Sánchez-Jankowski (2008), people who live in poor ethnic enclaves have little connection to and confidence in private and state bureaucracies. They turn therefore to local personal networks to accomplish what is needed in their communities and to help them navigate the larger systems (Rivas-Drake, 2009; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008). This type of civic engagement can impact political decisions but only can be

captured using a broader interpretation of the term. It would be lost in the political realm if other terms were used and it was relegated to social engagement. For the purposes herein, only active participation is considered, as there are many forms of passive political involvement, such as membership in organizations that require no more than one's mailing address and do not therefore constitute any form of direct community involvement (Homan, 1999; Putnam, 2000).

Civic engagement differs in definition and in practice among ethnic groups (Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants - WAPI, 2002). While de Tocqueville lauded the town hall style participation of American government as its defining characteristic, Putnam noted a sharp decline in such cooperative types of civic engagement in the last two decades (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). Moreover, new immigrants have been introduced to a very different set of conditions for participation in American government than past waves of immigrants (Garcia, 2003; Putnam, 2000). It is therefore prudent to study the following domains which shape the patterns of immigrant civic engagement: (1) the current trends in engagement of the mainstream culture, (2) how immigrants are incorporated into that culture, and (3) the cultural context that each immigrant group brings with them from their country of origin (Garcia, 2003; WAPI, 2002; Warren, 2001). Only by uncovering these domains can one begin to understand how and why Latino immigrants are represented or not by the American polity.

WAPI researchers (2002) found in their study of immigrant leaders that the definition each group ascribed to civic engagement was strongly correlated to the culture and politics of their country of origin. This cultural context also guided each group in their active *vs.* passive engagement once they came to the United States (WAPI, 2002). For example, in the Caribbean civic engagement refers to helping neighbors and celebrating traditions. However, for Chinese immigrants it means taking care of family members so that they can do good things for society

(WAPI, 2002). Yet, for many immigrants from Central America who experienced oppression and exclusion from public life in their home countries, civic engagement can be a scary proposition that can elicit fear of government officials even in their receiving country (WAPI, 2002). For some Latino immigrants civic engagement relates to demonstrations for particular causes and labor strikes following the lead of César Chávez (WAPI, 2002). The researchers from WAPI (2002) also underscore the mismatch between current studies on civic engagement in the United States as it primarily pertains to electoral participation, and an entire population of immigrants who are unable to vote or run for office due to their citizenship status. Therefore, future studies should incorporate the appropriate definitions of engagement for the population studied. They also should consider whether immigrants have access to the type of community organizing activities that could connect their needs to the policy makers who can address them. If immigrant groups have not integrated into the dominant culture they are more likely to have limited access to the resources necessary to bring about positive societal or political change (Garcia, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). WAPI (2002) illuminates the need for programs in the United States that would connect civic traditions from the immigrant culture to the American polity.

Additionally, Warren (2001) highlights the many activities that the Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), Saul Alinsky's organization, has been able to accomplish with Latin American immigrants to increase their representation at the local and state levels. He points out that while not all Latino immigrant groups have the same traditions, they often share the same goals and struggles (Warren, 2001). Not all are eligible voters, but they can still have a voice. He writes of organizing efforts throughout the country by IAF, even during the current time of such a documented national decline in social capital (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). These efforts focus

on local community improvements, especially for the poor and marginalized. Such efforts led to the passage of livable wage laws in several states, improved transportation, and the procurement of funding for bilingual education in Texas (Warren, 2001).

Warren (2001) addresses the two types of activities as outlined by Putnam (2000) as critical for the civic engagement of minority groups: bonding and bridging activities. Bonding activities constitute those that bring a group closer together. They can be informal gatherings, social engagements, and religious congregations (Garcia, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). Such activities assist in maintaining identity and strengthening self worth (Sussner, 2008). They can reduce one's acculturative stress but cannot independently help integrate an individual or a group into the larger society (Garcia, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). Bonding activities can build social capital but can also be isolating if there are no bridging activities involved (Warren, 2001).

Bridging activities, on the contrary, join the interests of two or more groups (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). They are collaborations that bring groups together to work towards common goals and are necessary for democratic renewal (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001). These collaborations, such as community meetings, tend to be more formal in nature as they are explicitly designed to find common grounds between seemingly disparate groups in order to solve social or other problems that affect them all (Putnam, 2000; Warren, 2001).

A major weakness in previous studies of civic engagement has been the very minor role afforded to ethnicity and race. There have been many more civic engagement studies on the white majority than on racial minorities (Portney & Berry, 1997). This could be due in part to the fact that civic engagement, as defined by Putnam (1995, 2000, 2005), is encapsulated in a language of majority; it is most easily understood and measured by the white majority citizenry

(Hero, 2007). However, as Fraga and colleagues (2006b) have illustrated, it is especially important to consider all aspects of American identity in the study of civic engagement, including the understanding of race and ethnicity. Immigrant involvement in politics and in their communities is at times hindered and at times propelled by their experiences with racial discrimination, their immigrant status, and their international politics (Bacon, 2008; García, 2003; Fraga et al., 2006; Prigoff, 2000; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Therefore, the conceptualization and forthcoming research of civic engagement needs to be altered in order to be applicable to a racialized and increasingly immigrant society (Hero, 2007).

In recent years as the Latino population has grown to be the largest minority group in the United States, attention has been drawn to the need for greater understanding of this very diverse group (Stokes, 2003). Two issues seem to be the largest confounding factors in studying the civic engagement and political participation of Latino immigrants in the United States: immigration status and intergroup diversity (Stokes, 2003). Latino immigrants who are not citizens cannot be direct participants in the political system of their local, state, or federal government (García, 2003). They also tend to experience fear of government authorities and isolation from the dominant culture, and therefore have limited access to indirect routes of engagement as well (Bacon, 2008; García, 2003; Keidan, 2008). It is thus necessary to study civic engagement of non-citizens within their local community and in more informal arenas.

Moreover, it is difficult to write of the Latino immigrant population as a unified group to be studied when it is composed of a myriad of subgroups, ethnicities, and races, each with their own history of struggle and relationship with the polity (Stokes, 2003). What is lacking from this literature is a study not only of the civic engagement of racial minorities in the United States, but an understanding of the particular identities of immigrant groups and how these identities

form their attachment to the civic process in this country, as well as their attachment to their home country and its unique form of government.

Political involvement.

Although the national political stage has begun to acknowledge the critical role the growing Latino immigrant population can play in election results, fewer studies have been published on Latino immigrant political and civic engagement than on the white majority (WAPI, 2002). One assumption that has kept minorities out of many studies on civic engagement is that because minorities tend to exhibit lower socioeconomic status (SES) than whites, and there is a strong association between SES and civic engagement, then minorities would automatically experience lower civic engagement than whites without necessitating further study (Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Marschall, 2001; Portney & Berry, 1997). Marschall (2001) explains the relevance of SES in civic engagement by describing the factors that tend to accompany higher levels of SES, which include: "better interpersonal skills, more social interactions, and greater access to avenues (institutions, activities) of participation..." (p. 230).

However, there are other factors that motivate and facilitate civic engagement even in populations with low SES. These factors include: reaction to discrimination; politics in country of origin; indignation at unfair treatment of minorities; community solidarity; and cultural values assigned to activism (Hero et al., 2000; Marschall, 2001; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008). Marschall (2001) found that group consciousness can also influence its level of civic engagement, and that after controlling for SES, minorities have greater levels of participation than whites (Marschall, 2001). Furthermore, she notes that for individuals who mentioned race as an important political issue when interviewed, rates of participation were higher still (Marschall, 2001).

Stokes (2003) conducted a similar study on Latino group consciousness and found that Latinos (immigrants and native born) who used pan-ethnic identifiers and expressed concern with ethnic or racial injustices in the United States showed increased levels of political participation. Stokes' study attributes historical accounts of the disenfranchisement of African Americans and Native Americans from American politics to discrimination and the inability to assimilate into the larger American society (Aguirre & Turner, 1995).

Other studies focusing on Latinos note a relationship between Latino voting and citizenship, Latino representatives running for office, level of education, and adherence to specific views on "moral"/religious issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage (Garcia, 2003; WAPI, 2002; Warren, 2001). Additionally, the civic engagement of Latinos has been found to be positively associated with English language use (e.g. Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Segura, et al., 2001); SES (e.g. Hero et al., 2000; Leighley & Vedlitz, 1999; Marschall, 2001; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Portney & Berry, 1997; Segura, et al., 2001); citizenship (e.g. Hero, et al., 2000; Pantoja & Segura, 2003; Segura, et al., 2001); and mobility (e.g. Hero et al., 2000). Another study, conducted by a staff writer for the Detroit Free Press, found that applications for U.S. citizenship rose 42% in Michigan over the period 2005-2007 with evidence that Latino immigrants were seeking a more permanent connection to American society and politics (Warikoo, 2007). Warikoo found that English language and citizenship classes in the city of Detroit were full to capacity trying to accommodate those, like Gavia shown in the following quote: "We're concerned about our rights. I want to be a citizen so I can change laws, vote ... so I can communicate with politicians." (Warikoo, 2007).

While level of education has been found to be an important indicator of political participation for all groups, it has an even stronger association for Latino immigrants who have a smaller range of incomes and fewer occupational categories to distinguish them (Fraga, et al. 2006; Lopez & Marcelo, 2008; Segura, et al., 2001). Even though level of education is found to be positively associated with civic engagement, in some cases specific education in politics (i.e. more information about the workings of the American government) has been found to decrease engagement due to dissatisfaction, cynicism, or beliefs of injustice (Pantoja & Segura, 2003). Civic engagement can be used as a measure of representativeness of the polity, but in this manner it can be understood as an overall indicator of public support of government as well (Wagle, 2006).

Activism.

A crucial facet of the civic engagement of Latino immigrants is the long history of Latino activism in the United States. Mexican clergy in the 19th and early 20th centuries led the populous with strong activist tendencies (Espinosa, 2007). After the Treaty of Guadalupe in February of 1848 and the United States' acquisition of a large portion of the Southwest from the Mexican government, the Mexican clergy incited Mexicans nationals in these areas to fight for equal rights under U. S. law. At the time they were granted automatic citizenship but segregated in terms of schooling, housing, and church membership (Espinosa, 2007). The activist Mexican clergy was then pushed out, one by one, and replaced by French and English clergy without activist inclinations (Espinosa, 2007). Through local, state, and federal legislation, the United States government attempted to squelch Mexican activism and to remove many of the original Mexican Americans in the first half of the 20th century. However, they were unable to forestall the creation of several Latino civil rights groups, such as the Alianza Hispano Americano (1894,

a mutual aid society); the Sociedad Caballeros de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (1927, also a mutual aid society); The League of Latin American Voters (LULAC, 1929); the Congreso del Pueblo de Habla Española (1938), and the G.I. Forum (1944). These groups have helped fight school segregation and other social injustices. They were cited in the *Brown v. the Topeka Board of Education's* decision to outlaw school segregation by race. Moreover, they paved the way for César Chávez to organize Latinos (immigrants and native born) and other minorities to fight for labor rights in the United States (Espinosa, 2007).

César Chávez is the most prominent historical Latino activist and still credited for inspiring Latinos to fight for equal representation and just policy (Orosco, 2008). He trained in the Alinsky Model[1] of radical democracy and became the most well known Latino organizer in the country (NPS, 2009; Espinosa, 2007; Orosco, 2008). While Chávez is recognized for founding the United Farmworkers Union and mounting the great grape boycott of the 1960s, his message was more about social justice and human dignity than a typical labor strike and therefore had a much broader reach than agriculture (NPS, 2009; Anonymous, 2009b; Espinosa, 2007; Orosco, 2008). Chávez demonstrated not only to the Latino community but to the whole country that diverse groups could be unified by common interests and present a larger protest and a more powerful statement together (Espinosa, 2007). He showed the country that time,

[1] Saul Alinsky/The Alinsky Model

One of the most prominent figures in the history of community organizing is Saul Alinsky. He incited people, interest groups, and communities to fight for their rights and challenge the status quo in the United States (Warren, 2001; Watkins Murphy & Cunningham, 2003). He did this in a very deliberate yet democratic manner; he said it was important to work within the system in order to be heard and respected (Alinsky, 1971). But within the system he encouraged organizers to use any tactic they could to get the attention of the decision makers and get their point across. He encouraged strong individuals to organize their own people. "Alinsky's direct action model of a powerful neighborhood coalition that could force politicians, bankers, slum landlords, and corporate officials to the bargaining table was adopted by groups throughout the 1950s and was copied on a mass basis by movements during the explosive 1960s" (Watkins Murphy & Cunningham, 2003, p.18). He developed the IAF which employed a model of power within a non-violent activism that is still used to this day (Warren, 2001; Watkins Murphy & Cunningham, 2003).

patience, and great numbers of passionate people could impact policy on a large scale (Anonymous, 2009b; Espinosa, 2007; Orosco, 2008).

Most recently, in unified opposition to the repressive anti-immigrant House Bill HR4437 in the Spring of 2006, 102 marches were organized across the country using Chávez' model of organizing, fasting, marching, and non-violent pressure on the polity to act in a just and humane manner for immigration (Espinosa, 2007). Facing a detrimental piece of anti-immigrant legislation, diverse groups came together and showed the motivation, values, and magnitude of those willing to fight for just and humane policy (Espinosa, 2007; Pantoja, Menjívar, & Magaña, 2008). The marches were multiracial. They were powerful. They were led by activist clergy as were earlier protests against segregation (Espinosa, 2007). They had the intended effect of informing the public and the legislators that the bill was discriminatory and extremely harmful (Espinosa, 2007). Latino immigrants were not the only ones to be harmed by HR4437. All undocumented immigrants would have been prosecuted, as well as schools, health centers, community organizations, and churches that did not turn them into Immigration and Customs Enforcement (Espinosa, 2007; Padilla et al., 2008). Not only did the 2006 marches positively affect policy change, by influencing legislators to reject the bill, but they awoke a passionate group of people with deep activist roots. The new slogan, born from the marches, seems to be a foreshadowing of the civic power of the Latino immigrant population: "Today we act, tomorrow we vote" (Espinosa, 2007).

Trust in government.

Although much less studied in the academy, trust in government can play an important role in civic engagement, be it on a local, state, or federal level (García, 1973; Michelson, 2003; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008). In order to become involved in the process of democracy, one would

need to believe the process works and the representatives are trustworthy (Michelson, 2003). Trust in government means that the public will welcome politicians more readily and give them more leeway to do their jobs without interference (Michelson, 2003). Lack of trust is linked to the reduced effectiveness of government (Michelson, 2003). García (1973) found that as Mexican American children aged and recognized extant discrimination and prejudice in American society, their trust of American people and the U.S. government declined.

Notwithstanding, in the immigrant population, trust in government is not solely dependent on the individual's experience in the United States, but on their familial and ethnic history of trust in general (Uslaner, 2008). Using the General Social Survey from 1972 to 1996, Uslaner (2008) found that one's generalized trust depends more on ancestry and if the grandparents came from a trusting country than on personal experiences. In comparison to other immigrant groups, such as those from Northern Europe, he found Latinos to have particularly low levels of trust. In light of the double barreled question posed in the survey ("Generally speaking, do you believe that most people can be trusted, or can't you be too careful in dealing with people?" p. 731) which was the primary variable used for the results, further research with immigrant ancestry and trust needs to be conducted. In the current study, I examine how country of origin and trust in government influence the civic engagement of Latino immigrants more comprehensively.

Sánchez-Jankowski (2008) conducted a nine-year longitudinal study on the social and civic lives of predominantly Latino and African American poor communities in the United States. He looked at five establishments in detail: public housing projects; barber shops and hair salons; gangs and their meeting spaces; high schools; and small grocery stores. Through years of ethnography and social observation, he came to find that these communities distrusted the U.S.

government. However, he concluded that the lack of trust did not impede their access to the goods and services that they need. Rather, social capital in poor neighborhoods was critical to people getting what was needed in order to obtain higher status, more power, or mere necessities (Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008). According to Sánchez-Jankowski, the people in these neighborhoods have little confidence in the government to do what is needed to improve their communities or their lives, but they can lean on their personal networks to accomplish these goals. His work beckons further study of how this lack of trust affects political participation and therefore the ability to impact policy.

Community involvement.

When direct political participation is precluded by citizenship or lack of trust, community involvement can be invaluable in not only bonding a community together, but building social capital and potentially affecting policy change (García, 2003; Hero, et al., 2000; Putnam, 2000; Sánchez-Jankowski (2008). Community involvement fosters strong communities that, in turn, have the ability to "mobilize resources for the benefit of their members" (Homan, 1999, p. 37). Community involvement has been shown to increase connection to the democratic process in the Latino community in the following areas: school involvement (e.g. Hero, et al., 2000); community organizations (e.g. McGarvey, 2005); and religious affiliation and commitment (e.g. Fraga, et al., 2006; Levitt, 2008). School involvement not only connects parents of school aged children with other parents and school administrators, but also with local policy issues, community and statewide budgeting, community resources, and information about other concerns of the community. Community organizations have the ability to unite community members socially while striving for community improvements and organizing events around social and political interests. They are the cornerstone of ‘get out the vote’ campaigns,

neighborhood improvement projects, and bringing the needs of the community to the attention of state and federal legislators. Religious affiliation and commitment can be a difficult variable to use in terms of civic engagement. While it has been shown to inform parishioners of community issues and connect potential volunteers to political organizers, there is much diversity across religious institutions (Levitt, 2008; Warren, 2001). Some promote a political agenda while others do not. Some embrace a role of community organizer and advocate for community resources and social justice, while others do not. Due to the unreliable nature of religious affiliation as a measure of civic engagement, it is included in this study only as a demographic indicator, not as a dimension of the civic engagement index.

While the three aforementioned domains are possible avenues to engagement available to community members regardless of citizen status, ethnicity, and income, using data from the Latino National Political Survey (2000), Hero and colleagues (2000) showed that Latinos are 45% less likely to be involved in community organizations than other groups. This lack of involvement was shown to be associated not only with mobility, SES, ethnicity, and citizenship, but country of origin as well, thereby setting the stage for further studies to establish possible areas for intervention and policy implications to more comprehensively address the lack of involvement of these groups. Hero and colleagues' research direct one to question the factors that contribute to less involvement, as well as how to promote a more reflective democracy by addressing those barriers.

Civic engagement of immigrants.

When trying to understand the civic engagement of Latino immigrants, it is necessary to first study what makes this group different from the majority, as well as what policies integrate or exclude them from the democratic process. As has been noted, the primary avenue for direct

engagement is through voting. However, Latino immigrants who are not citizens cannot vote. Inasmuch as some Latino immigrants do not have full rights in the United States, they are still members of the community and are affected by issues addressed in the voting process. Since so many Latino immigrants are excluded from one of the primary expressions of civic engagement in American society, this study also focuses on other pathways for individuals to become engaged and how to increase said engagement through future policy. For example, advocates can address the barriers to engagement discovered herein and can ameliorate the exclusion or alienation of Latino immigrants while working to improve immigration policy and trust in the U.S. government. This can be accomplished through newly proposed programs and outreach to the Latino community, such as integration programs, English language courses, civics classes, and social services aimed to address said barriers.

Immigration Literature

The immigrant experience in the United States begins with either contact with or avoidance of immigration law. Immigration law in the United States is complex system with many requirements and limitations (Bacon, 2008; Massey, et al., 2002; USCIS, 2009). Despite the many restrictions imposed under provision of immigration policy, there has been considerable growth in legal immigration to the United States in recent years (Passel, 2009; Pew, 2007; USCIS, 2009). Legal immigration has increased from 2.5 million in the 1950s, to 4.5 million in the 1970s, to 7.3 million in the 1980s, and to about 10 million in the 1990s. Since 2000, legal immigrants to the United States number approximately 1,000,000 per year, about 600,000 of whom are *Change of Status* immigrants who were already residing in the United States (CBO, 2006; USCIS, 2009a). The population of legal immigrants in the United States is

now at its highest level ever at over 35,000,000 (USCIS, 2009a). Furthermore, immigration led to a 57.4% increase in the foreign born population from 1990 to 2000 (U.S. Census, 2000).

Nevertheless, legal entrée does not match either the market demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labor or the foreign supply of such (Carlsen 2007; Echaveste, 2008; Furchtgott-Roth, 2008; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Peach, 2007; Xu, 2007). While there are on the average one million undocumented immigrants who enter the country each year filling unskilled or semi-skilled positions in many non- agricultural industries (Carlsen 2007; Echaveste, 2008; Furchtgott-Roth, 2008; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Peach, 2007; Xu, 2007), there are no immigrant status visas for unskilled or semi-skilled labor, and a limit of 66,000 temporary, non-agricultural, employer sponsored unskilled or semi-skilled visas (Bacon, 2008; Massey, et al., 2002; USCIS, 2009). According to research by the Pew Hispanic Center, illegal immigration may be as high as 1,500,000 per year with a net of at least 700,000 arriving each year to join the 12,000,000 to 20,000,000 that are already here (Passel, 2005, 2009). The contentious raids of the meat packing industry across the country from 2006 to 2009 demonstrated high numbers of foreign workers who were employed, paying taxes under incorrect names or invalid social security numbers, and filling a need for those employers who didn't secure the appropriate number of temporary visas for their employees (Bacon, 2008; Echaveste, 2008; Furchtgott-Roth, 2008; Hernández, 2008).

Latino immigrants in particular make up a large part of the United States labor force, primarily in the service industry, construction, and manufacturing, and filled 1 million of the 2.5 million new jobs created in 2004 (Kochhar, 2005; Toussain-Comeau, 2006). The Latino population grew from 12.5% of the total United States population in the census year 2000 to 15% in 2007, 9% of whom where native born, and 6% foreign born (Padilla, et al., 2008; Pew,

2007; U.S. Census, 2008). These estimates do not account for the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants in the United States at any given point, of whom 76% are Latino. This group of undocumented Latino immigrants is estimated by the Pew Hispanic Center (Passel, 2009) to make up 8.3 million undocumented laborers which equates to 4% of the United States population and 5.4% of the total workforce. Additionally, within these families, 73% of the children were born in the United States and thus are United States citizens, creating mixed-status families (Pew, 2007; U.S. Census, 2008).

Why immigrants come to the United States and what role they fill are questions that need to be answered in order to understand how they are incorporated into the mainstream society and if and how they become civically engaged (Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Sánchez Molina, 2008). There are many misconceptions about the impetus to emigrate from one's homeland as well as their place in the United States (Carlsen, 2007, 2009; Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003; Piore, 1979). Migration is a natural consequence of economic development (Piore, 1979). When a country transitions from a rural economy to an industrial economy, many farm workers are left with minimal transferable skills (Healy, 2001; Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003; Prigoff, 2000). They are forced to move to the cities to find the newly created jobs, but they are often too great in numbers for the demand and ill-trained for industrial employment (Bacon, 2008; Healy, 2001; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Sugrue, 1996). Many therefore must continue their search where there is a demand for unskilled, semi-skilled, or farm labor (Massey, et al., 2003; Healy, 2001; Sernau, 2006; Sugrue; 1996). As U. S. legislation has attempted to adapt to the free trade agreements from the deregulated 1990's, it has subsidized some crops, such as rice, and safeguarded some employment in America's farmland, thereby

opening the same jobs in American farms that it decimated in foreign lands, without restructuring immigration law (Bacon, 2008; Massey, et al., 2003; Van Soest, 1997).

Similar themes in United States immigration have come up in prior periods of growth and contraction in the United States economy (Massey, et al., 2002; Piore, 1979). In *Birds of Passage*, Piore examined the clashes that escalated between initially welcomed immigrant groups and American natives who began to feel threatened by their presence and growing employment. Piore (1979) attacked the misperceptions about the immigrant experience and explained some of the underlying conflicts between both groups. He formulated a theory "about the nature of the migrants and the roles they play within the industrial world" (p. 5). According to Piore, the conventional view of the labor market is similar to any other market, like that "for a shirt or any other commodity that is bought and sold" (p. 7). However, the problem in utilizing this conventional perspective was that the income earned within a particular job or industry was the only variable considered, while there were actually many other variables of equal importance, such as the social status of said job or industry, the purchasing power of the laborers in their community, the work ethic of said laborers, the availability of jobs in the immigrants' home countries, and work conditions in the industry.

Another faulty argument common to the literature of the late 1970's was that immigration to the United States was caused by problems in Mexico and if Mexican policy would increase income and reduce birthrates at home, immigration from Mexico would cease. Piore argued that immigration was not inherent in the sending nation but in the receiving nation. Further, he suggested that a characteristic of the American people was to wish the lowest jobs on "others" whether they came from Mexico or elsewhere (Piore, 1979). Piore noted that it was erroneous to think that the primary goal for all immigrants was to settle in the United States; that settlement

here was a sign of success. On the contrary, he countered that a sign of success would be to return to their homeland with financial independence (Massey, et al., 2003; Piore, 1979; Wampler et al., 2009). Nevertheless, many immigrants become tied to their new country because of personal relationships in the United States, or the presence of U. S. born children, or have impediments to their returning, such as monetary restrictions or health concerns. As a result, they stay indefinitely (Massey, et al., 2003; Piore, 1979; Wampler et al., 2009).

Similarly, Massey, Durand and Malone (2003) suggest that most Americans are quite naïve regarding immigration policy and immigration trends. According to Massey, Durand and Malone, many Americans think that people immigrate to the United States from Mexico based solely on a cost/benefit analysis involving higher salaries in the United States and their corresponding purchasing power. They rarely consider the forces in the sending nation or those in the receiving nation (Hernández-León, 2008; Massey, et al., 2003; Saito, 2009). Nor do they account for the social and economic structures of both countries and the personal story of each individual immigrant (Hernández-León, 2008; Orrenius & Zavodny, 2009). This misperception of the impetus to immigrate is one of the primary reasons that immigration reforms have not had the intended effect of reducing immigration to the United States (Massey, Durand & Malone, 2003; Saito, 2009).

Latino immigration.

Many studies of contemporary immigration highlight the demographic and racial differences between the white European immigrants at the turn of the 20th century and the current wave of Latino and Asian immigrants (e.g. Berry, 1997, 2002, 2008; Fischer & Mattson, 2009; Fraga & Segura, 2006; Golash-Boza, 2006; Lopez & Marcelo, 2008; Massey, et al., 2003; Papademetriou & Terrazas, 2009; Portés and Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Sánchez Molina, 2008).

They use race and level of education to explain why earlier immigrant groups assimilated more quickly into American culture and became engaged in community. The large wave of immigrants at the turn of the 20th century was predominantly white and from Europe. They did not physically stand out as different from mainstream American society. They came with similar levels of education as the average American citizen. Once they or their offspring were able to master the English language and adopt American styles, there was no apparent difference in native born Americans and foreign born immigrants. They were thus considered to have assimilated more quickly into American society than current immigrants who are predominantly from Latin America or Asia and have distinguishing physical features and skin tone as well as much lower levels of education that mainstream America.

Race and ethnicity play a role in the segregation of the Latino community and their lack of civic engagement as well (Keidan, 2008; Massey, 2007; Massey & Denton, 1993; Moore & Pinderhughes, 1993; Pratt & Hanson, 1994; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008; Sánchez Molina, 2008; Santiago & Galster, 1995; Wilson, 1978, 1993). There is substantial evidence that race matters, and that racial discrimination decreases one's integration into American society (e.g. Félix, 2008; Okigbo et al., 2009; Hernández-León, 2008; Portés, 1999; Rivas-Drake & Mooney, 2009; Toussaint-Comeau, 2006; Waldinger et al., 2007). While newcomers with physical differences than the dominant population of white Americans may adopt behaviors of mainstream society, they may experience rejection from mainstream society in the social realm, in stores and restaurants, in schools, in housing, and in employment, thereby increasing their chances of joining a racialized "underclass" (e.g. Brown, 2007; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003; O'Brien, 2008; Parrado & Morgan, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Wilson, 1993). This segmented

"underclass" group would consist of other racial minorities who have not integrated fully into mainstream society and often struggle with social and economic injustice (Wilson, 1993). When their interactions only take place within these racialized minority groups their voices are not heard by decision makers in the larger society (Félix, 2008; Okigbo et al., 2009; Hernández-León, 2008; Portés, 1999; Rivas-Drake & Mooney, 2009; Toussaint-Comeau, 2006; Waldinger et al., 2007). Therefore, their interests are not reflected in the decisions made.

Racial discrimination has also been shown to limit individual and group level trust in government as Latino immigrants see that the constitution of the United States has not protected some racial minorities from injustice (e.g. García, 1973; Michelson, 2003; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008; Uslaner, 2008). Additionally, race and racial discrimination have been found to reduce the civic engagement of racial minorities due to past experience with injustice, frustration with lack of representation, indifference towards the U.S. government, and in some cases fear of government officials (e.g. Arnett Jensen, 2008; De Souza Briggs, 2008; Félix, 2008; Hernández-León, 2008; Keidan, 2008; Stoll & Wong, 2007). Racial and ethnic differences in civic engagement can lead to unequal representation in policy decisions and thus unequal distribution of resources and services (O'Brien, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Stoll & Wong, 2007). Because the engagement itself directs policy decisions, marginalized people will experience a perpetual spiral away from the necessary resources for involvement. Even with the best intentions by elected officials, if all groups do not engage in the process of democracy and express their needs and concerns, new policy will not be reflective of their situation.

Moreover, discrimination of Latino immigrants based on phenotype or skin color has been shown to affect household income (e.g. Bohara & Davila, 1992; Frank, Akresh, & Lu,

2010; Telles & Murguía, 1990), educational attainment (Murguía & Telles, 1996) business opportunities and power (Zweigenhaft & Domhoff, 1998) and occupational prestige (Espino & Franz, 2002; Frank, Akresh, & Lu, 2010). Utilizing the Latino National Political Survey (1990), Espino and Franz (2002) showed that darker skinned Mexicans and Cubans fared significantly worse in the labor market compared to lighter skinned Mexicans and Cubans. They used an occupational prestige scale in order to approximate labor market opportunities more appropriately than household income had been able to do in previous studies. Additionally, Mexicans and Cubans fared better if they had European facial features. Their results for Puerto Ricans was not so clear, as those with medium toned skin seemed to do better in the labor market than either extreme. However, they acknowledged that regional differences not able to be accounted for in their study could be contributing factors for Puerto Ricans. Furthermore, Frank, Akresh, and Lu have concluded in their study on where Latino immigrants fit into a racialized society in the United States that those with darker skin have lower income and more barriers to occupational prestige than lighter skinned Latino immigrants. Also, they found that those who have been in the United States longer shied away from self identifying as any of the federally mandated racial categories on the US Census. Instead, they made attempts to change the racial categorizations by inserting new designations. Frank and colleagues attribute this to discomfort with the fact that Latino immigrants are often relegated to a racialized subgroup, not mainstream American society. Because skin color and phenotype in the Latino community in the United States has been studied to a lesser degree than in the African American community it warrants further research, as in the following study.

In comparing past waves of immigrants with contemporary Latino immigrants, few studies have looked at the differences in immigration status (e.g. Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009;

Bacon, 2008; Fraga & Segura, 2006; García, 2003; Padilla et al., 2008; Massey, et al., 2003; Segura, Pachon, & Woods, 2001). While many Latino immigrants are U.S. citizens, many of their family members are not. With approximately 44% of the Latino community being foreign born and 73% of them having US born children, the Latino community has become a complex mixed status community highly attuned to any changes in immigration policy and acutely affected by anti-immigrant sentiment in policy and society.

A few studies have addressed the issues of proximity to their homeland and replenishment of immigrants to explain the differences between current immigration and early twentieth century immigration (e.g. Brown, 2007; Fischer & Mattson, 2009; Hochschild & Mollenkopf, 2009; Jiménez, 2008). The ease of return to their homeland in this case makes Latin American immigrants more likely to maintain ties with the home culture than early 20th century European immigrants. This is thought to reduce their desires to become integrated into American society (Fischer & Mattson, 2009). Additionally, employing data from 123 in-depth interviews with older Mexican Americans, Jiménez (2008) found that the Mexican immigrant experience is different than that of turn of the century white Europeans not because of race or color, but rather because white European immigration halted and curtailed the formation of a unique ethnic identity. White European immigrants thus began to blend with white America, and often as early as the second generation began to assume an American identity. On the other hand, Mexican immigration has been fairly constant since the Treaty of Guadalupe, thereby blending the Mexican American identity with the new Mexican immigrant identity (Fischer & Mattson, 2009; Jiménez, 2008). This phenomenon is also said to maintain their ties to their homeland and reduce the necessity of incorporating in to the mainstream American culture

(Jiménez, 2008). In this manner, the Mexican American identity is often renewed, but seldom mistaken for the mainstream American identity.

One study has examined how pre-migration nationalism also impacts civic engagement in the United States (Waldinger & Lim, 2009). Waldinger and Lim (2009) suggest that there was no real national identity of the earlier waves of European immigrants. They were predominantly tied to towns and regions of their homelands, without an established connection to their country. Therefore, when arriving in the United States, they were open to developing national ties here and able to maintain pieces of their regional identities within their ethnic groups. However, Mexico in particular has a lengthy history of national identity. According to Waldinger and Lim, after the Mexican revolution in the beginning of the 20th century, the Mexican government went to great lengths to imbue a sense of nation in the populous. Their national identity therefore travels with Mexican immigrants as they come to the United States. These ties to Mexico, coupled with a strong sense of Mexican identity can and does affect their readiness to integrate fully into American society and become "American" (Waldinger & Lim, 2009).

Acculturation Literature

Once a clear picture is established of the multiple factors involved in the decision to leave one's homeland, the acculturation framework can help to explain what happens once immigrants arrive in their new country. Acculturation can be used to examine both the Latino immigrant culture and the dominant Euro-American culture, and how the two interact. It is a lens that is useful in understanding the factors that would lead an immigrant group towards or away from the mainstream American culture (Berry, 1997). The acculturation framework explains the lack of community involvement as an outcome related to the manner in which immigrants are accepted

into the dominant American culture (e.g. Berry, 1997, 2002, 2005; Portney & Berry, 1997; Putnam, 2005).

Acculturation has been used to study discrimination against Latino immigrants in American society (e.g. Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003); Latino immigrants' plans to stay in the United States (e.g. Abraído et al., 2006; Massey et al., 2003; Waldinger & Lim, 2009; Wampler et al., 2009); familial health and well-being (e.g. Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Hwang, 2006); mental health (e.g. Bacallao & Smokowski, 2009; Smokowski, et al., 2009a); rates of intermarriage (e.g. Lee & Bean, 2004; Qian & Lichter, 2001); political involvement (e.g. Michelson, 2003); educational attainment (e.g. Brown, 2007; Gándara & Contreras, 2008; Portés and Rumbaut, 2001, 2006); fertility (e.g. Parrado & Morgan, 2008); immigration policy (e.g. Berry, 2008; Massey et al., 2003); social work practice (e.g. Piedra & Engstrom, 2009); and labor inclusion (e.g. Brown 2007; Toussain-Comeau, 2006; Waldinger et al., 2007).

The most prominent outcome found among the studies is evidence supporting the theory of segmented assimilation developed by Portés & Zhou (1993) which suggests that Latino immigrants do indeed integrate into American society, but not mainstream American society (Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006). They become incorporated into a racialized segment of society that has experienced discrimination in multiple arenas including politics, education, commerce, labor, and residential neighborhoods (Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993). Children of immigrant laborers appear to assimilate into an ethnic minority subculture which while "American" by definition is not mainstream America (Portés, 1997). This provides the potential for intergroup bonding and social support but not bridging to the dominant culture nor divergence from the pigeonholed participation in the very bottom of the labor market (Arnett

Jensen, 2008; Brown, 2007; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003; O'Brien, 2008; Parrado & Morgan, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993 ; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Wilson, 1993).

Telles and Ortiz (2008) found that Mexican Americans become fluent in English by the second generation and reach higher levels of education than their parents (Telles and Ortiz, 2008). However, because of segmented assimilation and experience with discrimination, the third and fourth generations of immigrants experience lower levels of educational attainment and integration into mainstream American society is not achieved as expected (Telles and Ortiz, 2008). Without the connection to mainstream American society, the civic engagement of Latino immigrants is compromised and appropriate representation in political decisions does not occur. Piedra and Engstrom (2009) suggest that segmented assimilation theory be used to help social work practitioners understand that there are different paces and trajectories of assimilation for parents and children and therefore should have different modes of assistance for social services.

Some recent studies have found that the newest waves of immigrants to the United States have had remarkably different experiences with acculturation than did previous waves of immigrants who were of European ancestry (Barvosa, 2006; Monzó & Rueda, 2006; Smith, 2008). One such study, by Golash-Boza (2006), found that discrimination based on race and skin color is associated with diminished assimilation of the Latino community in the United States. Similarly, Monzó and Rueda (2006) showed that the traditional unidirectional, one-dimensional approach to assimilation is not appropriate for this new wave of immigrants. In a unidirectional model, immigrants adopt the dominant culture but do not influence the larger society in return. In a one-dimensional model, immigrants would either assimilate and shed all aspects of the original culture or maintain the original culture and not assimilate (Berry's, 2002;

Monzó and Rueda, 2006). More contemporary models of acculturation, such as Berry's (2002), describe a multidimensional process wherein immigrants maintain varying degrees of their original culture, adopt various aspects of the new culture, and influence the larger American society with aspects of their cultural heritage such as traditions, celebrations, foods, dress, music, and the arts (Barvosa, 2006; Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003; Berry, 2002; Monzó & Rueda, 2006; Smith, 2008). The existing literature, however, has not studied the effect of acculturation and trust in government on levels of civic engagement in American society. The following study explains the level of civic engagement of Latino immigrants by their experiences with discrimination, integrated friendships and coworkers, English language proficiency, their plans to stay in the United States, access to bilingual services, whether they consider themselves American and their trust in the U.S. government.

In conclusion, the civic engagement of the residents of the United States is what connects the populous to those who represent them in this representative democracy. Involvement at the local, state, and national levels brings the needs, concerns, and ideas of those represented to the decision makers. If the decision makers do not hear or listen to all groups they cannot appropriately represent them. Policy at any level that does not take into account the needs of all the stakeholders is intrinsically unjust. And when those impacted by unjust policy are excluded from decisions on new policy, then a vicious cycle of unjust policy ensues (Aguirre & Turner, 1995; Bacon, 2008; Massey, et al., 2003; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). This study addresses the barriers to civic engagement in the fastest growing minority population in the United States and focuses on areas where future policy can make the greatest impact on meeting their needs. These areas include bilingual services, discriminatory practices in education, law enforcement, housing, and retail, a mismatch between immigration policy and the demand for immigrant labor, English

language classes, and potential immigrant integration programs throughout the country. Moreover, this research combines complex survey data with rich qualitative data that provides the appropriate context and a greater understanding of the processes of civic engagement, immigration, integration and trust in government of Latino immigrants.

Chapter 3: The Theoretical Context Shaping the Civic Engagement of Latino Immigrants

This study utilizes the civic engagement and acculturation frameworks in order to tie together how and why immigrants become involved in their community and national affairs and how such involvement is moderated by their acceptance or rejection within the host society. While the acculturation framework articulates immigrants' divergent pathways to incorporation into American society, civic engagement theory explains who becomes involved in society, at what level, how, and why.

Civic Engagement Theory

Civic engagement theory identifies the various mechanisms within communities and the political landscape through which individuals and groups get involved and connect with decision makers (Putnam, 2000). According to Putnam (1995), civic engagement reflects the "people's connection to the life of their community" (p.2). The primary assumption underlying civic engagement theory is the more involved people are within their community and the larger society, the more representative public policy will be (Putnam, 2000). Consequently, if there is minimal civic engagement by the citizenry, subsequent public policy will reflect very narrowly the views, needs and desires of society (Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). According to Putnam, who approaches this phenomenon using a social capital perspective, civic engagement declines with the erosion of social trust or trust in government and the reduction of social connections. His theoretical framework identifies a uniquely individualistic trend in American society that, by definition, cannot be addressed within a representative government (Putnam, 2000; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). The American electorate must represent the whole country as a collective rather than millions of individuals.

In contrast, institutionalist civic engagement theorists operate on different assumptions (Clemens, 1997; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). They pay less attention to social trust and social interaction and focus the theory of civic engagement on the types of institutions in which Americans have been engaged over time (Berry, 2005; Clemens, 1997; Hall, 1994). They stress that the types of institutions and their memberships are critical to their influence on the American representative democracy (Clemens, 1997; Skocpol 1992; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). Institutionalist civic engagement theorists assume when people are engaged in organizations that are political or activist oriented or if they purposely involve marginalized segments of society, then they will have a greater chance of creating truly representative policy (Berry, 2005; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999). They argue that historically groups that have influenced policy, such as women's groups during the suffrage movement, only appeared to be social groups to outsiders but were actually political in nature (Clemens, 1997; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999).

A marriage of the two perspectives of civic engagement would see individual- and community-level involvement in activities that attach people to society and have the potential to influence multiple levels of policy (Putnam, 2000). Civic engagement is the active voice of collective participation in a representative government (McBride et al., 2006). If voices from all groups are not heard then representation is incomplete. Racial and ethnic differences in levels of civic engagement lead to unequal representation in policy decisions and thus unequal distribution of resources and services (Stoll & Wong, 2007). Moreover, the manner in which individuals and groups are integrated into American society affects their opportunities for civic engagement (Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Marginalized people will not have their voices heard as public officials consider new policy, and they will have no new pathways to engagement due to lack of truly

representative policy, thus demonstrating a vicious cycle of exclusion from social and political affairs of marginalized groups (Massey, 2007; Sugrue, 1996; Warren, 2001).

Civic engagement theory draws its strengths from identifying multiple areas for engagement in local, state, and federal levels of society and politics. It lays the groundwork for understanding the United States as a representative democracy that is driven by participation in community as well as political affairs (Putnam, 2005). It can address barriers to participation for particular groups or communities. Its proponents can find or create new areas for community and political involvement for groups excluded by electoral participation, including non-citizen immigrant groups. The theory documents the benefits of involvement that accrue by drawing associations between political participation, political representation and human rights; between community involvement and local policy, access to services, education, and health outcomes; and between school involvement, child health outcomes and educational outcomes (Berry, 2005; Clemens, 1997; Hero et al., 2000; García, 2003; Marschall, 2001; Putnam, 2000; Sánchez-Jankowski, 2008; Skocpol 1992; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999).

However, contemporary civic engagement theory does not account for the marginalization of immigrant communities and their ensuing lack of engagement in American society. The acculturation framework fills this gap in explaining the possible marginalization of immigrants in American society. This study addresses the unique position in which Latino immigrants find themselves as they attempt to incorporate into American society and engagement themselves in public life while significant barriers such as discrimination and oppressive immigration policy curtail their ability to participate.

The Acculturation Framework

From the turn of the 20th century and the great migration, throughout most of the twentieth century, assimilation was thought to be the only manner by which new immigrants became part of American society (Barreto & Pedraza, 2008; Berry, 1997; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003;Telles & Ortiz, 2008). The United States was called the melting pot and thought to mold all newcomers into Americans regardless of their cultural backgrounds. It was believed that within three generations immigrants would have shed all cultural identifiers (Barreto & Pedraza, 2008;Telles & Ortiz, 2008). In the past two decades, this theoretical framework has been adapted to newer waves of immigrants that are not predominantly white Europeans and thus do not resemble mainstream America. Two of these adaptations and those of particular importance to this study are Berry's (2002) comprehensive acculturation framework and Portés and Zhou's (1993) segmented assimilation theory.

In Berry's (2002) acculturation framework, there are four distinct levels of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. The model represents the varying degrees of interaction immigrants experience with the dominant culture and the maintenance of a connection to the culture of origin or non-dominant culture (Berry, 2002). In this model, integration is the ideal, and marginalization is what ideally would be avoided. While integration would facilitate greater participation in society at large, marginalization precludes engagement in either the local community or the dominant culture (Berry, 2002). To reach full *integration* in American society, newcomers would maintain their ethnic culture as well as interact regularly with the dominant American culture (Berry, 2002). Integration requires a mutual respect of both the dominant culture and the immigrant culture (Berry, 1997). Integration is consider to be ideal because immigrants adopt the necessary pieces of the dominant culture to access education,

employment and social services while simultaneously maintaining the core components of their cultural identity (Berry, 2002; García, 2003).

There are, however, multiple barriers to realizing integration, such as discrimination, racism, involuntary immigration, language difficulties, education, health, lack of trust in government, and unjust policy (García, 2003; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). These barriers pose a threat to the civic engagement of the individuals and their representation in the American polity because if they have not become part of their community, they will not have avenues for engagement available to them (Portés & Rumbaut, 2006).

Conversely, immigrants who maintain their own culture but reject or are rejected by the dominant culture experience *separation* (Berry, 2002). Often, the dominant culture does not welcome the cultural differences of the incoming group and does not accept the newcomers (Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003). When the two cultures differ greatly, it can prove to be extremely difficult to fit in and could lead immigrants to seek the comfort of their particular ethnic enclave fearing rejection by the dominant group (Abrahamson, 2006). Physical differences, such as skin color, can exacerbate the identification as an outsider and the rejection by the American society (Golash-Boza, 2006). As a result, darker skinned individuals would acculturate "separately" from mainstream society into an ethnic minority. This social separation can be associated with racial or ethnic residential segregation. Racial or ethnic segregation is associated with decreased well-being as well as limited access to necessary goods, services, and political representation within American society (Massey & Denton, 1993; Massey et al., 2002; Galster & Santiago, 1995; Santiago & Wilder, 1991).

This concept of ethnic separation has developed into a unique theoretical framework called segmented assimilation, a term coined by Portés and Zhou (1993) and used in recent years

to understand how ethnic minorities often integrate into a racialized minority group (Portés and Zhou , 1993; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Michelson, 2003). Segmented assimilation depicts a situation whereby newcomers who are visibly different from the dominant cultural group will not integrate into mainstream society. They will adapt to an already isolated ethnic minority group composed of other immigrants and Black Americans who themselves have not integrated into the mainstream (Brown, 2007; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003; O'Brien, 2008; Parrado & Morgan, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993 ; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Wilson, 1993). Once the newcomers integrate into a racialized minority group in the United States they often begin to consider themselves American. They experience the necessary sharing of cultural traditions with the receiving culture and develop integrated friendships, but all within the particular subculture that is a racialized minority (Aguirre & Turner, 1995; Lee & Bean, 2004; Waldinger, Lim, & Cort, 2007). They have limited access to mainstream America. They also lack access to the goods and services afforded those who are integrated into the dominant culture (Golash-Boza, 2006; O'Brien, 2008; Piedra & Engstrom, 2009; Portés & Rumbaut, 2001, 2006; Portés & Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut & Portés, 2001; Stoll & Wong, 2007).

Furthermore, the acculturation framework describes the traditional assimilation model in the light of newer waves of immigrants. In some circumstances, the dominant society sends the message that if newcomers want to participate they must shed all ethnic customs, characteristics, and language. In such cases, immigrants are welcome as long as they do not appear to be immigrants. If they fully adopt the American culture and reject their own, they have *assimilated* (Berry, 2002). This is what is considered to have transpired with generations of European immigrants into the 20th century (Massey, et al, 2002). However, it is also argued that

assimilation, while not only unrealistic, is impossible for those with identifiable physical differences from mainstream Americans (Barreto & Pedraza, 2008; Massey, et al., 2002; Monzó & Rueda, 2006).

Finally, there is a level of acculturation that forestalls involvement in either mainstream society or the original culture (Berry, 2002). This is marginalization. If immigrants reject their own culture, perhaps with the goal of assimilation, but in turn are shunned by the dominant culture, then they are *marginalized* or excluded from both cultures (Berry, 2002). This is the most dire of the acculturation levels for it tells the story of many immigrants who have been left out of both the new society and the old. These individuals exist in a void with little social support and few if any opportunities for engagement in society (Berry, 2002; Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

The greatest strength in addressing the integration or marginalization of Latino immigrants using the acculturation framework is the explanation it provides as to how immigrants are incorporated into or denied access to the dominant culture. However, the acculturation framework does not fully explain what immigrants do in society when they are incorporated or how their needs can be met if they are marginalized. Civic engagement theory can fill part of this gap by developing a story of involvement in society as well as ways to address the needs of marginalized people through public policy. This study utilizes both perspectives to understand the specific engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 3.1 provides a conceptualization of the research undertaken in this study. The model demonstrates the tested relationship between the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States, their demographics, their immigrant experience, and their socioeconomic

status, as well as the moderating effects of trust in the U.S. government and acculturation within the dominant American society. The index of civic engagement used in the model was created by summing the positive responses to active engagement in community affairs, political and electoral participation, and school involvement. The independent variables for which the model controls are: age; gender; birth place; marital status; employment status; educational attainment; skin color; reason for immigrating; religion; homeownership; and household income. The moderator trust in the U.S. government addresses how often the respondents trust the U.S. government to do what is right. The moderator acculturation comprises seven concepts which are: respondents' experiences with unfair or discriminatory treatment; their English language proficiency; their access to bilingual services in their community; the level of racial and ethnic integration in their groups of friends; the level of racial and ethnic integration of their coworkers; whether they considering themselves to be American; and whether they have become naturalized U.S. citizens. Because these variables measure the respondents' incorporation into American society, their potential for increasing their engagement is strong. The moderating variables can attenuate the effects of independent variables with negative associations with civic engagement, as well as increase the effects of independent variables with positive associations with civic engagement.

Hypotheses

Based on the assumptions of civic engagement theory and the acculturation framework, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Civic engagement will vary by the contextual factors.

    1.1 Civic engagement will vary by the demographic characteristics.

        1.11 Civic engagement will increase as respondents' age increases.

1.12 Men will be more civically engaged than women.

1.13 Those who are married will be more civically engaged than others.

1.14 Immigrants with white skin color will be more civically engaged than those who are brown skinned.

1.15 Civic engagement will vary by religious affiliation. Catholics will be more civically engaged than others.

1.2 Civic engagement will vary by socioeconomic factors

1.21 Immigrants who are employed at least part time will be more civically engaged than those who are not part of the labor force.

1.22 People with higher levels of education will have higher levels of civic engagement.

1.23 People with higher household income will have higher levels of civic engagement.

1.24 Homeowners will have higher civic engagement scores than non homeowners.

1.3 Civic engagement will vary by the characteristics of the immigrant experience

1.31 Civic engagement will vary by country of origin. Immigrants from Mexico will be less civically engaged than others. Immigrants from Puerto Rico will be more civically engaged than others.

1.32 Civic engagement will vary by reason for immigrating. Immigrants who came to the United States due to political turmoil in their country of origin will be more civically engaged than others. Immigrants who came for economic reasons will be less civically engaged than others.

1.33 The longer immigrants are in the United States, the greater their levels of civic engagement.

1.34 Immigrants who plan to stay in the United States permanently will be more civically engaged than those who plan on returning to their country of origin.

2. After controlling for the contextual factors, higher levels of trust in government will be associated with higher levels of civic engagement.

3. After controlling for the contextual factors, higher levels of acculturation will be associated with higher levels of civic engagement.

3.1 Greater English language proficiency will be associated with greater civic engagement.

3.2 Immigrants with integrated friendships will be more civically engaged than those whose friends are exclusively Latino.

3.3 Immigrants who have integrated coworkers will be more civically engaged than those who don't.

3.4 Immigrants who consider themselves American will be more engaged than others.

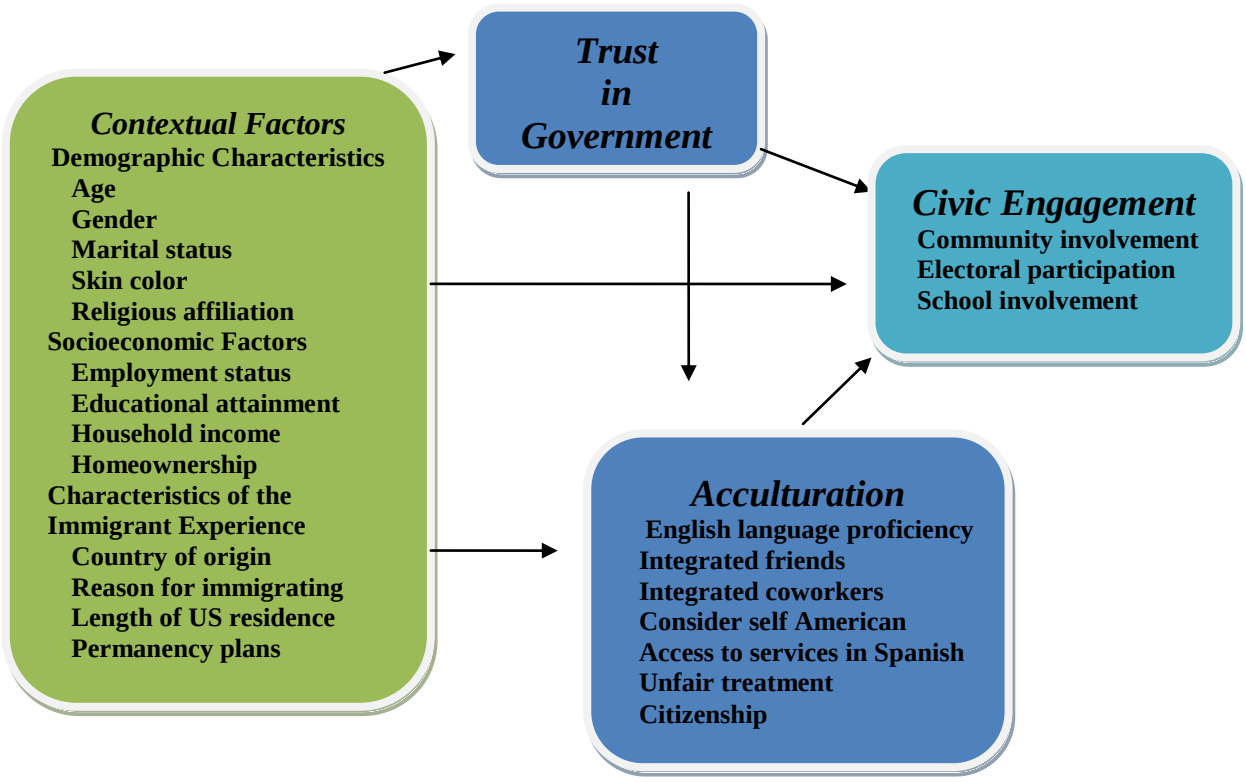
3.5 Immigrants with moderate to high access to bilingual services will be more engaged than those who do not.

3.6 The presence of unfair treatment will be associated with higher civic engagement.

3.7 Naturalized U.S. citizens and those born in Puerto Rico will be more engaged than those who are not citizens.

4. Trust in government and acculturation will moderate the contextual factors in their prediction of civic engagement.

Figure 3.1 **Conceptual Diagram**



Conceptualization of Variables

Dependent variable.

Level of civic engagement.

Civic engagement is the outcome variable of the model that is tested in this study. While not all authors agree on the conceptualization of civic engagement, it is generally considered to be a measure of connection to community and the polity (Putnam, 2000). It is the manner in which individuals come together socially, to solve community problems, and to be heard by elected officials (Putnam, 2000). In this study civic engagement is understood as the respondents' involvement in community groups or organizations; the extent of their electoral participation (registering to vote, voting in the last election, interest in politics); their connection to the United States government by way of military service; their involvement in work

communities by way of union membership; and their involvement in local parent networks through school involvement.

Moderating variables.

Level of trust in government.

Trust in government refers to the respondents' attitudes towards the U.S. government. The underlying assumption in measuring trust in government is that the greater the trust the more willing an individual or group will be to participate in political or civic affairs (Chavez et al., 2006; Letki, 2008). Trust in government is conceptualized here by addressing the respondents' level of trust that the government will do what is right.

Level of acculturation.

In this study, acculturation is defined as one's integration into the dominant American society. Seven dimensions of acculturation were used: English language proficiency, access to bilingual services, integration of friends, integration of coworkers, considering oneself American, becoming a naturalized citizen, and unfair treatment.

The proficient use of the English language in the United States gives immigrants the ability to connect directly with mainstream society as well as decision makers at the local and the national level (Berry, 2002; García, 2003). Those who become proficient in English are therefore considered to be most acculturated or integrated into mainstream American society.

As integration is the ideal level of acculturation according to Berry's (2002) model, integration of friendships is one of the key variables used to approximate acculturation in this study.

One manner of alienating immigrants from mainstream society is to segregate work environments by race or ethnicity (Massey, 2007: Sugrue, 1996; Wilson, 1993). For this reason,

integrated coworkers is one dimension of acculturation used to approximate acculturation in this study.

Self-identification as American is intended to measure one's attachment to the United States and feeling of incorporation into American society (García, 2003; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003). Many countries comprise what is known to Latino immigrants as America and sometimes referred to as 'the Americas'. However, colloquially, 'American' is pretty universally know to refer to people who are from the United States, in both languages.

For very recent newcomers as well as other English language learners, essential services for their health, well-being, and involvement in society would need to be provided in their primary language for them to fully understand what is available to them and how to access it. These services would be social services, law services, and educational services. Therefore, this study includes access to bilingual services as one of the dimensions of acculturation.

Discrimination, conceptualized here as unfair treatment in the job market, in housing, in stores and restaurants, and in law enforcement, can have a marginalizing effect on immigrants and is therefore included as a dimension of acculturation (Berry, 2002; García, 2003; Saito, 2009). Unfair treatment in these arenas would refer to not being treated as someone from the dominant culture would be treated. It may entail: being looked down upon; not being attended; being followed by store security personnel; being yelled at; being denied services; not being paid for work completed; being underpaid for work completed; or being treated disrespectfully in any of the areas mentioned here. While it can have a marginalizing effect, it can also enrage immigrants and spur them to seek racial equality, thereby increasing their civic engagement.

Another dimension of acculturation is U.S. citizenship. Immigrants born in Puerto Rico and those who have become naturalized citizens have the ability to vote in all local, state and national elections, thereby increasing their opportunities for civic engagement.

Independent variables/contextual factors.

The contextual factors, under the dimensions of demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and characteristics of the immigrant experience affect civic engagement directly and are moderated by acculturation and trust in government. Demographic characteristics include age, gender, skin color, marital status, and religious affiliation. Country of origin, length of residence in the United States, permanency plans, and reason for immigrating comprise the immigrant characteristics. The socioeconomic status variables used in this study are household income, educational attainment, employment status, and homeownership.

Demographic characteristics.

Age.

While older age tends to show a positive relationship with civic engagement, Latino immigrants are, on the average, younger than the general American population (Putnam, 2000; US Census, 2000). Therefore, age at time of survey is included in this study to determine if it has a similar relationship with civic engagement as has been shown in other studies, and if the effects of age are attenuated by acculturation and trust in government.

Gender.

In the general population, men have been shown to have higher voting rates, thereby positively affecting civic engagement (Putnam, 2000). In the Latino immigrant population, which involves a culture that has traditionally been male dominated, gender is studied to determine if it has the same relationship with civic engagement as in the larger society.

Skin color.

Much of the discussion regarding key differences between turn of the century European immigrants, who were able to acculturate and engage somewhat rapidly in American society, and recent waves of immigrants, has addressed physical differences (Michelson, 2003; Stoll & Wong, 2007; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). Skin color is the most visible physical difference and included herein to describe the tone of the respondents' skin from light to dark.

Marital status.

Marital status refers to whether the respondent is married, cohabitating, separated, divorced, widowed, or never married. In past studies, being married was shown to have a positive association with civic engagement primarily due to the shared responsibility of the time it takes to get involved (Putnam, 2000). Latino immigrants in general have been shown to have very high rates of marriage but low rates of civic engagement. It is included here to understand the relationship for this sample.

Religious affiliation.

Religious affiliation refers to with which religious tradition the respondents most closely identify: Catholic, a number of Protestant traditions, Mormon, Jewish, Jehovah's Witness, other groups, or that they don't identify with any religious denomination.

Socioeconomic factors.

Household income.

Household income can affect one's ability to participate in activities outside of the work place (Bacon, 2008; Telles & Ortiz, 2008). It can influence civic engagement by providing the necessary funds for involvement, the available time without loss of income that civic engagement requires, and the procurement of necessary resources for engagement (Putnam,

2000). Higher levels of income can facilitate access to sectors of society and interactions with people who can inform them on what is available, how to get involved, and what some of the pressing community and national issues might be. It is conceptualized here as the income of those employed in the household.

Employment status.

Employment status refers to the extent to which respondents are involved in the United States labor market. It includes all levels of work, from not currently employed, to working occasionally, to part-time and full-time employment. Regular employment, which is conceptualized as full or part-time employment, is believed to connect people to their community and to provide impetus for civic involvement, as it is highly associated with socioeconomic status and well-being (Sugrue, 1996). Historically, people have become informed of societal issues by way of their employment; thus many political and civic movements in United States history have grown from labor issues (Sugrue, 1996; Warren, 2001). Therefore, regular employment is hypothesized to positively contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants.

Level of educational attainment.

Level of educational attainment is important for creating a connection with one's community and government (Gandara & Contreras, 2008). Higher levels of education have been associated with greater knowledge of the political process and greater electoral participation (Gandara & Contreras, 2008; García, 2003; Segura, Pachon, & Woods, 2001). It is indirectly linked to civic engagement through the provision of more opportunities for involvement as well as knowledge of how the process works and how to get involved (García, 2003).

Homeownership.

Homeownership, while often precluded by citizenship, has been shown to be positively associated with civic engagement (Barreto, Marks, & Woods, 2007; Putnam, 2000). The financial benefits of homeownership have been molded by policy at the local, state, and federal levels. Therefore, homeownership and consequently protection of one's financial interests have propelled many Americans to become more active in policy that non-homeowners (Barreto, Marks, & Woods, 2007). It is conceptualized here as whether the respondent owned a home at the time of their interview.

Characteristics of the immigrant experience.

Country of origin.

Country of origin is included as an immigrant characteristic to examine the influence of the respondents' country of origin on their civic involvement in the United States. Immigrants coming from democratic governments could have a greater propensity to get involved in the democratic process in the United States, whereas those coming from other governments such as dictatorships would have no historical model for such involvement (Levitt, 2008). While Latino immigrants share some similar customs and the same language, not all are from the same country. Thus there could be differences in their civic engagement by country and culture of origin that are accounted for with this variable.

Length of residence in the United States.

Theoretically, the longer people remain in a new place, the more accustomed they will become of the intricacies of its society, culture, and government. Therefore, the length of residence in the United States is controlled for in this study to account for the time it might take for each individual to become comfortable enough in their new country to become engaged.

Reason for immigrating.

The reasons for migrating to the United States are hypothesized to affect the respondents' willingness to get involved in their new country. Some of the reasons reflect willing migration and a possible positive outlook on the opportunities in the new country (ie. immigrating for economic reasons). While some other reasons reflect passive migration (ie. being brought as a child) or traumatic circumstances that might steer respondents away from civic engagement (ie. escaping political turmoil).

Permanency plans in the United States.

Not all immigrants to the United States plan on staying here for the rest of their lives. If they plan on returning to their home country they might become less invested in the society and politics here. It is included herein to understand the role that their permanency plan plays in their civic engagement.

Chapter 4: Research Methods

In order to address the research questions put forth for this study, I used a mixed methods approach that examined data from a national survey of Latino immigrant as well as more intimate focus group interviews of local Latino immigrants. Based on my particular interest in examining factors that contribute to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States and potential policy implications and areas for intervention, I sampled only foreign born Latinos. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the data and methods for both the quantitative component (secondary analysis of survey data) and the qualitative component (focus groups) of the study.

Data and Methods

Quantitative model.

Quantitative data.

The data for this study were obtained from the Latino National Survey, 2006 (LNS), a survey instrument containing 165 distinct items ranging from political views to demographic indicators. The bilingual survey was administered from November 17, 2005 to August 4, 2006 to 8,634 residents of the United States in the form of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) by Fraga and colleagues (2008). Upon completion of the LNS, the data were archived at the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). Participants were given the option of completing the survey in English or Spanish. The mean length of the interview was 40.6 minutes (Fraga et al., 2008). All interviewers were bilingual and able to accommodate either language as well as changes in language choice.

Quantitative subject recruitment and sampling design.

The sample was drawn from a household database of approximately eleven million households identified in the United States as either Hispanic or Latino (Fraga et al., 2008). It included 15 states and the District of Columbia, based on the size of their Latino population as well as their rate of Latino population growth, as identified by the U.S. Census. The geographic areas covered by the sample are: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Texas, Washington, and the metro areas of Atlanta, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Fort Worth, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, San Antonio, San Diego, Seattle, (Fraga et al., 2008).

The researchers employed a spatial stratified random sampling design to capture a representative sample of the various ancestries across each of the geographic areas covered in the study. These strata were separated into two groups: controlled strata and naturally occurring strata. The primary strata that were controlled were geography and Hispanic ancestry. The secondary strata that were controlled were recency of immigration and gender. Naturally occurring strata were not controlled but rather were allowed to remain in the proportions that presented themselves. They were: generational status, language usage and acculturation. According to Fraga and colleagues (2008), "the universe of analysis contains approximately 87.5% of the United States Hispanic population" and therefore can effectively be generalized to the larger population . The samples were weighted by state, metropolitan area, and by the nation, and can be used as stand-alone representations of their respective Latino populations (Fraga et al., 2008).

Contextual data.

Demographic data.

Table 4.1 depicts the characteristics of the Latino population surveyed. It is primarily a young adult sample, with 37% under the age of 30, 30% between 30 and 40, and 33% over the age of 40. The sample is 52% female. Also 60% of the respondents are married or cohabitating. The most common skin color reported was medium dark (3 out of a scale from 1 very light to 5 very dark) at 41%, followed by light (42%) and finally dark (17%). Nearly three quarters are Catholic (74%).

Socioeconomic data.

Almost a third of the sample attained less than an eighth grade level of education (31%), 19% completed some high school, 25% graduated from high school or attained a GED, and 25% attained more than a high school level of education. While 61% of the sample held full time employment at the time of the survey and 10% part time or occasional labor positions, annual household incomes were very low overall: 19% earned below $15,000; 21% between $15,000 and $24,999; 37% between $25,000 and $34,999; 9% earned between $35,000 and $44,999, and just 14% earned above $45,000 in the year they were interviewed. Almost 40% of the respondents owned their residences in the United States at the time of the survey.

Immigrant experience data.

Only foreign born respondents were sampled for this study, with 66% coming from Mexico, 7% from Puerto Rico, 9% from the Dominican Republic or Cuba, 11% from Central American countries, slightly less than 7% from South American countries, and less than half of a percent from Spain. Slightly more than half (53%) of the participants consider themselves to be at least somewhat American, as opposed to not at all American. Although over a third of the

sample felt they were good English speakers (38%), 45% spoke little English and 17% spoke no English at all.

Qualitative model.

Qualitative data.

The data for the qualitative research were obtained from two pilot focus groups and two core focus groups of Latino immigrants in the metro Detroit area. Although metro Detroit and the state of Michigan were not part of the LNS, my access to this particular population facilitated data collection for the qualitative component of the study. This purposive sample was derived from the geographic area closest to my current residence and institutional affiliation. The focus groups were used to provide both the context and processes associated with acculturation, trust in government and engagement in the Latino immigrant community, albeit with distinct regional nuances that could differ from the larger sample.

There are many advantages to conducting qualitative focus groups following the quantitative analysis. The qualitative focus groups provided information about the immigrant experience while addressing the processes of acculturation, trust in government and civic engagement. I asked participants to identify facilitators to the two moderating variables (acculturation, trust in government) and the one outcome variable (civic engagement) used in the quantitative study. Thus, the focus groups comprise an in-depth study that complement the quantitative design. I was able to garner maximum participation by providing remuneration of $20 per participant in the form of a Target gift card; a culturally sensitive, empathetic group environment; work and childcare friendly scheduling and locations; and Spanish language sessions.

Table 4.1

Demographic characteristics of nationally weighted survey sample

Characteristic	n	% of total
Demographic Characteristics		
Age at Time of Survey		
Under 30	2298	36.8
Between 30 and 39	1431	22.9
Between 40 and 49	1321	21.2
Over 50	1189	19.1
Female Gender (omitted=male)	3251	52.1
Married or Cohabitating (omitted=not married)	3710	59.5
Skin Color (omitted=white skin color)	3201	51.3
Brown skin color	3201	51.3
Religious Affiliation		
Catholic	4609	73.9
Protestant	1003	16.1
Other religions	276	4.4
No religious affiliation	351	5.6
Socioeconomic Factors		
Level of Formal Education		
Eighth Grade or less	1931	30.9
Some High School	1205	19.3
High School Grad or GED	1538	24.7
More than High School	1565	25.1
Homeowner (omitted=renter)	2484	39.8
Employment Status	4417	70.8
Full time employment	3809	61.0
Part time employment or occasional labor	609	9.8
Not in labor force at time of survey	1822	29.2

(Table 4.1 continues)

(Table 4.1 continued)

Characteristic	n	% of total
Household Income		
Below $15K	1183	19.0
Between $15,000 and $24,999	2727	43.7
Between $25,000 and $34,999	904	14.5
Between $35,000 and $44,999	549	8.8
$45,000 and above	876	14.0
Characteristics of the Immigrant Experience		
Country of Origin		
Mexico	4116	66.0
Puerto Rico	441	7.1
Other Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Cuba)	546	8.7
Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama)	713	11.4
South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)	413	6.6
Spain	11	0.2
Length of Residence in US (in years)		
Less than 5	804	12.9
Between 5 and 10	1734	27.8
More than 10	3701	59.3
Main Reason for Immigrating to US		
For Education	424	6.8
For Family Reunification or Marriage	662	10.6
To Escape Political Turmoil or for Freedom	349	5.6
Parents Brought as Child	859	13.8
Economic Improvement/Better Life/Work	3727	59.7
Other	218	3.5
Plan to Stay Permanently in US (omitted=plan to return home)	3810	61.1

N = 6,239

Qualitative subject recruitment and sampling design.

I advertised my study in the local Spanish language newspaper, *El Central*, and on billboards throughout the Spanish-speaking community. The flyers as well as all other materials for the focus group interviews are presented in Appendices A through E. The study flyers had the overarching question, "Have you been able to get involved in your community?", as well as information regarding the purpose of the study, my contact information, confidentiality information, and mention of a $20.00 gift card payment in appreciation for study participation. When interested parties called in response to the flyer, I shared my research questions and described my short- and long-term goals of studying acculturation and civic engagement in the Latino immigrant community. After seeing the advertisement in the paper, the director of a local Head Start preschool program offered her assistance in recruiting parents to participate in my study. The two pilot groups were consequently held at the preschool. Staff members at a second organization - Southwest Solutions Counseling Center - also read my advertisement and contacted me with potential participants from their English language literacy program. One focus group was held at their facility while children of study participants were cared for in their childcare room. A final group was recruited by a community leader with many contacts in the area and the group was held at Ste. Anne's Church, one of the oldest Latino parishes in the city.

The qualitative study is a purposive sample of volunteer individual Latino immigrants residing in Southwest Detroit, which the US Census (2000) has identified as predominantly Latino. The population in the area is approximately 64% of Mexican descent which mirrors the larger United States Latino population (US Census, 2000). The sample is composed of only self-identified Latino immigrants of Mexican descent. I met with 42 participants, with a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 15 participants in each of the 4 focus groups (2 pilot groups and 2 core

groups). In order to maximize reliability, a uniform discussion guide was employed as well as a standardized coding scheme. I facilitated all of the focus groups and performed all of the coding by myself in order to minimize the possibility of miscoding. I took notes on all four groups and the community leader who recruited the final group took notes on three of the four focus groups to provide consistency in this process as well. I coded the transcripts of the focus groups first by the themes delineated by the focus group discussion guide and furthermore by subthemes as they came up in the discussions.

In order to identify differences between recent immigrants and those with lengthier histories in the United States, I sampled Latino immigrants with varying lengths of stay in the United States. While engagement necessitates a certain level of familiarity with American society and institutions, all of the participants that I included have been in the country between four and thirty years. As the extant research has indicated strong associations between civic engagement of Latino immigrants and labor market participation, education, homeownership, and having children enrolled in school, I procured participation from a wide spectrum of individuals including those who are working outside of the home and those who are not, those with less than and greater than a high school level of education, homeowners and renters, and individuals with children in the school system and those without. I found that of the focus group participants, approximately one third were under the age of 30, over a third were between 30 and 40 (38%), and slightly less than a third were over the age of 40 (30%). Most were women (93%). One third of the group participants attained an eighth grade level of education or less. While almost one third had some high school, this is understandable due to the fact that in Mexico "secondary school" goes through the 9th grade and would equate here to some high school. Approximately 24% graduated from high school or completed their GED, and almost

12% attained more than high school. Eighty one percent have children in schools in here in the United States. Currently working outside of the home were 17% of the participants, while their spouses were employed at a much higher rate. Most of the participants have been in the United States for more than 5 years: 12 % less than 5; 43 % between 5 and 10; 45% more than 10 years. There were many homeowners in the groups (43%). And they we relatively highly involved in their community with 52% indicating involvement in at least one of the following group memberships: religious groups (24%), school groups (29%), social groups (5%), sports groups (5%), and community groups (17%). Table 4.2 shows the demographic characteristics of the focus group participants.

Pilot focus groups.

Two pilot studies were conducted in order to ascertain the appropriateness of the proposed focus group guide and the feasibility of the proposed sampling design. The two pilot groups were not aggregated by any criterion. I received HIC approval in March 2010 to proceed with the proposed focus groups. I then conducted the two pilot focus groups on May 19, 2010 at the Head Start facility while the participants' children were attending their preschool program. The attached focus group guide was utilized for all groups (see Appendix D).

Core focus groups.

After piloting the focus group guide I found no further need for revisions as it appropriately reflected the discussion of the participants and I therefore administered the guide to the two core groups as well. The core groups were conducted on June 2 and June 4, 2010. The groups were predominantly female and Mexican, as Mexican women were those who showed willingness and availability for my study.

Table 4.2

Demographic characteristics of focus group participants

Characteristic	n	% of total
Age at Time of Focus Group		
Under 30	14	33.3
Between 30 and 40	16	38.1
Over 40	12	29.6
Female	39	92.9
Born in Mexico	42	100
Level of Formal Education		
Eighth Grade or Less	14	33.3
Some High School	13	31.0
High School Grad or GED	10	23.8
More than High School	5	11.9
Have Children in School in US	34	81.0
Currently Working in US	7	16.7
Length of Residence in US (in years)		
Less than 5	5	11.9
Between 5 and 10	18	42.9
More than 10	19	45.2
Homeowners	18	42.9
Involved in Community	22	52.4
Religious groups	10	23.8
School groups	12	28.6
Social groups	2	4.8
Sports groups	2	4.8
Community groups	7	16.7

N = 42

Focus group discussion guide thematic organization.

The guide that I developed, based on the themes highlighted in the empirical study, focused on: 1) the context within which the participants immigrated and currently reside; 2) their civic engagement; 3) their trust in the U.S. government; and 4) their acculturation in the American society. After an introduction to the study and obtaining informed consent, I began the discussion of each of the larger themes. I encouraged the participants to expand on their experiences and to give anecdotes within the larger themes. When the discussion lulled or veered off-topic I redirected the group with the next question on the guide.

Data Analysis

Quantitative model.

Operational definitions of variables.

Dependent variable: Level of civic engagement.

Civic engagement can be understood as individual and community level involvement in social and political activities that attach people to society and can influence multiple levels of policy (Putnam, 2000). In this study, civic engagement included three dimensions: community involvement; electoral participation; and school involvement.

Community involvement refers to participation or membership in community organizations. It was measured in the LNS by asking respondents if they participated in social, cultural, civic or political groups at the time of the survey. Also included in community involvement are military service and union membership. These are both dummy variables that are coded as yes if anyone in the immediate family of the respondent was ever a member of the US military or a labor union.

Electoral participation refers to the respondents' political participation. It was measured in the LNS by asking if the respondents were registered to vote in the United States at the time of the survey and if they voted in the presidential election in November of 2004. Because non-U.S. citizens are not eligible to register to vote or eligible to vote, there was originally a skip pattern in the survey and non-citizens were not asked these questions. In this study, however, these two variables were recoded and not applicable responses were calculated as 0 for no. Therefore, those who did not register or did not vote were all counted similarly, regardless of citizenship.

School involvement refers to participation in the schools of the respondents' children. This involvement is measured by asking if the respondents have ever attended PTA meetings or acted as school volunteers. There were also skip patterns for these variables that were recoded for this study. Respondents who did not have school aged children were originally coded as not applicable. Their responses were recoded as not being involved in the schools.

An index of civic engagement was created with the five relevant questions detailed above. A yes response to each question was given a score of 1 and all scores were summed to create the index with a maximum score of 5. Higher scores on the index correspond with greater civic engagement. A score of 0 on the index shows no engagement in any of the items in the index. Scores of 1 or 2 on the index indicate low civic engagement; a score of 3 indicates moderate civic engagement; and scores of 4 or 5 indicate high civic engagement. The index attained a Cronbach's alpha reliability score of .582. Concerns regarding reliability of the index as well as non-citizens' ineligibility to vote and non-parents' ineligibility to participate in the schools were considered in creating this index. However, as many attempt were made to incorporate other engagement variables in the index, none were as accurate a measure of active engagement as those 5 chosen. Considering Putnam's (2000) argument that membership in

organizations that do not meet face-to-face as inaccurate measures of civic engagement, the questions that were posed related to only active involvement rather than mere membership. Additionally they are able to test for the affect of citizenship which is critical to this study of representation of Latino immigrants.

Moderating variables: Trust in government and acculturation.

Trust in government.

Trust in government refers to the respondents' attitudes towards the U.S. government. It was measured with a variable from the LNS which asked respondents how much of the time they trust the government to do what is right (Fraga et al., 2008). The response set for the scale was a Likert scale in the LNS from 1 to 4 and recoded for this study to a scale from 0 to 3, so that no trust would yield a response of 0. The new responses are: (0) never trusting the government, (1) sometimes trusting the government, (2) trusting the government most of the time, and (3) almost always trusting the government.

Acculturation.

Historically, immigration studies have written about assimilation rather than the more culturally inclusive model of acculturation (Berry, 2002; Michelson, 2003). Traditional assimilation measures have focused primarily on English language proficiency (Michelson, 2003). This study includes seven separate variables to assess the level of acculturation of the study participants: English language proficiency, the integration of friends, the integration of coworkers, self-identification as American, citizenship, access to bilingual services, and experience with discrimination or unfair treatment.

English language proficiency can show if respondents are comfortable and able to communicate with English-speaking Americans. It was measured by asking the respondents

about the quality of their spoken English. The response set included understanding and speaking English very well, pretty well, just a little, or not at all. It was recoded as a dichotomous variable for use in the regression model. Responses indicating understanding and speaking English very well and pretty well were changed to a 1 for yes on the new proficiency variable. Just a little and not at all were coded 0 for not proficient.

Integration, as the pinnacle of acculturation of immigrants in the United States, according to Berry's theory, would mean that newcomers have become part of mainstream society, not merely relegated to ethnic enclaves. In this study, integration was assessed by the ethnic make-up of the respondents' friends and coworkers. It was measured with two variables which asked whether the respondents' friendships and coworkers were composed mostly of Latino immigrants, mostly of Whites, mostly of Blacks, mostly of Asians, or combinations of the above. These two variables were recoded several times as I tried to account for segmented assimilation by coding friendships and coworkers with other minorities differently than friendships with whites. There were, however, too few (less than 10%) who were only friends and only coworkers with other ethnic minorities. Thus, I recoded the variables as dummy variables for integrated friendships of any ethnicity and integrated coworkers of any ethnicity. Friendships and work environments composed only of Latino immigrants would constitute no integration and received a value of 0 in the recoded variables.

Self-identification as American also was intended to measure one's attachment to the United States and feeling of incorporation into American society (García, 2003; Golash-Boza, 2006; Michelson, 2003). This indicator was measured by asking how strongly respondents considered themselves to be American and recorded as (1) not at all, (2) not very strongly, (3) somewhat strongly, and (4) very strongly. It was recoded as a dichotomous variable for use in

the regression model. Somewhat strongly and very strongly were changed to 1 for yes considering oneself American; otherwise 0.

As citizenship bestows upon many the right to vote in the United States, it is naturally a strong indicator of civic engagement and an important consideration in one's acculturation in American society. Citizenship is a new variable that was created by combining two of the original LNS variables, birth place and naturalization. It was measured by selecting those who were born in Puerto Rico (because they are automatically American citizens) from the birth place variable and those who have become naturalized citizens from the naturalization variable. It thus became a dichotomous variable showing those who are American citizens with the omitted category being those who are not American citizens.

Access to bilingual services was measured with an new variable created from a series of question asking respondents if they had access to the following services in Spanish: social and health care services, public school services, and law enforcement and legal services in Spanish. Values from the responses were summed to create a tally from 0 to 3. A score of 0 would indicate that the respondent did not have access to any of the three services in Spanish. A score of a 1 or 2 would show that the respondent had access to 1 or 2 of the services in Spanish. And, a score of 3 would indicate that the respondent had access to all of the services in Spanish.

Because ethnic/racial discrimination has been shown to be "a barrier in the path of occupational mobility and social acceptance" (Portés & Rumbaut, 2006, p. 248), it is critical in shaping the extent to which one can become involved in larger society. Discrimination can have a marginalizing effect on immigrants and can account for their lack of integration (Berry, 2002; García, 2003; Saito, 2009). However, discrimination itself is highly subjective and very difficult to measure. Thus, it is measured here using unfair treatment as a proxy. I first created an index

of unfair treatment based on five variables in the LNS that asked the respondents if they had been unfairly treated by the police, in employment, in finding a place to live, in restaurants or stores, or unfairly paid or not paid for a job completed. This index did not prove reliable, and was thus changed to a dichotomous variable representing the experience of unfair treatment in any of the five areas, coded as 1; otherwise 0.

Contextual factors: demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, characteristics of the immigrant experience.

A number of contextual factors can affect civic engagement directly or moderated by trust in government and acculturation. In this study these factors were: demographic characteristics (age, gender, skin color, and marital status); socioeconomic factors (employment status, educational attainment, household income, and homeownership); and characteristics of the immigrant experience (birth place, reason for immigrating, and plans to stay permanently in the United States).

Demographic characteristics.

Age was measured by asking the respondents their age at time of interview. There were 298 missing values in this variable and these were imputed using mean substitution.

Gender was self-reported. In this study, a dummy variable was created with 1 coded as female; otherwise 0.

Skin color, considered to be the most distinctive difference between contemporary immigrants and earlier waves of European immigrants, was also referred to as complexion shades in the LNS. It was measured on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represented very light and 5 represented very dark. There were very few responses on the first and last categories. The

variable was thus recoded as a dummy variable for brown skinned from the original values of 3, 4, and 5 and white skinned with original values of 1 and 2.

Marital status was measured by asking the respondents if they were not married but living together; married but not living together; married; single; divorced; or widowed at the time of the interview. It was changed to create a dummy variable for married or cohabitating which was coded as 1; otherwise 0.

Religious affiliation could predispose some individuals to a political agenda that others might not have. Therefore, it is controlled herein. The original variable from the survey accommodated various religious affiliations ranging from Catholic to Protestant to no religious affiliation at all. However, there were less than 10% in most other categories aside from Catholic. The variable was thus recoded as a dummy with 1 for Catholic religious affiliation and 0 for all other categories that were not Catholic.

Socioeconomic factors.

Employment status served as a proxy for labor market involvement, which in turn can be linked to civic involvement due to its potential to connect people to others in American society. It was measured by asking the respondents to describe their employment status at the time of the interview as one of the following choices: employed full-time; working more than one job; employed part-time; engaged in occasional labor or day labor; currently unemployed; a full-time student; retired or permanently disabled; or not working outside the home (Fraga et al., 2008). This variable was changed to dummy variables representing full time employment, including working more than one job; part time employment, including occasional labor; and not part of labor force, including all those who were not employed outside of the home. These variables were intended to capture respondents' involvement in the labor market and interaction with

coworkers and employers. Of interest to this study is whether or not the respondents have the opportunity to interact with people outside of the home and participate in the American economy.

Level of educational attainment is an important predictor of a connection with one's community and government. Educational attainment was measured using the respondent's highest level of formal education completed. The original response set included no formal education, eighth grade or below, some high school, GED, high school graduate, some college, 4 year college degree, and graduate or professional degree. The response set was recoded to render a more meaningful set of responses that were used as 4 dummy variables: less than eighth grade (set as the reference category), some high school, high school diploma or GED, and greater than a high school diploma (collapsed category due to low responses in the several original categories beyond high school).

Household income can affect one's ability to participate in activities outside of the work place which, in turn, could influence civic engagement. Income was reported in the LNS using six categories. However, due to low responses in the higher income categories these were recoded to create five dummy variables: very low income (below $15,000, used as the reference category); low income ($15,000 to $24,999); low-moderate income ($25,000 to $34,999); moderate income ($35,000 to $44,999) and higher income (above $45,000). There were 1,396 refusals in the income variable. These were imputed using mean substitution.

Homeownership has been associated with greater community involvement and it was included as a predictor of civic engagement here. It is measured by asking if the respondents owned or rented their residences in the United States. It was recoded as a dummy variable using 1 for homeowners and 0 otherwise.

Characteristics of the immigrant experience.

Country of origin was included as an independent variable to control for the influence that one's place of birth and its politics can have on civic engagement in the United States. However, there were many countries with very few respondents. The variable was thus recoded by region. This also rendered several categories with very few responses due to the fact that over 60% of the sample was from Mexico. The variable was then changed to a dummy to identify Mexican ancestry. Therefore, the model is able to show how Mexican ancestry contributes to the civic engagement of Latino immigrants. This consideration is commensurate with the literature that shows that the Mexican identity is particularly strong and continually replenished, thereby creating a Mexican-American identity rather than an American identity. This could, in turn, influence the engagement of immigrants born in Mexico in a manner that would differ from all other Latino nationalities.

The reason for immigrating can affect one's willingness to integrate into the new society. It was measured in the LNS by asking respondents to identify the main reason they came to the United States. Respondents were given the following response set: education; family reunification; to escape political turmoil; brought to the United States as child by parents; to improve economic situation; and other. When these categories were broadened to accommodate similar reasons provided in the nominal 'other' variable they became: coming for education; family reunification or marriage; to escape political turmoil or to obtain freedom; brought as child by parents; to improve economic situation or for a better life/opportunities; and other. The string variable responses that accounted for the 'other' reasons for immigrating were then quantified and added to the new variable for reason for immigrating. However, several categories rendered less than 10%, while the economic improvement category held more than

half of the sample. The variable was then recoded as a dummy variable for the regression, with 1 representing coming to the United States for economic and life improvement, and 0 otherwise. Thus, the model would be able to explain if coming to the United States for a better life/work/economic improvement made a difference in their civic engagement compared to if they came for other reasons.

Longer time periods in the United States can provide respondents with higher levels of familiarity and comfort with American culture and society. Length of residence in the United States is measured here by asking the respondents how long they have been in the United States.

Whether or not immigrants plan to stay in the United States permanently or return home can affect their interest in becoming part of American society. Therefore, their plans to stay in the United States were included in the empirical model. Their permanency plans were measured by asking them if they planned to return country of origin to live permanently. The variable was reverse coded with 1 coded as planning on staying permanently in the United States and 0 otherwise, thereby making permanent plans in the United States the positive direction of the variable.

Quantitative data analysis.

I began data analysis by calculating descriptive statistics in PASW to identify the emerging patterns in acculturation, trust in government and civic engagement as well as to gain an initial understanding of the composition of the study population. Moreover, I used descriptive statistics to identify missing data, outliers that would unduly influence the results, and test for skewness, kurtosis, and multicollinearity. Following further data cleaning, I conducted reliability tests on the following civic engagement index created for the study.

The remainder of the data analyses were undertaken to test the research hypotheses. These analyses were addressed by performing the following series of tests in PASW. T-tests were employed to test the level of civic engagement as it varied by the dichotomous variables gender, marital status, skin color, homeownership, permanency plans, integrated friends, integrated coworkers, considering oneself American, unfair treatment, and citizenship. One-way repeated measures analyses of variance were used to test the level of civic engagement as it varied by age, employment status, educational attainment, household income, birthplace, reason for immigrating, number of years in the United States, English proficiency, access to Spanish language services, and trust in government.

Hierarchical linear regression models were estimated to test the relationships between the demographic characteristics (age; gender; skin color; marital status), socioeconomic indicators (employment status; educational attainment; household income; homeownership), and characteristics of the immigrant experience (birthplace; number or years in the United States; reason for immigrating; and plans to stay permanently in the United States), as moderated by trust in government and acculturation, and the outcome variable civic engagement. With these tests, I was able to estimate the variance in civic engagement of the LNS sample of Latino immigrants that was explained by the empirical model. I was also able to compare the differences in the levels of civic engagement that were explained by the contextual factors alone as well as after moderating the influence of these contextual factors with trust in government and acculturation.

Qualitative model.

Sequential qualitative analysis.

I conducted qualitative thematic analyses to understand the factors that the focus group participants reported as influencing their levels of acculturation, trust in government and civic engagement (Bazeley, 2007; Gibbs, 2002). After transcribing the focus groups into Microsoft Word [TM], I coded the data by themes and subthemes. My first level of coding followed the themes/topic areas set forth by the focus group discussion guide and thus the questions I presented to the groups. Within each topic area several subthemes emerged thereby providing greater focus to the thematic coding and greater understanding of the particular situation in which the individual participants found themselves. Because the qualitative analyses proceeded the quantitative analyses I was able to use the findings from the LNS survey to guide me through the focus group data as well. By searching for themes/topics/variables from the quantitative analyses in the qualitative data I was able to add to the rigor of the research by validating some of my own thoughts about the focus groups and joining the two pieces of the project together (Bazeley, 2007; Welsh, 2002). The coding also enabled me to link the respondents' direct quotes with my own analytical notes, observations, and memos within the themes that emerged from the data, thereby contributing to the rich context of the qualitative study (Walsh, 2003). The qualitative data were integrated with the quantitative data during this phase of the qualitative data analysis as well as at the point of interpretation of the results of the analyses. Moreover, the focus group discussions were able to illuminate the local context of anti-immigrant sentiment in which Latino immigrants reside and consider their engagement.

Chapter 5: Findings

Based on Berry's (2002) acculturation framework and Putnam's (2000) civic engagement theory, I examined the factors associated with community involvement and their contribution to increasing the civic engagement of Latino immigrants in the United States. Further, I assessed the relationship of trust in government and acculturation as moderators of such engagement. In support of the hypotheses tested here, both the contextual variables and the moderating variables in the empirical model were found to be significant predictors of civic engagement. In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of the findings from each of the three quantitative models employed in the study as well as a discussion of the results of the qualitative data analyses incorporated into the study.

Results

Quantitative model.

Civic engagement of Latino immigrants.

To measure the level of civic engagement of Latino immigrants, I created an index composed of indicators for electoral participation, school involvement, and community involvement. Subsequently, these index scores were categorized into low, moderate and high levels of engagement for ease of interpretation. Data analyses revealed overall low levels of civic engagement among Latino immigrants. Approximately 43% of the sample reported no civic engagement at all, 22% reported very low engagement, 29% were moderately engaged, and only 6% were highly engaged. Nonetheless, Latino immigrants showed considerably higher levels of participation in schools and politics. Specifically, respondents were most actively involved by registering to vote (77%), if they were eligible to vote, followed by attending PTA meetings at their children's' schools (76%), if they had school-aged children. Additionally, 61% of eligible

voters voted in the 2004 presidential election and 42% parents with school aged children volunteered at their children's schools. Approximately one in six respondents had an immediate family member join the US military; one out of eight participated in community groups. However, less than 10% were members of a labor union in the United States. These findings are summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Civic Engagement of Nationally Weighted Survey Sample of Latino Immigrants (N = 6,239)

Characteristic	n	% of total
Civic Engagement Index (0-5)		
No Civic Engagement (0)	2,705	43.3
Low Civic Engagement (1 and 2)	1,387	22.2
Moderate Civic Engagement (3)	1,794	28.8
High Civic Engagement (4 and 5)	354	5.7
Civic Engagement Variables		
Participate in Community Groups	791	12.7
Union Membership	431	6.9
Family Member in the US Military	978	15.7
Attend PTA Meeting (Full sample)	1,362	21.9
Attend PTA with Children in School [a]	1,362	75.7
Volunteer at School (Full sample)	764	12.2
Volunteer School with Children in School [a]	764	42.5
Registered to Vote	1,541	24.7
Registered to Vote out of Eligible Voters [b]	1,541	77.3
Voted in 2004 Presidential Election	1,221	19.6
Voted in 2004 out of Eligible Voters [b]	1,221	61.2

Notes [a] The denominator is the 1,799 respondents with children in school.
[b] The denominator is the 1,994 respondents who are naturalized citizens or U.S. citizens born in Puerto Rico.

Moderating variables.

Trust in the U.S. government.

Consistent with the extant literature, this study revealed overall low levels of trust in the U.S. government by Latino immigrants. Nearly 70% had little or no trust in the U.S. government, reflected by their responses indicating that they never trusted the government or trusted the government only some of the time. In contrast, 16% said that they trusted the government most of the time, and 15% indicated that they almost always trusted the government. Table 5.2 provides descriptive data for the moderating variable trust in the U.S. government.

Acculturation.

In assessing the acculturation of Latino immigrants, I looked at the seven variables described here: English language proficiency, integrated friends, integrated coworkers, considering oneself American, access to services in Spanish, experience with unfair treatment, and citizenship. Just over one third of the sample was proficient in the English language. Over half of the sample had integrated friends and integrated coworkers. Insomuch as half of the respondents considered themselves to be American, only a third were U.S. citizens. Interestingly, more than three quarters of the sample experienced moderate to high access to bilingual services, indicated by stating that they had Spanish language services in two or three of the identified areas: social services, legal services, and school services. Slightly more than a third of the sample experienced unfair treatment in this country. This sample of Latino immigrants thus relayed limited acculturation as seen by English language proficiency and citizenship, but relatively high acculturation in terms of social and work place integration, access to services in Spanish, as well as low levels of unfair treatment. Table 5.2 provides descriptive data for the moderating variables acculturation.

Table 5.2

Levels of Trust and Acculturation of Nationally Weighted Survey Sample of Latino Immigrants

Characteristic	n	% of total
Trust the U.S. Government		
Never Trust the Government	1,215	19.5
Trust the Government Some of the Time	3,080	49.3
Trust the Government Most of the Time	1,018	16.3
Almost Always Trust the Government	927	14.9
Acculturation Variables		
English Language Proficiency		
Speaks No English	1,075	17.2
Speaks a Little English	2,809	45.0
Speaks English Well	709	11.4
Speaks English Very Well	1,646	26.4
Integrated Friends	3,479	55.8
Integrated Coworkers	3,410	54.6
Consider Self American	3,323	53.3
Access to Services in Spanish		
No Access	396	6.3
Low Access	839	13.4
Moderate Access	1334	21.4
High Access	3487	55.9
Not Applicable/No Need for Spanish Services	184	2.9
Experienced Unfair Treatment in US	2,121	34.0
Citizen (naturalized or born in Puerto Rico)	1,994	32.0

N = 6,239

Differences in levels of civic engagement by immigrant characteristics.

Bivariate analyses were conducted to examine variation in the mean scores of civic engagement by an array of immigrant characteristics. Difference in means tests were used to examine variation in civic engagement by demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, characteristics of the immigrant experience, trust in the U.S. government, and acculturation. These tests revealed significant differences in civic engagement at the p = .000 level for all of the variables in the empirical model. See Table 5.3 for a summary of these analyses.

Table 5.3

Differences in Mean Levels of Civic Engagement by Contextual Factors

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Demographic Characteristics		
Age (F=334.59, p=.000)		
Under 30	.60	.93
30 - 39	1.15	1.20
40 - 49	1.43	1.31
Over 50	1.84	1.37
Gender (t=6.47, p=.000)		
Female	1.23	1.26
Male	1.03	1.25
Marital Status (t=9.71, p=.000)		
Married or cohabitating	1.26	1.29
Not married at time of survey	.95	1.19
Skin color (t=-8.35, p=.000)		
White skin	1.27	1.32
Brown skin	1.01	1.18
Religion (F=11.47, p=.000)		
Catholic	1.10	1.25

(Table 5.3 continues)

(Table 5.3 continued)

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Protestant	1.22	1.27
Other religions	1.52	1.29
No religious affiliation	1.08	1.25
Socioeconomic Factors		
Employment Status (F=9.28, p=.000)		
Full time	1.12	1.28
Part-time or occasional labor	.99	1.17
Not in labor force	1.23	1.24
Level of Education (F=219.70, p=.000)		
Less than high school	.79	1.00
Some high school	.85	1.04
High school diploma or GED	1.16	1.24
More than high school	1.76	1.46
Household Income (F=241.81, p=.000)		
Below $15,000	.79	1.03
$15,000 - $24,999	.85	1.07
$25,000 - $34,999	1.25	1.22
$35,000 - $44,999	1.58	1.34
Above $45,000	2.11	1.45
Homeownership (t=28.85, p=.000)		
Homeowner	1.67	1.35
Renter or other	.78	1.06
Characteristics of the Immigrant Experience		
Country/Region of Origin (F=171.42, p=.000)		
Mexico	.91	1.12
Puerto Rico	2.47	1.28

(Table 5.3 continues)

(Table 5.3 continued)

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Other Caribbean (Dominican Republic, Cuba)	1.67	1.34
Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama)	1.04	1.22
South America (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela)	1.45	1.37
Spain	1.56	.93
Length of Residence in US (F=846.62, p=.000)		
5 or fewer years in US	.30	.61
Between 6 and 10 years in US	.54	.80
Between 11 and 20 years in US	1.14	1.13
More than 20 years in US	2.05	1.34
Primary Reason for Immigrating (F=132.63, p=.000)		
For Education	1.21	1.26
For Family Reunification or Marriage	1.18	1.26
To Escape Political Turmoil /for Freedom	1.77	1.29
Parents Brought as Child	1.92	1.45
Economic Improvement	.87	1.09
Other	1.37	1.33
Permanency Plans (t=18.54, p=.000)		
Plan to Stay in US Permanently	1.37	1.32
Plan to Return to Home Country	.78	1.07

N = 6,239
Sample mean = 1.14
SD = 1.26

Demographic characteristics.

Age at the time of survey was a strong predictor of civic engagement. As respondents aged, their mean score increased. Respondents under the age of 30 had very low mean civic engagement scores (.60). Immigrants between the ages of 30 and 39 had a mean civic engagement score of 1.15. Respondents between the ages of 40 and 49 averaged 1.43. Immigrants over 50 had the highest mean score: 1.84. Women had average civic engagement scores (1.25) slightly higher than those for men (1.23). Marital status followed a similar pattern, with respondents who were married or cohabitating averaging 1.26 points relative to .95 for those who were not married or cohabitating. White skinned immigrants had higher mean civic engagement scores (1.27) than brown skinned immigrants (1.01). Civic engagement differed significantly by religious affiliation. Those with no religious affiliation showed the lowest mean score (1.08), followed by Catholics (1.10), and Protestants (1.22). Latino immigrants who practiced other religious traditions were the most engaged.

Socioeconomic factors.

When examining civic engagement by socioeconomic factors, I found that immigrants employed in part-time or occasional labor scored well below the overall sample mean (.99), while those engaged in full-time employment were higher (1.12). Those not in the labor force had the highest average civic engagement score (1.23). As expected, the higher the educational attainment the higher the civic engagement score. Those with less than a high school level of formal education averaged .79, those with some high school averaged .85, those with a high school diploma or GED averaged 1.16, and those will more than a high school level of education averaged 1.76. Household income behaved similarly, as expected, with higher household incomes associated with higher civic engagement scores. Respondents with household income

below $15,000 had very low civic engagement (.79). Respondents earning between $15,000 and $24,999 were slightly higher (.85). Those in the next income bracket, $25,000 to $34,999, averaged 1.25, while those in the $35,000 to $44,999 group averaged 1.58. The mean score for immigrants in the highest income bracket, incomes above $45,000, was 2.11. Finally, homeowners had mean civic engagement scores that were twice as high (1.67) as renters (.78).

Characteristics of the immigrant experience.

Factors associated with the immigrant experience contribute to our understanding of the overall low levels of civic engagement of Latino immigrants. Country/region of origin was a significant predictor of differences in civic engagement. Immigrants born in Puerto Rico had the highest mean civic engagement scores (2.47). In contrast, Mexican immigrants had the lowest mean scores (.91). Immigrants from other Caribbean countries averaged 1.67, those from Spain 1.56, those from South America 1.45, and immigrants from Central American 1.04.

Length of residence in the United States revealed a positive relationship: the longer respondents have been in this country, the higher their levels of civic engagement. Latino immigrants who have been here for more than twenty years had the highest mean scores (2.05). In contrast, immigrants residing in the United States for less than five years showed negligible civic engagement and averaged .30. Those who have been here between six and ten years averaged .54, and those who have been here between eleven and twenty averaged 1.14.

The primary reason for Latino immigrants to come to the United States provided some telling results as well. Latino immigrants who came here for economic reasons or for a better life, albeit the largest group, had significantly lower civic engagement scores relative to all of the other groups (.87). Immigrants who were brought here as a child had the highest average scores (1.92). Those who left their home country to escape political turmoil or who were looking for

freedom averaged 1.77, the group with other reasons not specified averaged 1.37, those who came here for education averaged 1.21, and those who came to the United States for family reunification or for marriage averaged 1.18.

Permanency plans affected civic engagement as well. Latino immigrants who planned on staying in the United States permanently had a mean civic engagement score of 1.37; in contrast, those who planned on returning to their home country had scores that averaged .78.

Differences in levels of civic engagement by trust in government and acculturation.

Difference in means tests were used to examine variation in civic engagement by trust in the U.S. government and acculturation. These tests revealed significant differences in civic engagement at the p = .000 level for all of the variables in the empirical model. See Table 5.4 for a summary of these analyses.

Table 5.4

Differences in Mean Levels of Civic Engagement by Trust and Acculturation

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Trust in the U.S. Government (F=21.54, p=.000)		
Never trust the government	.95	1.18
Trust the government some of the time	1.19	1.29
Trust the government most of the time	1.32	1.35
Almost always trust the government	1.00	1.12
Acculturation		
English Language Proficiency (F=453.59, p=.000)		
Speaks No English	.52	.84
Speaks Little English	.82	1.00
Speaks English Well	1.55	1.31
Speaks English Very Well	1.90	1.42

(Table 5.4 continues)

(Table 5.4 continued)

Respondent Characteristic	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Integrated Friends (t=17.07, p=.000)		
Integrated Friends	1.37	1.33
Not Integrated Friends	.84	1.09
Integrated Coworkers (t=11.61, p=.000)		
Integrated Coworkers	1.30	1.33
Not Integrated Coworkers	.94	1.13
Considering Oneself American (t=22.90, p=.000)		
Consider self American	1.46	1.36
Do not consider self American	.76	1.01
Access to Services in Spanish (F=6.27, p=.000)		
No access	1.05	1.22
Low access	1.01	1.25
Moderate access	1.10	1.25
High access	1.19	1.27
Unfair Treatment (t=6.47, p=.000)		
No experience of unfair treatment	1.06	1.21
Experienced unfair treatment	1.28	1.34
Citizenship (t=72.70, p=.000)		
US Citizen	2.38	1.18
Non Citizen	.55	.78

N = 6,239
Sample mean = 1.14
SD = 1.26

Trust in the U.S. government.

Trust in the U.S. government was a significant predictor of civic engagement as well. However, trust in the U.S. government does not follow a predictable pattern. Latino immigrants on the two tails of the distribution -- no trust and always trust the government -- had the lowest

mean civic engagement scores: .95 and 1.00 respectively. Those who trusted the government some of the time had civic engagement scores that averaged 1.19 while those who reported trusting the government most of the time averaged 1.32.

Acculturation.

English language proficiency had a positive relationship with civic engagement. The more proficient Latino immigrants were in English, the higher their civic engagement scores. Those with no English skills averaged .52, a little English .82, pretty good English 1.55, and very good English 1.90. Those with integrated friends had mean scores of 1.37 while those without integrated friends only averaged .84. The effect of integrated work places was similar: working in integrated settings averaged 1.30 and those in more segregated settings averaged .94. Latino immigrants who considered themselves to be American were more likely to be engaged (mean=1.46), compared to those who did not consider themselves to be American (mean=.76). Access to services in Spanish was shown to be a statistically significant predictor of civic engagement as well. Immigrants who had no access to services in Spanish averaged 1.05; those with minimal access averaged 1.01; those with moderate access averaged 1.10; and those with high access averaged 1.19. Those who experienced unfair treatment in the United States became more civically engaged with average scores of 1.28 while those who had no such experience averaged 1.06. As was anticipated, the largest difference in means was attributed to citizenship. Non citizens had very low civic engagement (mean=.55) relative to those who are naturalized U.S. citizens or U.S. citizens born in Puerto Rico (mean= 2.38).

Models predicting the civic engagement of Latino immigrants.

Before performing hierarchical linear regression analyses on the data set, regression diagnostics were performed. They revealed outliers that could influence the empirical results.

Therefore, I selected only those cases with studentized residuals greater than -3 and less than +3. However, since outliers still remained, I further selected only those cases with studentized residuals greater than -2 and less than +2 to render a set with no remaining outliers and a final N of 6,239. The distribution of scores on the civic engagement scale was slightly positively skewed, and the scale of access to services was slightly negatively skewed, yet transformations did not improve the normality of these scales and thus were not included. Further diagnostic tests suggested that there were no problems with multicollinearity as all tolerances exceeded .10 and all VIF scores were less than 10. The final model retained 34 degrees of freedom, with a final N of 6,239, an adjusted R square of .583.

Utilizing hierarchical linear regression, three separate models were employed: the base model (Model 1) was composed of the contextual factors reflecting demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and characteristics of the immigrant experience. Model 2 incorporated trust in the U.S. government as a moderator for these contextual factors. Model 3 utilized the acculturation variables as moderators for the aforementioned contextual factors and trust in government. The acculturation moderators employed in Model 3 were: English language proficiency, integrated friends, integrated coworkers, considering oneself American, access to services in Spanish, citizenship, and experience with unfair treatment in the United States. See Table 5.5 for the results of the hierarchical linear regression model.

Table 5.5

Predictors of Civic Engagement of Latino Immigrants

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	t	B	SEB	t	B	SEB	t
Demographic Characteristics									
Age at time of survey (omitted=under 30)									
30-39	.197	.035	5.63***	.199	.035	5.69***	.315	.030	10.41***
40-49	.154	.038	4.02***	.161	.038	4.20***	.322	.033	9.68***
50 and over	.172	.045	3.79***	.177	.045	3.91***	.241	.039	6.10***
Gender (omitted=male)	.154	.026	5.87***	.156	.026	5.95***	.185	.023	8.21***
Skin Color (omitted=White)	-.066	.025	-2.67 **	-.066	.025	-2.69**	-.050	.021	-2.39*
Marital Status (omitted=not married)	.111	.027	4.16***	.111	.027	4.16***	.170	.023	7.49***
Religion (omitted=not Catholic)	-.010	.028	-.37	-.013	.028	-.46	.015	.024	.63
Socioeconomic Factors									
Employment Status (omitted=not employed)	-.003	.029	-.09	.000	.029	-.01	.016	.025	.65
Level of Schooling (omitted= < high school)									
Some high school	.077	.036	2.14 *	.074	.036	2.04*	.002	.031	.05
High school diploma or GED	.274	.034	8.11***	.267	.034	7.87***	.118	.029	4.03***
Above high school	.544	.036	14.97***	.531	.036	14.57***	.228	.033	6.97***
Household Income (omitted= < $15,000)									
$15,000 - $24,999	-.026	.034	2.14 *	-.029	.034	-.85	-.052	.029	-1.81

(Table 5.5 continues)

(Table 5.5 continued)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	*t*	B	SEB	*t*	B	SEB	*t*
$25,000 - $34,999	.138	.044	3.14 **	.135	.044	3.07 **	.081	.037	2.17*
$35,000 - $44,999	.229	.052	4.41***	.223	.052	4.28***	.093	.044	2.10*
$45,000 or more	.510	.048	10.58***	.503	.048	10.43***	.272	.042	6.53***
Homeownership (omitted=renter)	.222	.028	7.81***	.221	.028	7.76***	.126	.024	5.17***
Characteristics of the Immigrant Experience									
Country of Origin (omitted=other than Mexico)	-.275	.029	-9.60***	-.274	.029	-9.57***	-.096	.025	-3.90***
Reason for Coming (omitted=non-economic)	-.154	.027	-5.62***	-.155	.027	-5.63***	-.036	.024	-1.51
Length of residence in the US (in years) (omitted=5 or fewer)									
6 – 10 years in US	.151	.039	3.85***	.148	.039	3.78***	.039	.034	1.17
11-20 years in US	.507	.041	12.49***	.507	.041	12.51***	.151	.036	4.20***
More than 20 years in US	1.197	.047	25.63***	1.197	.047	25.57***	.442	.043	10.23***
Plans to stay in US (omitted= return home)	.124	.027	4.69***	.119	.027	4.50***	.044	.023	1.92
Trust the U.S. government (omitted=never)									
Trust the government some of the time				.115	.033	3.52***	.048	.028	1.71
Trust the government most of the time				.141	.041	3.43**	.078	.035	2.20*
Almost always trust the government				.086	.042	2.04*	.083	.036	2.32*

(Table 5.5 continues)

(Table 5.5 continued)

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SEB	*t*	B	SEB	*t*	B	SEB	*t*
Acculturation									
English Proficiency (omitted=not proficient)							.096	.013	7.19***
Integrated Friends (omitted=not integrated)							.068	.023	2.94**
Integrated Coworkers (omitted=not integrated)							.063	.023	2.74**
Consider Oneself American (omitted=not American)							.108	.022	4.83***
US Citizen (omitted=not citizen)							1.241	.028	44.13***
Unfair Treatment (omitted=no unfair treatment)							.118	.022	5.29***
Access to Spanish Language Services (omitted=no access)									
Low access							.004	.044	.09
Moderate access							.096	.041	2.36*
High access							.133	.037	3.62***

N = 6,238
***p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05
Note. Model 1: Adjusted R^2 = .420, F = 206.35***. Model 1 constant: B = .163, SEB = .063, *t* = 2.59*
Model 2: Adjusted R^2 = .421, F = 182.56***. Model 2 constant: B = .081, SEB = .067, *t* = 1.21
Model 3: Adjusted R^2 = .583, F = 257.53***. Model 3 constant: B = -.399, SEB = .067, *t* = -5.99***

Model 1.

Model 1 accounted for 42% of the variance in the civic engagement scores of Latino immigrants. Among the contextual factors tested, the strongest predictor of civic engagement of Latino immigrants was their length of residence in the United States. Relative to immigrants who resided in the United States for five years or less, immigrants with six to ten years of residence averaged civic engagement scores that were .15 points higher. For those residing in the United States from eleven to twenty years, the difference increased to .51. Among those with more than twenty years, the difference increased to 1.20 points.

The second strongest predictor of civic engagement of Latino immigrants was educational attainment. Latino immigrants who attended some high school had civic engagement scores that were .08 points higher than the average for immigrants who had less than a high school level of education. Immigrants who obtained high school diplomas or GEDs had scores that averaged .27 higher. Schooling beyond high school produced an average score that was .54 points higher when compared to those who had less than a high school level of education.

The third strongest predictor of civic engagement of Latino immigrants was household income. Compared to immigrants earning less than $15,000 per year, immigrant households earning between $15,000 and $24,999 had civic engagement scores that were .03 points lower. Households earning between $25,000 and $34,999 had mean scores .14 points higher. Earning between $35,000 and $44,999 increased the average score .23 points relative to those in the lowest income category. Earnings above $45,000 per year raised the score by slightly more than half a point (.51) compared to earning less than $15,000 per year.

The next strongest contextual predictor of civic engagement was country of origin, followed by homeownership, gender, reason for coming to the United States, permanency plans,

marital status, and skin color. Being Mexican decreased civic engagement scores by .28 points when compared to all other Latino nationalities combined. Homeowners averaged .22 points higher than renters. Women averaged .15 points higher than men. Latino immigrants who came to the United States for economic reasons averaged .15 points lower as compared to all of the other reasons for coming to the United States combined. Those who planned to stay in the United States permanently averaged .12 points higher than those who planned to return to their country of origin. Latino immigrants who were married or cohabitating at the time of the survey averaged .11 points higher than those who were not married or cohabitating. Immigrants with brown skin color had civic engagement scores that were .07 points lower than immigrants with white skin color.

Model 2.

Model 2, which introduced trust in the U.S. government as a moderator for the contextual factors in Model 1, was able to explain 42% of the variance in civic engagement as well. In Model 2, some modest changes did occur with the coefficients, but there was no real improvement in the percent of variance explained. The inclusion of trust in the U.S. government in the model slightly increased the strength of the coefficients for age and gender. Moreover, it slightly decreased the strength of the coefficients for permanency plans, educational attainment, and household income. However, the group difference for household income between $15,000 and $24,999 became insignificant in Model 2.

Model 3.

As shown in Table 5.5, the proxies for acculturation moderated the effects of the contextual factors on levels of civic engagement. The adjusted $\underline{R^2}$ increased from .421 in Model

2 to .583 in Model 3, thereby explaining 58% of the variance in the civic engagement scores of Latino immigrants.

The influence of trust in the U.S. government on civic engagement was further diminished once I controlled for variations in the level of acculturation. Compared to Latino immigrants who never trusted the U.S. government, those who trusted the government some of the time did not show a significant difference. However, those who trusted the government most of the time had civic engagement scores that were .08 points higher, and those who trusted the government almost all of the time had civic engagement scores that were .08 points higher as well.

In Model 3, the strongest predictor of civic engagement was the citizenship status of the respondent. Those who became naturalized U.S. citizens or were U.S. citizens born in Puerto Rico had civic engagement scores that were 1.24 points higher than those who were not U.S. citizens.

The next strongest predictor of civic engagement in Model 3 was age. Compared to Latino immigrants under the age of 30, those who were between the ages of 30 and 39 averaged .32 points higher civic engagement scores. Also compared to Latino immigrants under the age of 30, immigrants between 40 and 49 averaged .32 points higher, and those over the age of 50 averaged .24 of a point higher scores. Additionally, acculturation accentuated the differences shown by age and strengthened its prediction of the variance in civic engagement.

Length of residence in the United States was the third strongest predictor of the variation in the levels of civic engagement in Model 3. The longer Latino immigrants reside in the United States, the higher their civic engagement scores. Compared to Latino immigrants who were in the United States for less than six years, those who were here between six and ten had civic

engagement scores that were .04 points higher. Immigrants who were here between 11 and 20 years had scores that were .15 points higher, and those who were here for more than 20 years had scores that were .44 points higher. However, the Model also shows that although the effect of length of residence on civic engagement was still significant, it was attenuated after controlling for acculturation.

Gender also was shown to be a significant predictor of the civic engagement of Latino immigrants. In this model, the civic engagement scores of women were .19 points higher than those for men. Moreover, the effect of gender on civic engagement was accentuated after controlling for acculturation.

Marital status followed a similar pattern to gender. Compared to those who were not married or cohabitating, the civic engagement scores of married or cohabitating respondents were .17 points higher. This difference was accentuated by acculturation as well.

Compared to Latino immigrants who were not proficient in English, those who were proficient had civic engagement scores that were .10 points higher.

Higher levels of education also were associated with higher levels of civic engagement. Compared to immigrants with less than a high school level of education, the civic engagement scores of those who attained more than a high school level of schooling were .23 points higher; those with a high school diploma or GED were .12 points higher; and those who attained some high school were not significantly different from the reference group. However, the Model also shows that the effect of educational attainment on civic engagement was attenuated after controlling for acculturation.

Household income also was a significant predictor of civic engagement in Model 3. After controlling for acculturation, Latino immigrants who earned more than $45,000 had scores

that were .27 points higher scores than those with household incomes below $15,000. Those who earned between $35,000 and $44,999 were .09 points higher. Those who earned between $25,000 and $34,999 were .08 points higher. In contrast, those who earned between $15,000 and $24,999 had civic engagement scores that were .05 points lower. However this difference was not statistically significant. Moreover, the influence of household income on civic engagement significantly decreased once controlled for acculturation.

Model 3 showed that those who experienced unfair treatment had civic engagement scores that were .12 points higher than those who had not experienced unfair treatment.

Homeowners had civic engagement scores that were .13 points higher than renters. However, the effect of homeownership was attenuated after controlling for acculturation.

Latino immigrants who considered themselves to be American had civic engagement scores that were .10 points higher than those who did not consider themselves to be American.

Immigrants from Mexico had civic engagement scores that were .10 points lower than immigrants from all of the other Latin American countries and Spain. However, the effect of country of origin was significantly attenuated after controlling for acculturation.

Furthermore, the more access respondents have to social services in Spanish, the higher their civic engagement scores. Compared to Latino immigrants who do not have access to services in Spanish, those who have moderate access averaged .10 higher scores, and those who have high access averaged .13 higher scores.

Another contributor to civic engagement is integration. Compared to respondents who did not have integrated friends, those who did had civic engagement scores that were .07 points higher. Also, immigrants who had integrated coworkers had civic engagement scores that were .06 points higher than those who did not have integrated coworkers.

Brown skin color was associated with lower civic engagement than white skin color. Compared to white skinned immigrants, brown skinned immigrants had civic engagement scores that were .05 points lower, an effect that was significantly attenuated after controlling for acculturation.

Qualitative Model

Focus group interviews.

The focus group interviews which aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the contexts and processes of civic engagement in the Latino immigrant community are detailed in the following section. Although the groups did not provide sufficient data to describe the processes surrounding civic engagement, they did provide critical information about the situational contexts shaping patterns of engagement in the metropolitan Detroit area. Further, they illuminated the role of trust in government and acculturation on shaping these patterns.

While the metropolitan Detroit area has a history of Latino immigrant settlement dating back to the 1930s, it was a small proportion (under 5%) of the area's population throughout most of the 20th century (US Census, 2000). However, recent years have shown not only an increase in the number of Latino immigrants, but growing diversity in the Latino immigrant community as well (Durand et al., 2006). The Latino population in Wayne County (home to the city of Detroit) saw a 20% increase from the year 2000 to the year 2006. Most Latino immigrants have settled in Southwest Detroit, Wayne County, which was 58.4% Latino in the year 2006, 79% of whom were of Mexican descent (American Fact Finder, 2008). By 2008, the area had become 64.1% Latino (ESRI, 2010) with 75% of Mexican descent, thereby experiencing an increase in other Latino nationalities (Sterling, 2010). While economic growth in the Latino community has not been well documented, my personal observation as well as those of my focus group

participants supports significant growth in the number of Latino small businesses, retail establishments, restaurants, and grocery stores in Southwest Detroit in the past twenty years.

However, as the sentiment across the nation has become increasingly harsh against undocumented immigrants, the metropolitan area has experienced a similar anti-immigrant ambiance. Insomuch as reports of increased raids by immigration authorities within the Latino community have covered the local Spanish language newspaper (El Central, 2010), the conversations that I shared with focus group participants touched on these experiences as well. It is within this context of economic and population growth in the midst of growing anti-immigrant rhetoric and atmosphere that my focus groups were held. The findings from these groups are suggestive of further research focusing on the manner in which Latino immigrants become engaged within their community. See Table 5.6 for frequencies of key themes discussed in the focus groups.

Civic engagement in the local Latino immigrant community.

Engagement through neighborhood pride.

One way that focus group participants have become part of their community has been by building up their neighborhoods. Nearly one half of the group participants owned their homes in the Detroit area. They reported making major improvements to the homes and their neighborhoods. They cleaned up an area that they said was previously riddled with graffiti and abandonment. Now, as five women commented: "it is prettier". "We fixed the house, refinished the front, planted flowers. It used to have graffiti and a broken porch", said a woman who has been here for nearly 10 years. Neighborhood pride was expressed directly by 12 participants and received broad nodding in agreement from fellow group members. They have brought commerce as well to this area that previously had one lonely store and desolate streets. One

homeowner from Jalisco declared: "We made the economy in this neighborhood". Now there are many restaurants, stores, gardens, and maintained houses. However, several participants redirected the topic to maltreatment, in spite of the neighborhood involvement. Three said that they are being treated poorly even when they have beautified the neighborhood. Two participants said their houses were egged; one owned by a married professional couple with college degrees, and the other by a young family who has been there for 6 years. Similarly, one woman recalled having trash thrown at her house, and another being told: "go back to Mexico".

Engagement in schools.

Nearly one-third of the participants reported being involved in school groups and in that manner engaging themselves in their community. One woman ran for office at her children's school and became the PTA president. This level of civic engagement connected her to local issues and would have given the Latino community a voice in district policy. However, she said that they treated her poorly in the district meetings for bringing a translator: "I felt rejected. Truthfully they turned off my microphone. I felt completely ignored. It bothers them that someone doesn't speak English".

Direct barriers to civic engagement.

Citizenship and Michigan drivers licenses.

The focus group interviews conducted for this study shed light on the worries and fears within the Latino immigrant community in Southwest Detroit, and most significantly their barriers to engagement in the Detroit area and in the United States. While slightly more than half of the participants (52%) were involved in community groups of some type, when asked specifically about their civic engagement they focused primarily on the barriers to engagement and their feelings of rejection from American society. Most notably, they detailed their feelings

of fear and mistrust of government officials and hence their avoidance of public forums, government offices, representatives, and in many cases any activities outside of work and school: "I don't go out. I would love to participate but I am afraid of the police and of immigration (ICE) because of the license (driver's licenses taken away from non-legal residents). Now I don't go out," said a participant who came here for her husband's work opportunities and now stays in her house except for taking her kids to school. This issue of denied drivers licenses came up 17 times in the four groups.

Table 5.6

Frequencies of key themes in focus group discussions (42 participants in 4 focus groups)

Key Themes and Subthemes	**Frequencies**
Barriers to Engagement	
Lack of Citizenship - Need for Immigration Reform	24
Lack of Driver's Licenses - Need for Michigan Legislative Reform	17
Experienced Harassment by Immigration and/or Police	11
Fear of Officials/Deportation Worries	16
Importance of Civic Engagement	18
Civic Engagement through Neighborhood Pride	12
School Participation	14
Acculturation	
Isolation and Depression	13
Not North American/Not Part of American Society	25
Concerns about English Language Skills	10
Importance of Level of Education	4
Negative Experiences in the United States	
Mistrust of U.S. government	33
Workplace Discrimination	33
Discrimination in Services and Stores	36
Social/Societal Discrimination	18

The focus group participants corroborated the data from the surveys regarding the lack of U.S. citizenship being the largest barrier in civic engagement in the Latino community, as one eloquent speaker who has been here for 10 years stated: "without papers, neither voice nor vote". Furthermore, the desire for immigration reform and thereby equal rights in the United States was raised 24 times in the groups, while discussing barriers to engagement as well as trust in government.

One woman who attained her GED here has become outspoken about the need to participate in politics to give the Latino community a voice. She said: "Right now we don't have a voice because we don't have a vote. Right now we are nobody. We need to change that we don't have an identity in this country." However, it is not the mere fact that non-citizens cannot vote, as this one barrier was only one concern of the groups. It was also expressed that current immigration policy lends towards an environment of harassment and fear or deportation.

Indirect barriers to civic engagement.

Fear of deportation and harassment.

The focus group participants explained that there are indirect barriers to civic engagement caused by not being a US citizen, or rather, not having legal resident status in the United States. While these two issues are not mutually exclusive, they seem to be linked and spoken of as if they had the same meaning. A 27 year old woman who has been in Detroit for 5 years, owns her own home, and has a ninth grade education told the group that she has not participated out of fear, but she said: "we must all must participate in the community and in the marches (for immigration reform) with or without papers (legal immigration papers) to make change".

Three of the four groups focused on the increased presence of immigration officers in their neighborhoods and at their work places. Eleven participants spoke of police and

immigration officers harassing them or their family members. A woman who came from a small town in southern Mexico and has been here for 16 years told a story of a police officer pulling her over just to have the immigration car quickly slide in and demand her papers:

> The police pulled me over, he said for running a red light. There was no red light. He asked for my papers. Immediately an immigration car pulled in front of me and the police officer drove away. Luckily someone gave me a little piece of paper with my rights as an immigrant and I showed him the paper. He read it. I cried. I cried because I feel impotent because of the color of my skin. He let me go. Everyone should carry this little paper.

Sixteen times in the groups participants expressed fear of immigration officials and of being deported. Similarly, a young woman who has been here for 6 years told a teary story of her husband being deported and her being left here with her babies trying to figure out what to do:

> My husband, they took him. I don't speak English. I didn't know where he was. I think of my daughters. I , we called everyone we could think of. He called me days later from Mexico. He is back now and I am worried. They could take him again. It's not safe.

Acculturation.

Isolation and experiences with depression.

Thirteen Mexican women commented on their feelings of isolation and not being a part of American society: "We isolate ourselves." "We are alone here". "It's a cage here - we are isolated". Some spoke of difficulties with depression caused by the feelings of isolation: "One thing is for sure, the majority of us suffer from depression because we are alone, our mothers are not here to give us advice, we do not feel welcome, it is very different, but then we adapt." At another point in the discussion this same woman expounded on the need to adapt: "Why suffer for free when you can get over it if you want to? One has to adapt, adapt oneself because there is so much we can't change".

North American.

I asked each group if they considered themselves to be "American". I used the term in Spanish that is "North-American" because all Latin Americans are Americans and it is offensive to assume that American means only from the United States. Even so, North American can be Mexican and Canadian as well, and thus all of these terms become confusing. However, there is no appropriate term for what we mean by American (in would be something like United Statesienne...) in Spanish. Additionally, in conversation they themselves use the term American to refer to White Americans. So, once we had passed the terminology, all four groups universally said no, shaking their heads vigorously. All of the group participants indicated that they do not feel American, with the exception of one man who made the point of saying: "Mexico, like the United States and Canada, is in North America and home is not where you were born, but where you live". He and his family have been here for 20 years, he said, "so why not consider myself American? I should be considered American but I am not. Is it worth it being here, for how we are treated? We are living in a gold cage. There is enormous hatred towards Latinos here" he said with a very sorrowful expression. He is considering going back to Mexico, after 20 years away, because he said that his family is not welcome here and he doesn't think it is worth the emotional hardship to stay here for the little amount of work that is left.

Insecurity about language skills.

Eight participants highlighted their low level of participation due to their lack of confidence about their English language skills. They said they often remain silent even when they are being mistreated. One woman with less than a high school level of education and limited English language proficiency said "they treat us like less (less of a person) in the stores because of our accent and because we don't speak English." Several group members said that

they have been yelled at, humiliated, scorned, or simply ignored due to their poor English language skills. A 37 year old woman who owns her home in the United States with her husband and has become involved in several community groups said that she decided on her own that she would overcome this obstacle and thus began to take English language classes. She concluded:

> Look, since I began to study English, now I can communicate with the people in English, for example in the health clinic. If I don't like something I can say so. If I need something, I can ask for it. With the neighbors sometimes you have complications, you can defend yourself a little more. You can make calls to 9-1-1. I am not the same any more. I feel stronger, more confident, with more fortitude, more security.

Level of education.

While not conscious of its influence, and minimally directly addressed in the groups, level of education did appear to be a facilitator of civic engagement. I compared the comments from the transcripts to the demographic information sheets and found that those with high school education levels and beyond were the participants who tried to teach the others how to get involved. "We do have a voice. We can move many; we just have to participate" a Mexican woman with a high school level of education said. She told the other group members:

> Rashida is our representative. She has posters around - you've seen them. Her office is in front of the park. She is a good person, and in her office they have all kinds of things to help you. You just have to go in. The important thing is to involve ourselves. We are not informed - that is it.

Additionally, four of those who had at least a high school diploma shared with their fellow group members the need to know their rights as immigrants and tried to tell them not to be afraid to go out and get involved. However, one of these women also commented on the diminishing community organizations:

> Before there were many organizations in the community that helped people that were abused at work or that were fired for no reason. But now they don't exist anymore. I haven't seen them. Now they aren't there and I feel unprotected. I feel alone, without help.

On the other hand, a 29 year old woman with a third grade level of education from Mexico said that she participates in community groups and activities, because "in this country they involve you for free". She seemed genuinely delighted by the availability of groups, activities and classes for which one does not have to pay. She did not speak of discrimination or resentment, or lack of jobs. She was just honestly surprised that in the United States she could take English classes and join groups without expense.

Negative experiences with American institutions including the government.

Mistrust.

While trust in government could be a facilitator to engagement, it did not appear to be so in these groups due to their low levels of trust and their many negative experiences with American institutions and society. "I am afraid of the government; I do not feel a part of it," said a 26 year old homeowner with some high school, and no community participation. When I asked them if they trusted the U.S. government they brought up their concerns many times about the new immigration law in Arizona and the rumors that Michigan legislators are considering a similar law. Twenty four times the need for immigration reform was raised. A disenchantment with the government also surrounds discussion of trust and of immigration. Thirty three times mistrust was discussed, many such occurrences in the context of failed immigration policy. A 37 year old homeowner who has some high school and is involved in religious groups in the community said: "I would like to tell President Obama to change immigration law so we can live

with dignity. This government should not be trying to change other places like Haiti, while there is so much need here".

In response to my question regarding trust in government, another participant from Mexico who has limited English language skills went on to say "we pay taxes; we are conscious of our worth. But we are not treated humanely." Several of the other group members agreed with her, nodding and uttering the words "yes, dignity". Similarly, a woman who is involved in her community, owns a home, and has a high school diploma worries "that the United States government will never prioritize immigration reform when they are so consumed with foreign wars". Another Mexican woman, who has been in Detroit for six years and has children in school said: "We all want immigration reform, but we don't go, we don't participate. We should all go even without papers to be heard". A 42 year old college educated woman contributed: "The President of Mexico should pressure the President of the United States to favor Mexicans in the immigration laws." A 31 year old woman with a high school education and no community involvement explained her lack of trust: "The problems with discrimination are not only here, but in Lansing (Michigan's state capital)." One of the male participants who has been in the United States for 20 years said: "We are losing confidence in the government because we are not seeing any improvement in immigration law, only more anti-immigrant actions like what has happened in Arizona." Another participant in a different group had similar thoughts and said: "The new law in Arizona gives us less confidence in the government." One woman from one of the pilot groups who has been here for 17 years summed up the concerns in the following: "I am unhappy about losing my driver's license, scared about immigration and nervous about the police and whether my husband will come home from work (or be detained)".

Discrimination in the workplace.

Employment became a complex topic in terms of civic engagement for the groups. It was the primary reason for 60% of the participants to come to the United States and it could be a great facilitator to their engagement. However, as a topic, employment elicited a robust discussion about discrimination. Participants referred to discrimination in the labor force 33 times in the four groups. For example, although her husband has not been without work, the following participant highlighted the stereotyping that he encountered while looking for a job:

> That happened to my husband. He was looking for work and they needed three people and he went and two Americans went and he got the job and they told the two Americans 'no'. The boss is American. He said 'you alone are going to do for me the work that the two of them would do'.

Several participants recalled being shorted on their pay, with no recourse to fight the injustice. Two women from two different groups told of friends who were working for two dollars an hour and continuing to accept such low pay due to fear of being fired or worse, deported if they complain. Another participant who has been in the United States for 15 years analyzed the situation with the following comment:

> All of us are a convenience for someone, and we are a convenience for them. Because they are going to pay us very little, they are going to work us more, and we aren't going to complain. They aren't going to give us benefits. There *are* benefits, but they are not going to offer them to us - they are not going to give them to us.

A 29 year old married woman with medium brown skin tone, who has some high school education and now works for an American man, said that although she got the job, she felt discrimination upon applying for it:

> I have also felt discrimination in the work place. I went to hand in an application and the boss said that he could hire Mexicans but he doesn't like them and that he doesn't want fat, pregnant women or anyone that doesn't speak English.

Others in the group contributed their evaluations of the situation and said that they feel disliked, socially unwanted, and reticent to get involved in such a discriminatory society, but that they still come out ahead of Americans in getting hired. As a 26 year old mother of two said: "A Mexican works more than an American, because an American is not going to work for you in the sun for seven dollars (an hour)."

Discrimination in services and stores.

The most frequent comment regarding experiences in the United States in the focus groups was discrimination in local social services and in stores. The anti-immigrant air that was spoken of during the discussion about civic engagement and trust in government was exemplified by the 33 instances of unfair or discriminatory practices that these participants encountered in the Detroit metropolitan area. Multiple times they cited a local health clinics and hospital staff; 4 people stated that they or their children were mistreated at school; eight made reference to maltreatment by the police; and many others talked about being discriminated against while shopping in local stores or restaurants. Two of the focus groups found darker skin color to be the main factor in their experiences with discrimination. They spoke of racial profiling by the police, by immigration agents, and in social contexts as due to their being Latino, as identified by their brown skin color. In one case a medium to light brown toned woman told a story of being followed throughout a store while White customers with misbehaving children were not followed. She said: "He had some audacity because he didn't even try to hide. My friend said 'Hey are you spying on us or what?'. He said 'Yes, it's my job'.

Those White people could have been stealing but he only followed us." She and her friend were quite disturbed that they were profiled due only to their Latin appearance and skin color. Similarly, a woman who has been here for 10 years, has children in the local schools, and works at a chain restaurant spoke of mistreatment when she was in labor with her first child:

> I have felt mistreated also sometimes in the clinics and the hospitals. I went to the hospital when I was in labor. The nurse was White. She spoke to me and I hardly understood her. But she treated me very badly - she threw things at me meanly. I remember that they took me to the bathroom because my legs were asleep, and she slammed me down on the toilette so hard that she actually hurt her arm and got mad. I felt angry about the discrimination - because of the language, because of my Latino appearance, and she was supposed to be working for me. Well, she got me so too bad.

Societal discrimination.

As alluded to above, the anti-immigrant environment in the area and the country in recent years has brought about many glares, rude and offensive comments, and uncomfortable situations. Eighteen times societal discrimination was discussed. For example, a light skinned 37 year old woman who speaks English put the experience succinctly into an interaction at a park:

> I have felt incredibly discriminated against: one day we were at a park and some American people, well they looked like it - tall, light skinned, blonde - sat next to us and they left because we were there. A ha. They left. And that happens.

In sum, many of the Latino immigrants who participated in the focus group discussions have engaged in the local community. They have taken classes to learn English. They have also purchased homes and improved their neighborhoods. Their children are enrolled in local schools. Participants have held down jobs and paid taxes. However, they expressed difficulty in engaging in American society due to the discrimination they have faced. They expressed heightened concern about what they consider to be failed immigration policy, increased police

harassment, local immigration raids, and deportations of family members. They said that they would like to participate more, but find it very difficult to get involved in this society that has them fearful of officials and living without proper identification. They were gracious and thanked me profusely to listening to their concerns and their stories.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

In this study, I examined the factors that influenced the level of civic engagement of Latino immigrants in American society, and how trust in the U.S. government and integration into the American culture moderated these factors. Additionally, I identified the facilitators and barriers Latino immigrants experienced in becoming engaged in American social and political affairs. Moreover, I gained an understanding of the local contexts in which Detroit area Latino immigrants lived and participated. In this chapter, I prove a summary of key findings. This is followed by a discussion of the policy implications of the study. Then I discuss the limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future directions for research.

Civic Engagement

The facilitators and barriers to engagement highlighted here may help to inform lawmakers, advocates, policy makers, community members, practitioners, and leaders in order to support policies that better meet the needs of Latino immigrants. As has been noted in the literature, the Latino immigrant population has not been able to fully voice their needs and desires within the American social and political system to the degree that the dominant American society has (García, 2003). García argues that there are laws and societal practices that keep Latino immigrants in a marginalized position that denies their political participation, thereby excluding them from new legislation. This participation is represented in this study in their level of civic engagement. In terms of the civic engagement of Latino immigrants, the findings suggest that that older immigrants were more engaged than those under the age of 30. Women were more engaged than men. Married or cohabitating immigrants were more engaged than others. White skinned immigrants were more engaged than brown skinned immigrants. Non-Catholics were more engaged than Catholics. Furhter, higher income, higher educational

attainment, and homeownership were predictors of higher civic engagement. Those who came from countries other than Mexico and for non-economic reasons were more likely to be involved in their communities and civic affairs than others. Also, immigrants who had been here for more than 20 years and planned to stay permanently were more likely to be involved than others. Moreover, the effects of these contextual factors on the civic engagement of Latino immigrants were significantly moderated when the level of acculturation was controlled. The effects of age, gender, and marital status were accentuated after controlling for the acculturation variables. In contrast, the effects of the remaining demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors and characteristics of the immigrant experience were reduced after controlling for acculturation.

Trust in the U.S. Government

As the literature has shown, the heterogeneous group that is often represented by the labels Latino and Hispanic is composed of individuals from many countries, many forms of government, and differing histories depending on the country in question (Barvosa, 2006; Freire, 1972; García, 2003; Monzó & Rueda, 2006; Saito, 2009) - all of which could influence an individual's trust in government (Letki, 2008). Respondents' trust in government also is fostered by the relationship they had with their previous governments as well as their experiences with the U.S. government, including immigration officials (Freire, 1998; García, 2003; Saito, 2009; Stokes, 2001). Furthermore, often past oppression caused by political strife or social injustices in the country of origin are not addressed when they come to the United States, and may even be perpetuated. In this manner, immigrants can bring the effects of oppression and feelings of mistrust with them to their relationship with the U.S. government (Freire, 1998; Martín-Baró, 1996).

Latino immigrants' trust in the U.S. government was found to be a statistically significant yet non-linear predictor of civic engagement in the empirical model. The empirical findings indicated that those who never trusted the U.S. government and those who almost always trusted the government had very low civic engagement scores. In contrast, both of the groups with moderate trust had higher civic engagement scores. These findings suggest that if respondents feel there is no hope in the government or implicit trust then there is no need to get involved. However, these findings also suggest that Latino immigrants who expressed moderate levels of trust were compelled to engage civically. Thus, those who have identified problems with some of the government's actions, yet trust that the problems may be resolved would be more apt to be involvement than others. The focus group participants expressed low levels of trust due to their experiences with unjust social and immigration policy. Additionally, they supported the empirical findings when they said that their experiences with many forms of unfair treatment have incited them to engage in activities such as marches and rallies for immigration reform.

Acculturation

Unique to this study, acculturation was found to moderate the demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and characteristics of the immigrant experience in their prediction of levels civic engagement of Latino immigrants. The inclusion of acculturation in the empirical model increased the explained variance by 16% and provided a better understanding of the civic engagement of Latino immigrants. This finding suggests that although Latino immigrants may face significant barriers to involvement in their communities and in civic affairs, these barriers may be reduced and their civic engagement may be increased if they are given the opportunity to integrate into mainstream society. Acculturation had

significant direct effects on the civic engagement of Latino immigrants. These effects are described below.

Naturalized U.S. citizens and U.S. citizens born in Puerto Rico were more engaged than non-citizens.

Citizenship was the strongest predictor of civic engagement of Latino immigrants. Also, U.S. citizens had the second highest mean civic engagement scores after those born in Puerto Rico. Prior studies have shown Latino immigrants to be excluded from political participation due to their lack of citizenship (García, 2003). Due to the fact that there were two measures of civic engagement that necessitated citizenship (voting and registering to vote), those who were U.S. citizens had an advantage in their civic engagement scores over non-citizens.

Greater English language skills were associated with greater civic engagement.

Consistent with the literature, English language proficiency was associated with higher levels of civic engagement in this study. Moreover, because the study showed English speakers to be more civically engaged than non-English speakers, teaching English language skills to immigrants could facilitate their involvement within their communities. English language ability or lack thereof has dominated the rhetoric surrounding immigration, citizenship, and assimilation for decades (Abraído et al., 2006; Ben-Shalom & Horenczyk, 2003; Lieberson, 1980; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Michelson, 2003). However, it has been used as a divisive tool and suggested as a mandate in order to attain certain rights and benefits in American society, such as citizenship (Golash-Boza, 2006; Massey, Durand, & Malone, 2002; Rumbaut & Portes, 2001). This study suggests that if English language proficiency were facilitated and encouraged, it could facilitate civic engagement as well.

Immigrants with integrated friends and coworkers were more engaged than others.

Whether immigrants have integrated coworkers and friendships demonstrates their incorporation into the American society and democracy (Berry, 2002). In this study, I found that respondents who did not have integrated friends or work places were less civically engaged than those who did. Therefore, communities that work to incorporate Latino immigrants into mainstream society and promote their interaction with other ethnic groups could benefit from increased civic engagement and thus more comprehensive representation (Wagle, 2006).

Those who considered themselves to be American were more engaged than others.

Considering oneself to be American was found to be a significant, but modest, predictor of the variance in civic engagement. Similarly, in a study on international labor migration, Furchtgott-Roth (2008) found immigrants who did not identify themselves as American to be marginalized from mainstream society and governmental representation. While a representative democracy aims to represent the entire populous, this is not possible if the populous does not consider itself to be part of the country (Furchtgott-Roth, 2008).

Those who had moderate to high access to services in Spanish were more engaged than others.

Spanish speaking Latino immigrants with moderate to high access to services in Spanish had slightly higher civic engagement scores than those who had low to no access. Similarly, prior studies have found that providing services in the language of origin can facilitate immigrants' accessing said services as well as their adaptation to the host culture (García, 2003; Wagle, 2006) It is important to note that most of the sample reported moderate to high access (77%), thus making the differences less significant. Considering the strength in prediction and in group differences for English language proficiency, it appears as though English language skills

are more conducive to civic engagement than accessing services in Spanish. These findings were supported by the focus group participants who expressed an appreciation for services in Spanish, but were involved much more in mainstream society once they began studying English and improving their English language skills.

The greater the presence of unfair treatment the higher the civic engagement.

Unfair treatment was a statistically significant predictor of civic engagement. Further, focus group participants recalled many instances of discrimination in the work place, in social services and stores, and in social interactions. Unfair treatment was a catalyst for involvement: survey participants who experienced unfair treatment were more civically engaged than those who had not. My focus group participants shared that they would like to get involved in local, state, and national politics to confront the discrimination they have experienced as well. These experiences, they said, led them to want to participate more in marches and rallies to fight discriminatory legislation. Similarly, DeSipio (2006) found in a study on legislative concerns that discrimination is one of the most prioritized concerns that Latino immigrants would like to see addressed in new legislation.

Focus Group Discussions

The qualitative component of this research enabled me to better understand the contexts in which Latino immigrants in the Detroit metropolitan area reside and engage. Data from the focus groups portrayed a community of Latino immigrants who came to the United States for economic improvement for themselves and their families, yet wish to contribute to the larger community as well. They are proud of the work they have done, of the improvements they have made to a deteriorated neighborhood, and of the life they have built here. They struggle with the English language and understanding what is expected of them. Yet they learn and adapt - as one

empowering woman explained: "we adapt so that we may find happiness here". They spoke of their strong work ethic and the perceived injustice of their consistently low pay.

The topic of discrimination dominated most of the focus group discussions, as participants detailed the many anti-immigrant experiences they have had. They overwhelmingly suggested a more inclusive immigration policy that would allow them to "live with dignity". Primarily, this discussion took the form of the desire to reinstate Michigan driver's licenses regardless of immigration status. They shared that the lack of drivers licenses coupled with the increase in immigration raids and deportations causes fear of going out and of participating in their community. Additionally, they expressed confusion about the workings of this type of participatory democracy and their role in the process. Albeit a selective group of people, the focus group participants in this study were aware of the barriers they face in American society and encouraged the creation of new policies that would break these barriers.

Policy Implications

This study is suggestive of how more inclusive immigration policy might facilitate the civic engagement of Latino immigrants. In order for Latino immigrants to fully contribute to American society and the economy they would need to have the right to vote and the right to legislative representation. Without these rights, immigrants face undeniable barriers to their engagement, while still being affected by policy decisions made on all levels of society. Additionally, as citizenship was found to be the strongest predictor of engagement of Latino immigrants, future efforts that would increase access to naturalization and broaden eligibility requirements would be most likely to influence levels of civic engagement.

Such efforts are supported by the National Immigrant Law Center and Services Immigrant Rights and Education Network. Specifically, Latino immigrants would benefit from

state and federal prioritization of naturalization services (CIPC, 2007). This is a policy consideration that could be coordinated with broader immigration reform or addressed separately. This prioritization could take the shape of creating programs to disseminate information regarding naturalization eligibility and application processes throughout immigrant communities. Additionally, efforts should target decreasing the cost of applying, reducing the obstacles in seeking naturalization, and increasing the opportunities for English language learning and American civics lessons (CIPC, 2007).

Naturalization services could also take the form of acculturation programming in immigrant communities. This study suggests that policies aimed at acculturating Latino immigrants by integrating their neighborhoods, schools, community groups and work places have the potential to increase their civic engagement. There is a precedent in the profession of social work for naturalization services and immigration programming with the 20th century settlement houses that held many community groups and forums for immigrants (Karger & Stoesz, 2005). These efforts also provided English language classes and venues for ethnic celebrations. The settlement house movement also proved instrumental in helping early 20th century European immigrants adapt to the United States (Karger & Stoesz, 2005). Such programs could provide the link between the need to acculturate and the desire to become civically engaged as expressed by the Latino immigrants I interviewed.

Further, programs such as California's former Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants, would provide Latino immigrants with the proper assistance afforded non-immigrants to become a more integral part of American society by increasing their financial ability to participate. The proposed Dream Act would provide the children of immigrants with equal access to higher education. Study findings may help community organizers who wish to identify potential leaders

within the Latino immigrant community as well as target those who are less likely to be involved and might need encouragement.

In keeping with the model presented by César Chávez, community marches could be the most powerful venue for community activists to elicit participation within the Latino immigrant community (Espinosa, 2007; Orosco, 2008). It is a forum understood and accepted in the Latino immigrant community. It is a movement that has grown since the resurgence of the marches in May 2006 following the passage of California's Proposition 187, denying access to social, health, and educational services for undocumented immigrants (Espinosa, 2007). Community leaders could use similar marches and rallies to organize Latino immigrants to participate in local, state, and national issues. They could use the energy and eager participation that emerges from the marches to organize the community to identify, understand, and advocate for new legislation to address their needs, inclusive of but not limited to immigration reform.

Limitations to the Research

There are some limitations to this research that could be addressed by future studies. Primarily, the survey research questions that were used in the Latino National Survey were designed by other researchers with different research questions in mind. The Latino National Survey did not examine the factors associated with levels of trust in government, nor the direct affects of the unfair treatment they experienced. Also, the survey was completed in a different time and therefore did not account for the current anti-immigrant environment that now affects many immigrant communities. Another factor that proved challenging in this mixed methods study was the fact that my focus group participants wished to talk primarily about their experiences with discrimination, even when they were not directly related to civic engagement. While approximately half of the group participants indicated that they were involved in

community groups, when asked about their engagement they redirected the discussion to immigration issues.. Further research could be considered regarding the direct manner in which state and federal immigration policy affects the incorporation of Latino immigrants into American society and their engagement in the democratic process thereafter.

Future Research

Future studies needs to focus on the manner in which Latino immigrants become engaged in American society and civic affairs. These processes could prove instrumental in the logistical planning by community organizers and social work practitioners alike to engage this often marginalized community. Additionally, the findings regarding the complex relationship between Latino immigrants' trust in the U.S. government and their civic engagement, coupled with the moderation by unfair treatment, are suggestive of future research focusing on the structural discrimination of Latino immigrants. Finally, because immigrating for economic reasons proved to hinder civic engagement, future studies might address the positive and negative effects of immigration policy and their associations with domestic and international economic policy. This type of study could lead to improving the coordination of the many U.S. policies that are global in nature.

Conclusion

The results of this study contribute to our knowledge of civic engagement by examining a minority group seldom studied – Latino immigrants -- as well as by investigating how their acculturation into mainstream American society and their levels of trust in the U.S. government influence their engagement. When considering the many barriers to engagement facing the Latino immigrant population in the United States, it is easy to understand the low level of civic engagement that is depicted in the study findings. Those who are the most civically engaged

share the following characteristics. They are U.S. citizens, female, married or cohabitating, older than 30, have at least a high school level of education, earn more than $35,000 per year, are homeowners, have white skin color, are proficient in the English language, consider themselves to be American, and have integrated friends and coworkers. Furthermore, this study uncovered a complex relationship between Latino immigrants' civic engagement, their experiences with discriminatory practices and policies, and their trust in the U.S. government which heretofore had not been previously studied. According to the focus group participants, this complex relationship takes roots in the anti-immigrant sentiment in which they reside and work, as well as in discriminatory policies that make them fearful of participation in their community. Finally, local, state, and federal policies have the potential to incorporate Latino immigrants more successfully into American society and thus increase their civic engagement by facilitating their naturalization, English language acquisition, higher education, higher wages, and integrated neighborhoods and work places.

Appendix A

Study Flyers (English and Spanish)

Telephone Contact Scripts (English and Spanish)

Are you involved in your community?

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

for a

RESEARCH STUDY

on

LATINO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Researchers from the Wayne State University School of Social Work will be conducting focus groups to learn more about the level of community involvement of Detroit area Latinos and their experiences in American society.

These focus groups will take approximately 90 minutes. These discussions will be completely confidential. **Participants will receive a $20 gift card in appreciation for their time.**

If you would like to participate in one of these groups, please contact the Principal Investigator, **Cristina Tucker, at 313/577-4137 or email du5452@wayne.edu** in English or Spanish.

Community Participation Study Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 or du5452@wayne.edu	**Community Participation Study Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 or du5452@wayne.edu**	**Community Participation Study Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 or du5452@wayne.edu**	**Community Participation Study Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 or du5452@wayne.edu**

¿Está participando en su comunidad?

SE SOLICITAN VOLUNTARIOS

para una

INVESTIGACIÓN SOCIAL

de la

PARTICIPACIÓN COMUNITARIA DE LATINOS

Personal de la Escuela de Trabajo Social de la Universidad de Wayne State conducirá grupos de discusión para aprender más sobre el nivel de participación comunitaria de latinos en Detroit y de sus experiencias en la sociedad norte-americana.

Estos grupos durarán aproximadamente 90 minutos. Estas discusiones serán completamente confidenciales. **Participantes recibirán una trajeta de regalo por $20 en gratidud por su tiempo.**

Si quiere participar en uno de los grupos, por favor comuníquese con la Investigadora Principal, **Cristina Tucker, al 313/577-4137 o al email du5452@wayne.edu**, en español o inglés.

Estudio de Participación Comunitaria Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 o du5452@wayne.edu	**Estudio de Participación Comunitaria Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 o du5452@wayne.edu**	**Estudio de Participación Comunitaria Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 o du5452@wayne.edu**	**Estudio de Participación Comunitaria Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 o du5452@wayne.edu**	**Estudio de Participación Comunitaria Wayne State University Cristina Tucker 313/577-4137 o du5452@wayne.edu**

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY
Cristina M. Tucker - Principal Investigator

SCRIPT FOR TELEPHONE FOLLOW UP CONTACT

May I please speak with _____?

My name is Cristina Tucker. I am a researcher from Wayne State University and I am calling about the discussion groups that I am conducting on community participation of Latinos in Detroit and their experiences in American society. I am calling to follow-up on your response to the flyer that was posted and to ask if you are still interested in participating in one of these groups.

Groups will be held at time on date. The discussion groups will last about 90 minutes and you will be given a $20 gift card at the end of the group. Light refreshments will be served. I would also like to tell you that we will not be able to provide child care during the session and no children or guests will be allowed in the meeting room. Do you have any questions about the discussion groups at this time?

Would you like to participate in one of these groups? Yes No

If No, thank you for your consideration.

If Yes, in order to enroll you in one of the focus groups, I need to ask the following information: *(Interviewer, complete participant information form over the phone)*

Thank you for your willingness to participate in one of the discussion groups. You will be in the date group that will be all **women/men** (*Caller select based on gender of participant).* I will be contacting you the day before the discussion group to remind you of the date of your session.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPACIÓN CÍVICA EN LA COMUNIDAD LATINA
Cristina M. Tucker - Investigatora Principal

PROTOCOLO PARA EL CONTACTO TELEFÓNICO

¿Podría hablar con _____?

Me llamo Cristina Tucker. Soy una investigadora de la Universidad de Wayne State y estoy llamando para hablar de los grupos de discusión que voy a conducir sobre la participación comunitaria de latinos en Detroit y de sus experiencias con la sociedad norte-americana. Estoy llamando para dar seguimiento a su respuesta a los anuncios solicitando participación en uno de los grupos de discusión.

Los grupos de discusión se reunirán hora y fecha. El grupo de discusión durará aproximadamente 90 minutos y usted recibirá una tarjeta de regalo valorado en $20 al concluir el grupo. Se ofrecerán unan bebidas. También quiero avisarle que no vamos a poder cuidar a niños durante la sesión y tampoco se permitirán entrar a los niños o a otras personas al salón de reuniones. En este momento, ¿tiene algunas preguntas sobre el estudio?

¿Le interesa participar en uno de estos grupos? Sí No

Si No, gracias por su consideración.

Si Sí, para apuntarle en uno de los grupos, tengo que preguntarle lo siguiente. *(Entrevistadora, completa hoja de información)*

Gracias por su participación en uno de los grupos de discusión. Usted estará en el grupo fecha que será compuesta sólamente de **mujeres/hombres** (Investigadora selecciona dependiendo del sexo del participante). Lamaré el día antes de su grupo para recordarle de la fecha de la sesión.

Appendix B

Focus Group Participant Information Forms (English and Spanish)

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY
Cristina M. Tucker - Principal Investigator

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FORM

Thank you for your interest in Wayne State University's discussion groups with Detroit area Latinos. Please answer the following questions so that we may assign you to the most appropriate group for you. All information provided will be kept confidential and used only for the research purposes of this study.

Name: _____

Telephone:
Home ( ) _____ **Work** ( ) _____ **Cell** ( ) _____

Circle gender **M** **F**

What year were you born? _____

Were you born in the US or abroad? **US** **Abroad**

If abroad, where were you born? _____

If abroad, what year did you move to the US? _____

If US, what country are your ancestors from? _____

Are you involved in any community groups or activities (including church, school, social groups, sports, block clubs, community organizations, others...)? **Yes** **No**

If yes, what kinds of groups? *(Circle response)*

church **school** **social** **sports** **neighborhood** **community** **political**

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPACIÓN CÍVICA EN LA COMUNIDAD LATINA
Cristina M. Tucker - Investigatora Principal

HOJA DE INFORMACIÓN DE LOS PARTICIPANTES EN LOS GRUPOS DE DISCUSIÓN

Gracias por su interés en los grupos de discusión con latinos de Detroit conducidos por investigadores de la Universidad de Wayne State. Por favor conteste lo siguiente para que nuestros investigadores puedan inscribirle al grupo mas apropriado para usted.

Nombre: _____

Teléfono:
Casa ( ) _____ **Trabajo** ( ) _____ **Celular** ( ) _____

Marque su sexo **M** **F**

En qué año nació? _____

¿Nació en los Estado Unidos o en otro país? **Estado Unidos** **Otro país**

Si otro país, ¿dónde nació? _____

Si otro país, ¿en qué año vino al los Estado Unidos? _____

Si Estado Unidos, ¿de qué país son sus ancestros? _____

¿Está usted envolucrado en algunos grupos en la comunidad (como grupos sociales, escolares, religiosos, deportes, grupos del barrio, de organizaciones comunitarias, u otros....)? **Sí** **No**

Si sí, ¿qué tipo de grupos? *(Circula respuesta)*

religiosos **escolares** **sociales** **deportes** **del vecindario** **comunitarios** **políticos**

Appendix C

Research Information Sheet (English and Spanish)

Civic Engagement in the Latino Community

Research Information Sheet

Title of Study: *Civic Engagement in the Latino Community*

Principal Investigator (PI): Cristina M. Tucker
School of Social Work
313-577-4137

Purpose:

You are being asked to participate in a research study of Latinos in Detroit in order to better understand the levels of community involvement and their experiences with American society.

Study Procedures:

You are being asked to participate in a one-time 90 minute focus group discussion session led by a researcher from the School of Social Work at Wayne State University. This discussion will focus on how people like you feel about the ways in which they have become involved in the community and their experiences in American society. You are free to not answer any questions that might make you feel uncomfortable.

Benefits

- As a participant in this research study, there will be no direct benefit for you. However, the knowledge gained from the study may help to improve opportunities for Latinos to participate in their communities.

Risks

- There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Costs

- There will be no costs to you for participation in this research study.

Compensation

- For taking part in this research study, you will be compensated for your time and inconvenience with a $20.00 gift card.

Confidentiality

- All information collected about you will be kept without any identifiers.

Civic Engagement in the Latino Community

- All information discussed in the group will remain confidential. It may be used in written or oral presentations only if your identity is disguised and confidentiality is maintained.
- Digital recordings of the focus groups will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Voluntary Participation /Withdrawal:
Taking part in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with Wayne State University or its affiliates.

Questions:

If you have any questions concerning your participation in this study, you can reach the Principal Investigator Cristina Tucker at 313/577-4137, and her Dissertation Chair Dr. Anna Santiago at 313/557-8006. If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you can contact the Chair of the Human Investigation Committee at Wayne State University at 313/577-1628.

Participation:
By participating in the focus group you are agreeing to participate in this study.

Civic Engagement in the Latino Community

Hoja de Información para una Investigación Social
Título del Estudio: *Participación Cívica en la Comunidad Latina*

Principal Investigator (PI): Cristina M. Tucker
Escuela de Trabajo Social
313-577-4137

Propósito

Le están pidiendo que participe en una investigación social de latinos en Detroit para entender mejor sus niveles de participación comunitaria y sus experiencias en la sociedad norte-americana.

Procedimiento

Le están pidiendo que participe en un solo grupo de discusión de 90 minutos facilitado por una investigadora de la Escuela de Trabajo Social de la Universidad de Wayne State. Esta discusión se enfocará en cómo personas como usted se sienten sobre las maneras en que han participado en la comunidad y en sus experiencias en la sociedad norte americana. Usted está libre a no contester cualquier pregunta que le hace sentir incómodo.

Beneficios

Como participante en esta investigación social, no habrá beneficio directo para usted. Sin embargo, la información obtenida de este estudio puede ayudar a mejorar las oportunidades de participación comunitaria para latinos.

Riesgos

No existen riesgos conosidos asociados con la participación en este estudio.

Costos

No existen costos para usted por su participación en este studio.

Compensación

Por participar en esta investigación social, usted sera compensado/s por su tiempo e inconveniencias con una tarjeta de regalo por $20.00.

Participación Voluntaria

Entiendo que mi participación es completamente voluntaria y que tengo el derecho de no contestar cualquier pregunta y que estoy libre de salirme del grupo en cualquier momento.

Civic Engagement in the Latino Community

Confiabilidad

Toda la información obtenida de usted se guardará sin identificación.

Toda la información discutida en el grupo se mantendrá confidencial. La información podrá ser utilizada en presentaciones escritas u orales solamente si no se divulga su identidad y si se mantiene la confidencialidad.

Grabaciones digitales serán destruídas al terminar el studio.

Participación Voluntaria / Salida:

Particpación en este studio es voluntaria. Usted tiene el derecho de rechazar cualquier pregunta o de salir del studio en cualquier momento. Su decision no cambiará ninguna relación, presente o future, con la Universidad de Wayne State o sus afiliados.

Preguntas

Si tiene preguntas sobre su participación en este estudio, puede comunicarse con la Investigadora Principal Cristina Tucker al 313/577-4137, o con la Supervisora del Estudio Dra. Anna Santiago al 313/557-8006. Si tiene preguntas sobre sus derechos como participante en un estudio de investigación, puede comunicarse con el Director del Comité de Investigaciones Humanas de la Universidad de Wayne State, al 313/577-1628.

Participación:

Por participar en el grupo de discussion usted esta de acuerdo con participar en el studio.

Appendix D

Focus Group Discussion Guide (English and Spanish)

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY
Cristina M. Tucker - Principal Investigator

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

WARMUP AND EXPLANATION [10 minutes]

A. Introduction

Thank you for coming today. My name is Cristina Tucker. I am a researcher with Wayne State University. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. Your presence and opinions are important to me and to my study on the community involvement of Latinos. I am interested in learning about your experiences with your community in Detroit and in the United States. Everything you say will be kept strictly confidential. Nothing you say will be linked to you or linked with information that could identify you, like your name or address. The session will last about 90 minutes. At the end of the session I will give each of you a $20 gift card for participating and will ask that you sign a receipt saying that you received this card. Are there any questions regarding the study and your participation at this time?

B. **Purpose**

1. I have asked you to speak with me today to share some of your experiences in Detroit and in the United States in order to understand how they have influenced your community involvement. What you say may help us to better understand how to improve opportunities for Latinos to participate in their communities.
2. In a group like this it is **very** important that you express yourselves freely. There are no right or wrong answers. I want to know what each of you think. I am interested in all of your ideas and comments, both positive and negative.

C. **Procedure**

1. I would like to tape record the session in order to be as accurate as possible when I write up the report. The recording will not be heard by anyone outside of the researchers on this study. Everything will be kept strictly confidential, and the recordings will be destroyed when the study is over. If at any time you would like me to turn off the recorder, please let me know and I will do so.

Does anyone have a concern at this time about the use of the recorder? May I go ahead and record this session?

D. Introductions

1. *Please tell me a little bit about yourselves like how long you have lived here…*

FOCUS GROUP [70 minutes]

A. Country of Origin/Ancestry

1. Could you tell me about where you lived before coming to the United States? If you are from here, where are your ancestors from?
2. What is it like there? Can you describe the community and how people get involved? Are people involved in community groups, schools, sports clubs, church groups…..?

B. Detroit, Michigan, and the United States

1. What brought your families here?
2. What are your impressions of Detroit, Michigan, and the United States?

C. Opportunities for involvement in community

1. Can you describe the community you live in here in Detroit?
2. Have you been able to feel part of your community here? In what way?
3. Do you feel connected to the American culture? In what way?
4. Are you a member of any groups (social, school, political, religious, community, sports...)? Can you describe them? Are the members Latino? Are they from the same country as your family?
5. What have been the most important factors in your involvement in your community here in Detroit?
6. Do you feel there is something missing that could help you get more involved?

D. Perceived attitudes towards Latinos and immigrants

1. What do you believe people in Detroit, Michigan, and the United States think about Latinos and immigrants?
2. Have you experienced any discrimination here?
3. Do you feel that you have adequate access to services in Spanish? Can you give examples?
4. Do you trust the United States government to represent you appropriately?

CONCLUSIONS AND WRAPUP [10 minutes]

Do you have any additional thoughts or comments about any of the topics we have been discussing today? Are there any questions or other concerns you have about this study?

Your comments have been very helpful. Thank you very much for participating today.

Hand out gift cards.

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPACIÓN CÍVICA EN LA COMUNIDAD LATINA
Cristina M. Tucker - Investigatora Principal

GUÍA DE GRUPO DE DISCUSIÓN

EXPLICACIÓN [10 minutos]

A. Introducción

Gracias por venir hoy. Me llamo Cristina Tucker. Soy una investigadora de la Universidad de Wayne State. Gracia por su participación en esta discusión. Su presencia y sus opiniones son importantes para mí y para mi estudio de la participación comunitaria de latinos. Me interesan sus experiencias en su comunidad en Detroit y en los Estados Unidos. Todo lo que ustedes dicen en el grupo será completamente confidencial. Nada de lo que dicen será conectado a ustedes ni a información que podría identificarlos, como sus nombres o direcciones. La sesión durará aproximadamente 90 minutos. Al concluír el grupo les daré una tarjeta de regalo de $20, y les pediré que firmen un recibo diciendo que recibieron la tarjeta. Tienen algunas preguntas en este momento sobre el estudio o su participación?

B. Propósito

1. Los he invitado a esta sesión para que comparten conmigo algunas de sus experiencias en Detroit y en los Estado Unidos para entender cómo han influído su participación comunitaria. Lo que me dicen nos puede ayudar a entender mejor cómo mejorar las oportunidades para participarción comunitaria para latinos.
2. En un grupo como este es **muy** importante que se expresen libremente. No hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas. Quiero saber lo que cada uno de ustedes piensa. Me interesan todos sus comentarios e ideas, tanto positivos como negativos.

C. **Protocolo**

1. Uso de la grabadora. Me gustaría grabar la sesión para ser lo más presisa posible cuando hago el reporte. Nadie fuera de los investigadores del estudio escuchará la grabación. Todo se mantendrá completamente confidencial y se destruirán las grabaciones al concluír el estudio. Si en cualquier momento quieren que apague la grabadora, solo tienen que pedírmelo y lo haré.

¿Tienen algunas preocupaciones con la grabadora en este momento? ¿Puedo seguir con la grabación de la sesión?

D. Presentaciones

1. Por favor, cuéntenme un poco de ustedes como por cuánto tiempo han vivido aquí…

GRUPO DE DISCUSIÓN [70 minutos]

A. País de origen/ancestría

1. ¿Me podrían decir dónde vivían antes de venir a los Estados Unidos? O si son de aquí, ¿de dónde son sus ancestros?
2. ¿Cómo es allá? ¿Me pueden describir la comunidad y cómo la gente se envolucra? ¿Participa la gente en grupos comunitarios, en las escuelas, en clubes de deportes, en grupos de la iglesia….?

B. Detroit, Michigan, y los Estado Unidos

1. ¿Qué atrajo a sus familias aquí?
2. ¿Qué les parecen Detroit, Michigan, y los Estados Unidos?

C. Oportunidades para participación comunitaria

1. ¿Pueden describir su comunidad aquí en Detroit?
2. ¿Han podido sentir parte de la comunidad aquí? ¿Cómo?
3. ¿Se sienten conectados a la cultura norte-americana? ¿Cómo?
4. ¿Son miembros de algunos grupos (sociales, escolares, políticos, religiosos, comunitarios, o de deportes...)? ¿Los pueden describir? ¿De dónde son los otros miembros? ¿Son latinos? ¿Son del mismo país que ustedes?
5. ¿Cuáles han sido los factores mas importantes para su participación en su comunidad aquí en Detroit?
6. ¿Piensan que falta algo que les ayudarí a participar más?

D. Actitudes enfrente a los latinos y a los inmigrantes

1. ¿Qué piensan que la gente en Detroit, en Michigan, y en los Estado Unidos piensan de los latinos y de los inmigrantes?
2. ¿Han sentido discriminados aquí?
3. ¿Sienten que tienen aceso apropriado a servicios en español? ¿Ejemplos?
4. ¿Tienen confianza en el gobierno de los Estados Unidos de representar a ustedes de manera apropriada?

CONCLUSIONES [10 minutos]

¿Tienen comentarios adicionales acerca de los temas de la discusión de hoy? **¿**Tienen otras preguntas o preocupaciones?

Sus comentarios me han ayudado mucho. Muchas gracias por su participación.

Distribuye tarjetas de regalo.

Appendix E

Gift Card Receipts (English and Spanish)

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE LATINO COMMUNITY
Cristina M. Tucker - Principal Investigator

GIFT CARD RECEIPT

My signature on this receipt signifies that I received a $20 gift card for my participation in a focus group discussion sponsored by the School of Social Work at Wayne State University.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY
PARTICIPACIÓN CÍVICA EN LA COMUNIDAD LATINA
Cristina M. Tucker - Investigatora Principal

RECIBO PARA LA TARJETA DE REGALO

Mi firma en este recibo indica que yo recibí una tarjeta de regalo valorado en $20 por mi participación en un grupo de discusión apoyado por la Escuela de Trabajo Social de la Universidad de Wayne State.

Nombre _____

Firma _____

Fecha _____

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ABSTRACT

THE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF LATINO IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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August 2010

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This study employs acculturation and civic engagement theories to explain the incorporation and engagement of Latino immigrants in American society by examining how demographic characteristics, socioeconomic factors, and characteristics of the immigrant experience, as moderated by acculturation and trust in government influence their civic engagement.

The core component of the study is a secondary data analysis of the 2006 Latino National Survey (Fraga et al., 2008). The study shows that some of the strongest predictors of civic engagement in the Latino immigrant community are citizenship, length of residence in the United States, level of education, household income, age, country of origin, gender, homeownership, and marital status. Several factors, such as low levels of education, low household income, brown skin color, Mexican ancestry, and coming to the United States for economic reasons are found to be barriers to civic engagement. However, this research also shows that acculturation can reduce the effects of these barriers and can increase the engagement that is associated with facilitators such as being married and female.

A sequential qualitative study was also is conducted with two pilot focus groups and two core focus groups on a small purposive sample of Latino immigrants in the metropolitan Detroit area. The focus group discussions illuminated experiences with a strong anti-immigrant sentiment in the area and the country, which acts as an obstacle in their integration and engagement in American society and leads them to mistrust of the U.S. government. As community organizers, local leaders in the Latino immigrant community, and the polity address the barriers to engagement brought to light in this study, they may help the Latino immigrant community become a more integral part of society and to have their interests more accurately reflected in future policy.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT
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