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Latina Women and Political Leadership

Implications for Latino Community Empowerment

Carol Hardy-Fanta, Ph.D.

Mainstream studies of Latino politics have tended to reflect a primarily male view of political participation and political leadership. In such a view, the study of Latino political leadership continues the tradition of viewing leadership as derived from official positions in elected or appointed office and in formal organizations. This article demonstrates that (1) contrary to prevailing myths, Latina women in Massachusetts run for and are elected to office in very high numbers, and (2) when the definition of political leadership is expanded to include community-based, not solely position-derived, forms of leadership, Latino community empowerment may depend, to a great extent, on the political leadership of Latina women. The author challenges researchers to reexamine the general assumptions and potential gender bias that underlie traditional conceptualizations of political leadership.

Like "power," "leadership" is one of the most complex and elusive concepts in social science. Leadership has meaning for, and has been studied extensively across, all social science disciplines: politics, business, especially management, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and military studies.[1] Most surveys of political leadership reflect certain assumptions about how leadership is conceptualized, who is counted as a leader, and how leadership should be studied. Some of these assumptions seem to tie leadership to holding office or positions in organizations; others focus on the personal traits of the people who are leaders. Still others seem to conceive of leadership as the ability to contribute to a cause, organization, or process and focus on the effectiveness of different leadership strategies or styles. Finally, there are assumptions that lead to an examination of the relationship between leaders and their followers. All these assumptions inform both the research design and the conclusions reached about political leadership. However, it is not untypical for a study built on one type of assumption about leadership to ignore the other dimensions that form the totality of leadership in urban politics today. While it is not without value to select a narrow aspect of a field to study, what seems to be occurring in the area of political leadership is a certain blindness as to how the implicit or at least unstated assumptions reflect biases about culture and gender.

In a related vein, studies about Latino politics generally ignore the role of Latina women as political leaders or view women as constrained from political participation by cultural or gender-based oppression. Cultural values of machismo and its female corre-

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late, marianismo,[2] appear to create a submissive and passive role for Latina women that suppresses the likelihood of their becoming political leaders. These cultural values supposedly exacerbate gender-based attributes that "leave politics to the men."[3] Structural obstacles and gender-based power relations, according to traditional social science analysis, also stifle the political aspirations of Latina women. Yet Latino activists and researchers alike are extremely concerned about low levels of Latino political participation in the United States and are eager to discover strategies that can serve to mobilize Latino communities in this country, strategies that, in fact, may depend on the political leadership of Latina women.

In this article I show how an examination of the political leadership of Latina women can provide a broader set of answers to three key questions: (1) What is political leadership? (2) How does the definition of leadership depend on gender? and (3) In what ways does the empowerment of Latino communities depend on the political leadership of Latina women? Contrary to their invisibility in the political leadership literature, Latina women play important leadership roles both in the electoral arena and at the community level. As political leaders, Latina women make significant contributions to Latino community empowerment.

The Meaning of Political Leadership

One of the major flaws in much of the literature on political leadership stems from the assumption that leadership is somehow derived from or equivalent to official positions, whether elected office, appointed office, or as head of a formal organization.[4] The assumptions embedded in a Weberian view of the superiority of the bureaucratic leader who is vested with rational/legal authority and legitimacy seem to lead researchers studying leadership to look first to people in positions and then identify the qualities exhibited by those individuals. These qualities then become associated with definitions of leadership.

The extent to which political leadership is identified with official position is rarely noticed and its implications rarely acknowledged. In an analysis of publications on political leadership conducted for this article, I found that more than 50 percent of the books and articles listed between 1977 and 1994 focus on specific official positions within a government or institutional authority.[5] Thus, the majority of research and writing on political leadership focuses on leadership derived from official positions.

Of course, literature exists that focuses on other aspects of leadership. Numerous books and articles have examined leadership values,[6] personal qualities,[7] and the interaction between leadership and democratic processes.[8] In addition, researchers, especially in the fields of psychology and management, have studied leadership style; researchers from these fields have also given most attention to gender differences in leadership.[9] Nevertheless, it is not uncommon for literature that purports to examine the interpersonal aspects of leadership, namely, the relationships between leaders and their followers, subsequently to highlight men who are leaders by virtue of institutionally derived "authority" or force of will. William Litzinger and Thomas Schaefer, for example, describe how certain leaders began as "good followers"; unfortunately they provide as illustrations such individuals as Winston Churchill, Otto Bismarck, Julius Caesar, Joseph Stalin, Adolf Hitler, Idi Amin, Benito Mussolini, and Genghis Khan. Most of this literature assumes, as well, that leaders are embedded in formal organizations, be they busi-

ness or politics. Jeffrey Pfeffer, for example, states that "persons are selected to leadership positions," and Warren Bennis states in various ways that "effective" leaders serve the purposes of their organizations.[10]

Gender Bias and the Study of Political Leadership

Inherent in the conceptualization of political leadership as position and institution derived is a specific gender bias. When the focus is on position-derived leadership, the political leadership of women is often overlooked or rendered invisible. Susan Bourque and Jean Grossholtz suggest that male authors in political science often restrict their attention to male political actors and that researchers today follow the pattern established by men such as Floyd Hunter and Robert Dahl "that . . . the people you study are men."[11] Warren Bennis, for example, in his otherwise compelling discussion of the dynamics and traits of leadership, studied only six women in his sample of ninety.[12] And others find that when situational cues associated with leadership, such as being seated at the head of a table, are applied to men, they are identified as leaders; however, women are not so identified even when situational cues should convey leadership status on them.[13]

In addition, women are often rendered invisible as leaders in community studies simply by the authors' ignoring that they are women. This trend is especially true for minority women. For example, Matthew Crenson's study of neighborhood politics in Baltimore never comments on the fact that many if not most of the black leaders he writes about are women, identifiable by their names. In Boston, Miren Uriarte-Gaston fails to comment on the fact that the activists who had the biggest impact on Latino mass mobilization in the 1970s were Latina women. Even works by women, such as Jane Bayes's *Minority Politics and Ideologies in the United States*, overlook the unique aspects of the politics of minority women when they focus on women as a minority rather than minority women as political actors and political leaders.[14]

Another way of overlooking the political leadership of women is by defining the domain of politics so that it reflects a male bias: the domain of political leadership is essentially public and formally organized and structured.[15] Hierarchically structured organizations with position-derived leaders may in fact reflect a male preference for hierarchy, authority, legitimacy, and control than embody an inherent quality of leadership per se.[16] Women's activism in arenas that reflect their concern for their children, their families, and their neighborhoods is identified as "community activism" at best or "disorderly" at worst, but rarely is it identified as political leadership to the same degree as male-focused activities.[17]

My purpose in providing this rather lengthy discussion of the failures of current thinking on political leadership is to emphasize that what is left out of such conceptualizations is the role of community leadership — leadership of the community. By focusing so heavily on the leaders in high positions, mainstream studies of leadership fail to address the interaction between leaders and followers at the community level.[18] Yet it is precisely community-level political activism that is often the first step toward political participation taken by Latinos in the mainland United States. The political process, especially for those who have not previously participated in politics, typically begins at the community level. The crucial task identified by most analysts of Latino politics is to engage those Latinos who are disaffected or alienated from the political process or who

are ineligible to participate owing to lack of citizenship. This is the community level at which Latina women are most successful in promoting political participation among the disaffected or alienated Latino community members.

Latina Women and Leadership: Research Methods

This article is based on findings from three research studies. The first was a qualitative study of Latino political participation in Boston, Massachusetts.[19] I conducted in-depth, semistructured interviews with thirty-one influential Latinos and twenty-two "common folk" (*la gente del pueblo*) between 1988 and 1990. Each interview, in English or in Spanish, lasted two to three hours. I selected the influential Latinos through a combination of reputational, purposive, and snowball sampling; the common folk were volunteers from Latino community centers in Boston's three main Latino neighborhoods. I interviewed twenty-nine women and twenty-four men; the ethnic breakdown reflected the current demographic diversity of Boston's Latino population. Further, more than one hundred hours of participant observation of community organizing and other political events added context and richness to the interview data.

The second source of data provides some preliminary findings on Latina women's leadership from a national project on Latina leadership development in relation to the AIDS crisis.[20] This research includes a series of interviews with eighteen Latina women from six sites across the United States and Puerto Rico who are participating in a national project called Latina HIV/AIDS Partnership Plan. The women, selected randomly from those participating in the project, are being interviewed over a three-year period to track their development as leaders in the area of HIV/AIDS within a national network of Latina women. Included in their interviews are their opinions on and experiences related to leadership development as Latina women. Data from this study are included here because they provide in-depth information on leadership from a Latina woman's perspective over time and include women from across the United States, including Puerto Rico.

The third source of data is a study in progress that examines the impact of gender on Latino electoral campaigns in Massachusetts. This study is gathering information on all Latino candidates who have ever run for office in the state and examining the impact of gender on motivation to run for office and campaign strategies.[21]

Leadership as Positions: Latina Women and Latino Men

Before discussing the ways a focus on leadership as positions prevents us from gaining a complete picture of political leadership, I would like to address the issue of the invisibility of women's leadership even when the women hold positions. The literature on Latino politics virtually ignores the political participation of Latina women in general, and a common response to comments about Latina women as political leaders is skepticism and doubt. However, the assumption that Latina women are passive, submissive, and uninvolved in politics is belied by reality.[22]

Nationally, Latina women make up a larger portion of Latino elected officials than non-Latina women.[23] While the literature on women in politics stresses the difficulty in recruiting women to run for office[24] (and during the 1990 primary campaign only 15 percent of Massachusetts candidates were women), Latina women in Boston and

Massachusetts run for office in high numbers. *In Boston, a full one-half of all Latino candidates have been Latina women.* In addition, the first Latino to run for mayor was a Latina woman, Diana Lam in 1991, not a man. Her candidacy was extremely short-lived owing to certain IRS irregularities, but the lack of attention to her candidacy may be attributed to her being a woman: Lam's announcement that she was a candidate received little press and was placed "below the fold" in the *Boston Globe*. Only after she withdrew did the *Globe* declare that she would have presented the most serious challenge to the incumbent.

In Massachusetts, almost one-third (32.6%) of the Latinos who have run for office have been Latina women. More than half (57%) of the candidates who have been elected, that is, were "successful," have been Latina women. Of the two Latinos who ran for mayor, one was a Latina woman. In addition, five of the eight Latinos (62%) who ran for state-level offices or higher since 1980 have also been Latina women.[25]

The political leadership of Latina women is less visible, therefore, by a tendency to ignore them even when they are candidates or elected officials — roles commonly accepted as political leadership within mainstream literature. The assumption that males are the leaders, despite the sheer numbers of Latina women who run for office and are elected, is illustrated as well by what Andrea del Valle,[26] one Latina woman I interviewed, said: "You can have ten women, but if there's one man, 'Oh! He must be the president!'" In other words, there seems to be a need to see men as being "in charge."

Del Valle attributes the invisibility of Latina women in politics, specifically as leaders, to a particular mind-set: leaders must be men. In addition, the assumption of position-derived leadership creates a bias against recognition that political leadership is not located only in those who hold official titles. She herself holds no lofty position and is not acclaimed in the Anglo press as a "leader"; she works to organize others politically. Her politics is not the politics of positions and public speeches; who is president is less important than achieving change. Her work, and the work of other women like her, is rendered invisible by the mind-set of researchers who look at public, official, and titular politics.

Mary Pardo discovered a similar process when she examined the political organizing of Mexican-American women in Los Angeles. She found that the Latina women mobilized Latino men "by giving them a position they could manage. The men may have held the title of 'president,' but they were not making day-to-day decisions about work, nor were they dictating the direction of the group. . . . *This should alert researchers against measuring power and influence by looking solely at who holds titles.*"[27] (Emphasis added)

Even more important than the fact that Latina women hold positions of leadership as candidates or elected officials is the way Latina women and Latino men differ in whether holding a position is an essential feature of leadership. One man, when asked to describe what he did politically, turned to his computer and printed a list of his positions, titles, and memberships in organizations. Latina women, in contrast, talked about politics as making connections between people to take collective action on social problems and to achieve social change.

The gender difference in how politics was defined by men and women was striking. In the Boston study I found that Latino men were five times as likely as Latina women to define politics as positions and status. The men, who were more concerned about holding positions, defined political participation as gaining access to positions and iden-

tified leadership as serving as role models. Until relatively recently, Boston Latino men were also more likely to move into positions in government from positions as directors of community-based agencies.

As one man said, "If you look at the leadership, every single person has been a director of agencies. I don't think there are any exceptions around. Why? Because those were the only institutional bases available to Latinos ten, fifteen years ago here, so the leadership . . . today . . . came through that bottleneck." And while there are certainly exceptions where women in Boston have been directors of agencies, male dominance of these positions was confirmed by men as well as women. One man said, for example, "It's men making decisions on who gets hired. . . . The men's club."

A preliminary list of influential Latinos in Boston generated through the reputational method, yielded, not untypically, names of people in positions — and the list was 60 percent male. When the question was asked: "Who is good at getting others to participate in politics — in other words, to lead others?" the gender ratio shifted to 60 percent female. Scrutiny of the list of individuals not holding positions revealed that a full 75 percent of those identified as "being able to lead others into politics" were Latina women.

The idea of "being in charge," of holding a position in an organization, office, or institution, relies heavily on the assumption that leadership stemming from institution-derived authority is superior to charismatic or traditional leadership. The problem with such an assumption is that the concern for legitimacy associated with positions in institutions or organizations may be a male concern or preference more than an inherent feature of leadership. (I would even go so far as to suggest that the concern for institutional legitimacy — implicit in bureaucratic leadership — goes back even further to male concerns about legitimate progeny for the purposes of inheritance.)

Leadership and Personal Traits

Studies of political leadership — and studies of leadership in such fields as management as well — have often focused on personal traits associated with presumed "leaders."[28] One of the most prominent personal traits assumed to be associated with leadership is that of dominance, which of course is linked to power.[29] The supposition follows that leadership is associated both with having a position and with personal traits such as "being in charge." Being able to convince others that one is right, that one's ideas are "the way to go," seems indelibly linked to our ideas about leadership and pertain to charismatic leaders as much as, if not more so, than bureaucratic leaders. However, theories of leadership that stress personal traits often overlook the fact that certain traits are more likely to reflect male styles of leadership than universal or female styles of leadership. Also, much of the emphasis on dominance as a key trait of leaders derives from early studies conducted almost exclusively on males — usually white ones.

Robert Lane, for example, connects politics to the need for power and the need to express or control aggression, but he downplays social relations and affiliative needs. Lane's conclusion that politics is more about power and control than affiliation and social connectedness may result from the fact that the subjects of his research were male and not from an accurate analysis that reflects both male and female perspectives. Implicit in the conception of leadership as positions and a concern for power over social relations is the ability to "command action" and for the followers of leaders to be able to "take orders." William Litzinger and Thomas Schaefer, for example, state that "many

fine leaders have been excellent followers. The young Churchill distinguished himself as a faithful taker of orders."[30] My findings suggest that the concern for power over affiliation is not a political trait but a male trait, one that does not capture a complete picture of political leadership.

Catalina Torres, a Mexican-American woman in Boston, tells of her efforts to develop an economic project for the Boston Latino community. When she contacted agency directors for letters of support, they resisted and complained that she should have consulted them first on any project development. She recalled "people saying, 'Who does she think she is? We were here first. Why is she doing it, why didn't you call on us?'" The concern about who is going to be first — competition over turf and the desire to retain power — got in the way of an economic development project. When asked, "Who were these people resisting support for the project?" Torres replied, "These are the guys." While it might be pointed out that competition over turf is a mainstay of all political life, it was the women in both studies who pointed specifically to men's obstructing the community projects they, Latina women, initiated. It was not the other Latina women who were putting obstacles in their paths.

There is some evidence in the Latino social science literature that men are more concerned about power and turf than women. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, for example, described her efforts to pass legislation establishing Hispanic women's centers in New Jersey. She indicated that one stumbling block was the opposition by the directors of Hispanic agencies and later stated that the directors who opposed her were virtually all men. Antonia Pantoja and Esperanza Martell found a similar pattern in New York.[31]

Results from the Latina women's leadership development project discussed above suggest that Latina women see men as being overly concerned with "having the right answer" and dominating the discourse at meetings. A California woman I interviewed stated that men were likely to get up at a meeting and say "something like, 'There are three things you can say about this [problem]' and everybody else is saying, 'Yeah, yeah, there are three things.' And I'm sitting there saying, '*Three* things? Maybe there are more, I don't know.' I just don't like it when people are so sure of themselves." She echoed other women I interviewed as part of this project when, in discussing what makes a "good leader," she deemphasized the need to be recognized or to control the agenda. Another woman stated that a good leader is successful when "no one knows you're leading"; the group members feel empowered to take collective action on their own behalf.

Aracelis Guzmán, in Boston, also identified male concerns for dominance as a source of divisiveness in the Latino community.

> When they [men] become leaders, they go off on their own and you cannot get
> them down from there. And this is very divisive, very harmful . . . because
> everyone is there, like this, saying, "Sí, sí [nods several times] when, in reality,
> they do not agree with him. And it's the mental set that the man — el macho —
> has all the answers.

If Latino men stressed positions and status five times as much as Latina women did, what did Latina women talk about? Politics for Latina women emphasized making connections at the community level — for them, leadership involves not positions and dominance but the relationships between people. The relationship between leaders and followers is the basis for much of the political leadership of Latina women.

They express less concern for control and power over others[32] or for being designated official leader. For example, men were almost three times as likely as women to talk about power.[33] Instead, women underscore a collective, shared vision of leadership. One woman said that there is pressure to designate a leader and when someone is seen as effective: "They see you as a ray of light and then this person becomes 'The Leader!' And even though there are clearly people who have a vision, who have a set of skills that enable them to stir people up later on — to say, 'Look, what we have to do is this and this and this.' I believe that it should be more collective — that there should be more than one head."

This emphasis on multiple sources of leadership and being able to "stir people up," *atraer a otros*, is heavily invested in assumptions that leadership has to do with the leader-follower relationship. Political science sometimes seems a little uncomfortable in shifting a focus to the relational side of politics. For example, H. G. Peter Wallach criticizes Barbara Kellerman for "further[ing] the assumption that leadership is largely understood through the leader-follower relationship."[34] Feminist political theory, however, suggests that the emphasis on power, position, and hierarchy reflects male concerns more than a universal set of beliefs and certainly does not reflect women's concerns about leadership. Nancy Chodorow and Deborah Tannen find that women's strivings for intimacy, interdependence, and relationship "dovetail with connection" and that men are working hard to preserve their independence in a hierarchical world.[35]

Leadership for Latina women stresses affiliation — personal relationships — and is located in a domain that is both public and private. María Ramírez, for example, told a story of connecting neighbor to neighbor to fight drugs in her neighborhood. Her concern was not for her own status — she downplayed her own role in the effort. Her leadership was not derived from a position she held, although she worked in the state legislature. Her leadership is illustrated by and derives from the relationship she has with community members, with the people who follow her lead. Ramírez works with Latinos in her neighborhood — Latinos who cannot vote, who are not citizens, and who often are in the United States illegally — to solve community problems. She first focuses on the need to connect neighbor to neighbor, whether the people involved are citizens from Puerto Rico or legal or illegal residents from Santo Domingo and Central America.

> I've called a couple of people and said, "Look, these are our kids; we either
> see them get their heads beat in, put away for life, get shot up, or we go
> out there and we help them." They're not my children personally, but they
> are our kids and we all get labeled the same and [the police] don't care if
> [the kids] are Puerto Rican, if they're from Santo Domingo, if they're from
> El Salvador; they don't care, they speak Spanish, they're Hispanic, that's all
> they know. So we either do something about it or we don't. We're trying to
> talk to the parents and I have neighbors talking to neighbors, talking, saying
> "Look, let's not have a riot this weekend, let's try to talk — What's the problem?"

María Ramírez then described how she succeeded in mobilizing undocumented immigrants in a Latino neighborhood to tackle the problems of drugs.

> We had this drug house and I told the people on Boylston Street — they could
> not vote, the majority of those people could not vote. And they weren't
> Puerto Ricans either. I said, "You live on this street, you want it to be good,
> you take responsibility." . . . They first thought I was crazy! They said,

"What do you mean?! I mean [that] some of these people were even illegal,
and I said, "I don't care if you're legal or not; you want responsibility, you
do something about it." We have to decide what we want and go after it. . . .
They did. We put this march together, we had the New England Telephone
Company donate the BAD shirts — Boston Against Drugs — we had buttons,
we made banners, they cooked, we rallied in front of the drug houses with
the cops and everything. We pointed the people out. They did that — I mean,
I was there, but they did it. And every time there was an incident, they
came out to the streets and they said, "No more," and it took us a year, but
[the drug dealers] aren't there anymore. The elected official was there,
the police were there, and these are people who do not vote!

She stresses what "they" did, not what she did. Like Anne Statham, who found that
women were less inclined than men to be, what she called, "image-engrossed,"[36]
Ramírez is less concerned with making an impression or achieving status for herself or
controlling the actions of the group. She is more concerned with accomplishing the
goals of the group. Her goal, at the most basic level, was to get rid of drug houses; at a
deeper level, her leadership empowered groups who are among the most marginalized of
all urban groups: the undocumented immigrants — "illegal aliens." Providing leadership
for her neighbors empowered them to overcome both the disinclination to get involved
associated with poverty, the inability to speak English, and the inhibitions imposed by
illegal status. Here, in this example, are Latinos who are illegal residents working side
by side with the police in the city of Boston. They are also being led by Latina women.

Political Leadership, Culture, and Gender

The nature of leadership shifts from a focus on positions and dominance to a focus on
interpersonal relationships when one includes the experiences of Latina women.
Those whom I interviewed for these studies emphasize the relational rather than posi-
tional aspects of leadership, are less concerned with power or control of turf, and lead
others into political participation through the use of personal relationships. Politics be-
comes an interactive process oriented toward achieving collectively determined goals.
It seems clear that the way leadership is defined depends on the gender of the researcher
and of the leaders themselves.

But is what Latina women do any different from what other women — white women,
black women — do? A feminist debate continues to rage about whether there are essen-
tial differences between women's politics and men's politics in general.

Feminist politics, which typically focuses on white women, emphasizes grass roots,
personal politics, a politics tied to individual, family, friendship networks, and com-
munity relationships. Martha A. Ackelsberg and Diane L. Fowlkes, for example, discuss
how women's views of politics are connected to home, family, friends, and community,
much like the views Latina women in this research exemplified. Virginia Sapiro and
Janet Flammang also find that women in general link private experiences to public poli-
tics and that women differ from men in their perception of politics and political partici-
pation.[37]

Research on black women in politics leads to similar conclusions. Generally, private
actions and informal personal networks have provided support for lower-class black
women to achieve major social changes. Black women seem to provide evidence, there-
fore, that gender differences in the nature of politics do exist — that politics for women

is more personal, stresses interpersonal relationships, and is an interactive process. According to this literature, everyday concerns and relationships based on day-to-day networks form the basis of political mobilization for black women.[38]

I do not claim, then, that Latina women are unique in their ability to generate political participation via their emphasis on connectedness. What is important is not whether Latina women differ from other women in how they perceive the nature of politics and how they work within the Latino community, but rather that (1) Latina women run for office more than their non-Latina counterparts; (2) contrary to prevailing myths, Latina women take on political leadership roles; and (3) by virtue of the women's connectedness to the community, Latina political leadership may well be the key to Latino community empowerment.

Implications for Latino Politics and Community Empowerment

The study of Latina women in Boston and nationally serves to dispel myths about Latina women and leadership and provides insight into issues of political leadership. When leadership is defined as positions in government and elected or appointed office, males dominate the discourse about the nature of leadership. In addition, by ignoring the extent to which Latina women run for and are elected to office, the media, social science literature, and community are able to continue to see politics as a male phenomenon. However, by acknowledging the contribution of Latina women as candidates and as community leaders, we can begin to examine and recognize the value of their ability to empower Latino communities.

And what do they do that is different from Latino men? Latina women seem to work with community members on collectively generated goals that derive from the community members themselves. Political leadership based on the community members' seeing themselves "in charge" empowers the community in ways that leadership based on dominance may not. The benefit of this leadership style is that it gives voice to Latinos who have not previously participated in politics; it empowers them to speak out at meetings and to decide on a course of action.

In addition, by focusing on improvements in everyday life in the neighborhoods — education, street safety, housing quality, jobs — Latina women are able to mobilize the community around felt needs. It is possible, therefore, to bring into the political process those Latinos who are too often marginalized by a politics based on more traditional, position-derived leadership that emphasizes voting and electoral representation.

Indeed, the picture of Latina women's political leadership that emerges from the two studies that form the basis of this article has several important implications for Latino community development. First, Latina women, compared with men, are less concerned with titles and positions and more concerned with community connectedness. Because of this, they focus on how to achieve change at the neighborhood, community level. This is the level at which Latinos who see the need for jobs, safety, financial security, health care, and access to high-quality education can become mobilized to participate in electoral or community politics. As a male political activist in Boston said, "Women have been a major force at the grass roots in the Hispanic community — from the day we came here, from the day we came to the United States. At the grass roots, the community level, women have been the major force for change."

Second, the Boston Latino community comprises only 11 percent of the population and is characterized by considerable diversity. Creating a unified community is a

first step toward community empowerment. Building bridges — making connections — between Latinos of all nationalities at the community level is critical at this stage.

In addition, generating a sense of empowerment in a community increasingly made up of undocumented immigrants requires a political leadership not constrained by the requirements of an official position or organizational role. Latina women, as illustrated in the efforts of María Ramírez, generate political participation in ways that transcend legal status. They lead by connecting neighbor to neighbor, by generating a sense of efficacy, and they do this by not dominating the process or the people they are trying to lead. Their focus is on social change undertaken in action with others. As Rosa López said, "Politics is promoting change . . . That's political. That's what I mean by politics. That's what politics means to me."

In order to achieve Latino community empowerment, it is necessary to begin to acknowledge Latina women as political leaders, to recognize their contribution to Latino political participation, and to learn from their experiences as candidates, community activists, and political mobilizers.

Third, it is important to examine why Latina women run for office essentially in numbers equivalent to Latino men and why, when they run, they are elected in comparable numbers, as well. Although their candidacies and electoral successes receive little recognition in the media and the social science literature, they seem to be connecting to the Latino communities they strive to represent. By examining their motivations for running for office, their campaign style and strategies, and the way they interact with Latino community residents, we may gain insights needed for successful Latino candidacies — male as well as female.

A final implication of this research is that it represents a challenge: a challenge to researchers to examine our own work for questions of gender and gender bias in how we define our terms, how we study the elements of politics, whom we choose to interview or study, and what assumptions frame our research. ❧

Notes

1. For a discussion of both the elusiveness of the topic and the interdisciplinary nature of research on leadership, see, for example, William E. Rosenbach and Robert L. Taylor, eds., *Contemporary Issues in Leadership* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), and Warren Bennis, *An Invented Life: Reflections on Leadership and Change* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1993).

2. Marianismo, as a cultural value, creates role expectations that derive from qualities attributed to the Virgin Mary.

3. For a discussion of the impact of restrictive, oppressive, and subservient life conditions on the politics of Mexican-American women, see, for example, Ralph Guzmán, *The Political Socialization of the Mexican American People* (New York: Arno Press, 1976), 231–234; Margarita B. Melville, ed., *Twice a Minority: Mexican American Women* (St. Louis: C. V. Mosby, 1980); Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enríquez, *La Chicana: The Mexican American Woman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); and Polly Baca Barragán, "The Lack of Political Involvement as It Relates to their Educational Background and Occupational Opportunities," in *Conference on the Educational and Occu-*

pational Needs of Hispanic Women, by the National Institute of Education (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, September 1980), 39–46.

4. In conducting a computer search of literature on political leadership from 1977 to 1994, I found that the majority of publications on political leadership focus on people in positions, or on the positions themselves, as somehow denoting leadership (see note 5 below). Research on Latino politics that follows the same path is exemplified by George Edward Martin, "Ethnic Political Leadership: The Case of the Puerto Ricans," Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1977; Felix M. Padilla, *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985); Felix M. Padilla, *Puerto Rican Chicago* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1987).

5. I conducted the computer search in November 1994 using Multiplatter and the keywords "leadership" and "politic*," which included not only political but also politics.
   This search listed the titles, authors, sources, and abstracts for almost five hundred books and articles published between 1977 and 1994. In addition to books and monographs, I included all major political science journals in the data base. I categorized each search result on the basis of its title and abstract as to the primary and secondary focus. I calculated percentages of each category to produce the data cited here. The categories generated included "one head of state/ruler"; "one or more heads of states/conflict over succession"; "conflict between leaders of groups within specific countries (e.g., Yasir Arafat as a leader of the PLO; includes leaders of coups and revolutions); "leadership offices/positions such as 'state legislators,' 'mayors,' 'appointed officials' (including competition over turf/office)"; "policy/government decisions made by leaders of countries"; "party politics/leadership and 'elite' leaders"; "leadership development"; "types of leadership related to government structure (i.e., authoritarianism vs. democracy, particularly in Middle East, Soviet Union, Africa, and other foreign countries)"; and "management, especially around 'effective government,'" "leadership and elections," "gender differences," "personality and characteristics," and "community participation/leaders."
   The categories were not necessarily mutually exclusive but most articles/books, in fact, could be categorized into one major category and in the analysis I calculated percentages based on exclusive categories. The analysis showed that 16.3 percent were about a specific "ruler" of a given country (e.g., Presidents Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan, Franklin D. Roosevelt; Prime Ministers Pierre Trudeau and Margaret Thatcher; and other heads of state such as Sukarno of Indonesia and Charles de Gaulle). When publications about conflicts between more than one head of state/ruler (and issues of succession) were added, 25 percent of the works cited focused on these two aspects of leadership. Finally, when literature about leaders of groups in a given country who were in conflict to become the head of state and discussions about elected/appointed official positions such as legislators, mayors, and so forth, were added, a full 53.2 percent of published works on political leadership were found to be about specific official positions with a government or institutional authority.

6. See, for example, Harold J. Bershady, ed., *Social Class and Democratic Leadership* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), and Frank Bealey, *Democracy in the Contemporary State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).

7. See, for example, Robert Tucker, *The Soviet Political Mind: Stalinism and Post-Stalin Change*, rev. ed. (New York: Norton, 1977).

8. This is one of the largest categories in my search of the literature on leadership that is not specifically about official positions. The concern in political science for stability and foreign relations has yielded an extensive literature on the relationship between types of leadership (authoritarian, bureaucratic, charismatic) and forms of government. Many of the publications in this area focus on countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe, especially Russia in the post-Communist era. See, for example, O. M. Laleye and Victor Ayeni, "On the Politics of Traditional Leadership," *International Journal*

of Politics, Culture, and Society 6 (Summer 1993): 555–571; Michael B. Bisku, "Sukarno, Charismatic Leadership and Islam in Indonesia," Journal of Third World Studies 9 (Fall 1992): 100–117; and Anatoly Chernyaev, "The Phenomenon of Gorbachev in the Context of Leadership," International Affairs (June 1993): 37–48.

9. Edwin P. Hollander and Jan Yoder examine gender and leadership style, situational influences, and leadership effectiveness in "Some Issues in Comparing Women and Men as Leaders," Basic and Applied Social Psychology 1, no. 3 (September 1980): 267–280. See also, for example, Anne Statham, "The Gender Model Revisited: Differences in the Management Styles of Men and Women," Sex Roles 16, nos. 7/8 (April 1987): 409–429; Barbara Kellerman, ed., Political Leadership: A Sourcebook (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986).

10. William Litzinger and Thomas Schaefer, "Leadership Through Followership," in Contemporary Issues in Leadership, edited by William E. Rosenbach and Robert L. Taylor (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984), 138–143; Jeffrey Pfeffer, "The Ambiguity of Leadership," in Contemporary Issues in Leadership, 6; Bennis, An Invented Life, 75–85.

11. Quote is from Susan C. Bourque and Jean Grossholtz, "Politics — An Unnatural Practice: Political Science Looks at Female Participation," Politics and Society, Winter 1974, 225–266; Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953); Robert Dahl, Who Governs? (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961).

12. Bennis, An Invented Life.

13. Natalie Porter, Florence Lindauer Geis, and Joyce Jennings (Walstedt), "Are Women Invisible as Leaders?" Sex Roles 9, no. 10 (October 1983): 1035–1049.

14. Matthew Crenson, Neighborhood Politics (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983); Miren Uriarte-Gaston, "Organizing for Survival: The Emergence of a Puerto Rican Community," Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1988. Uriarte-Gaston corrects this omission in a later publication; see Miren Uriarte, "Contra Viento y Marea (Against All Odds): Latinos Build Community in Boston," in Latinos in Boston: Confronting Poverty, Building Community, edited by Miren Uriarte, Paul Osterman, Carol Hardy-Fanta, and Edwin Meléndez, background paper for "Beyond Poverty: Building Community through New Perspectives, The Boston Persistent Poverty Project" (Boston: The Boston Foundation, 1992), 22; Jane Bayes, Minority Politics and Ideologies in the United States (Novato, Calif.: Chandler and Sharp, 1982).

15. See, for example, Benjamin Barber, Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

16. For a discussion of the way hierarchy and formal organizations reflect a male bias, see, for example, Martha A. Ackelsberg, "Women's Collaborative Activities and City Life: Politics and Policy," in Political Women: Current Roles in State and Local Government, ed. Janet A. Flammang (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), 242–259; Martha A. Ackelsberg, Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991); Kay Barbara Warren and Susan C. Bourque, "Gender, Power, and Communication: Women's Responses to Political Muting in the Andes," in Women Living Change, edited by Susan C. Bourque and Donna Robinson Divine (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1985): 255–286. William E. Rosenbach and Robert L. Taylor illustrate the concern for legitimacy when they state that "followers give legitimacy to the leadership role," Rosenbach and Taylor, Contemporary Issues in Leadership, 135). See also my discussion of this topic in Carol Hardy-Fanta, Latina Politics, Latino Politics: Gender, Culture and Political Participation in Boston (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 83–87, 90–94.

17. For a discussion of the way women's political activism is labeled "disorderly," see, for example, Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), and Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*.

18. See Part 3, Rosenbach and Taylor, *Contemporary Issues in Leadership*, 135–230, for a discussion of the concept and implications of "followership" for the study of leadership.

19. See Carol Hardy-Fanta, "Latina Women and Politics in Boston: *Somos La Vida, La Fuerza, La Mujer*," *Latino Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (May 1992): 38–54; Hardy-Fanta, *Latina Politics, Latino Politics*; Carol Hardy-Fanta, "Discovering Latina Women in Boston Politics," *Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy* 7 (1993–1994): 5–25. For a complete discussion of the research methodology of this study, see Carol Hardy-Fanta, "Latina Women, Latino Men and Political Participation in Boston: *La Chispa Que Prende*," Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1991. Interviews and observations were transcribed into a text-base computer analysis program, *The Ethnograph* (Amherst, Mass.: Qualis Research).

20. I have been analyzing data from the evaluation of the Latina HIV/AIDS Partnership Plan, a CDC-funded project developed by Hispanic Designers International. The evaluation is being conducted by Hortensia Amaro, Ph.D., at the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department of Boston University School of Public Health; I thank Dr. Amaro for her permission to share preliminary findings from this study.

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22. For discussions of this view of Latina women, see, for example, Mirandé and Enríquez, *La Chicana*, and Melville, *Twice a Minority*.

23. See, for example, Harry P. Pachon, "An Overview of Hispanic Elected Officials in 1987," in *1987 National Roster of Hispanic Elected Officials* (Washington, D.C.: National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials [NALEO], 1987), iv–xxvi.

24. Most of the mainstream literature on the recruitment of women candidates clearly states that women do not run for office as often as men. Susan MacManus, for example, refers to the "paucity of female candidates" in "How to Get More Women in Office: The Perspectives of Local Elected Officials (Mayors and City Councilors)," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (September 1992): 159–70. A recent report from the National Women's Political Caucus also states: "Women have made up a very small percentage of candidates in general elections, particularly at the higher levels" (Jody Newman, "Perception and Reality: A Study Comparing the Success of Men and Women Candidates," Executive Summary of the National Women's Political Caucus [Washington, D.C.: National Women's Political Caucus, September 1994], 6).

25. For a discussion of the percentages of Latina women who have run for office from Boston, see Hardy-Fanta, *Latina Politics, Latino Politics*, 16. The data on Latino candidates in Massachusetts are preliminary findings from the research study on the impact of gender on Latino campaigns in Massachusetts currently in progress (see note 21). Carmen Pola (1981), Crucita Rivera (1992), Dorca Arriaga-Gómez (1992), and Linda Torres (1994) have run for state representative; Alba Castillo ran against Patricia McGovern for the state senate (1990). Nelson Merced ran for and was elected state representative (1988, 1990). He ran again in 1992 but was defeated in a sticker campaign. Juan Soto ran for state rep-

resentative in 1988 and for U.S. Congress in 1990. Johnny Rivera ran for state represent-ative in 1994 but did not campaign actively. A Latino man also ran for state-level office several decades ago. Alex Rodriguez ran for state representative in 1968.

26. The names of people I interviewed are pseudonyms; those of public officials are their true names.

27. Mary Pardo, "Mexican American Women Grassroots Community Activists: Mothers of East Los Angeles," *Frontiers* 11, no. 1 (1990): 3.

28. See Edwin P. Hollander, *Leadership, Innovation and Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), and G. C. Homans, The Human Group (New York: Harcourt, 1950).

29. For a discussion of how dominance is associated with presumptions of leadership, see Porter, Geis, and Jennings, "Are Women Invisible as Leaders?"

30. Robert Lane, *Political Thinking and Consciousness: The Private Life of the Political Mind* (Chicago: Markham Publishing, 1969), 31, and Litzinger and Shaefer, "Leadership Through Followership," 140.

31. Gloria Bonilla-Santiago, speech delivered at the National Association of Social Workers Conference, Boston, November 15, 1990), and Antonia Pantoja and Esperanza Martell, "Mi gente," *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños Bulletin* 2, no. 7 (Winter 1989–1990): 48–55.

32. See Jean Baker Miller, "Women and Power," *Social Policy* 13, no. 4 (Spring 1983): 3–6, and Hardy-Fanta, *Latina Politics, Latino Politics*, 30–31.

33. Hardy-Fanta, *Latina Politics, Latino Politics*, 207.

34. H. G. Peter Wallach, "Political Leadership," *Journal of Politics* 50, no. 4 (November 1988): 1092, and Kellerman, *Political Leadership*.

35. Nancy Chodorow, "Family Structure and Feminine Personality," in *Woman, Culture and Society*, edited by M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), quoted in Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982), 16, and Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Morrow, Ballantine edition, 1991), 28, 277.

36. Anne Statham finds that "respondents perceived that women were both task and people oriented while men appeared image engrossed and autonomy invested," "Gender Model Revisited," 409.

37. Ackelsberg, "Women's Collaborative Activities," 242–259; Diane L. Fowlkes, "Conceptions of the 'Political': White Activists in Atlanta," in Flammang, *Political Women*, 66-86, and Virginia Sapiro, *The Political Integration of Women: Roles, Socialization and Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983).

38. Bonnie Thorton Dill, "'Making Your Job Good Yourself': Domestic Service and the Construction of Personal Dignity," in *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*, edited by Ann Bookman and Sandra Morgen (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 33–52; Anne Witte Garland, *Women Activists: Challenging the Abuse of Power* (New York: Feminist Press, 1988); Karen Sacks, "Gender and Grassroots Leadership," in Bookman and Morgen, *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*, 77–94.