Chapter 1

1. I use the term community organization in this book to refer to organizations that serve a particular community—that is, immigrants—rather than to suggest that an organization serves a specific geographic locale.

2. The wave of immigration that the United States is experiencing today parallels the mass migration that occurred one hundred years ago. U.S. immigration peaked from 1900 to 1910 and then decreased after the 1920s as a result of immigration policies and a declining economy. During the 1960s, restrictive and discriminatory immigration laws were liberalized, and immigration began to increase dramatically. Although only 3 million immigrants arrived in the United States in the 1960s, nearly 8 million immigrants entered the country in the 1990s (Shinagawa 1996; Lollock 2001; Westphal 2001).

3. The Current Population Survey (CPS) defines the foreign-born population as those civilian persons currently living in noninstitutional housing who entered the United States with immigrant visas or as spouses or children of immigrants; who were admitted in a refugee status; who entered with student visas and overstayed; or who entered the United States without documents. The CPS may underestimate the U.S. foreign-born population by failing to account fully for the undocumented population. According to a recent news report by Cindy Rodriguez (2001), the 2000 Census showed a higher than expected number of Asians and Latinos, which is most likely attributable to undocumented immigrants. She reported that the number of undocumented immigrants in the United States may be 11 million, 5 million more than the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service had estimated.

4. Latino refers to residents of the United States who trace their ancestry to Latin America or the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean. I use the term Asian or Asian American interchangeably to refer to those U.S. residents who trace their ancestry to Asia, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands. Some scholars also use the term Asian American to refer only to those of Asian ancestry who are U.S. citizens by birth or naturalization. However, many immigrants from Asia who are not citizens plan eventually to make the United States their permanent home and contribute to American life. In many cases, I use
the term *Asian American* rather than *Asian* to refer to people of Asian descent living permanently in the United States regardless of their place of birth or citizenship status. Although scholars often use the term *Asian* to refer to people of Asian origin in the United States, that term fails to distinguish people in Asia from those in the United States and can contribute to the stereotype that people of Asian ancestry in the United States are perpetual foreigners. I use *Mexican* and *Mexican American* interchangeably to refer to someone of Mexican origin living in the United States. Similarly, I use the terms *Chinese* and *Chinese American* interchangeably to refer to someone of Chinese origin living in the United States.

5. The trend in California illustrates the effect of immigration compared to the effect of birthrate. The population in California has been growing steadily since the 1960s. However, unlike the past, the current growth is occurring in the proportion of foreign-born *newcomers* to the state, and this will remain true in the future. In 1970, immigrants constituted less than 10 percent of the state’s population; by 1990, they comprised more than 20 percent. In absolute numbers, the immigrant population in California doubled between 1980 and 1990 (Myers and Pitkin 2001).

6. For example, according to data from the 2000 Census, more than 10 percent of California’s population (including approximately 30 percent in San Francisco County and 12 percent in Los Angeles County) is Asian American. In Queens County, New York, 18 percent of the residents are Asian American. The statistics on the Asian American population included in this section are taken from www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab08.htm; www.census.gov/population/cen2000/phc-t1/tab01.txt; www.factfinder.census.gov/home/en/pldata.html (Census 2000 Redistricting Summary File).

7. In New Mexico, California, and Texas, for example, Latinos account for at least 30 percent of the state’s population. Latinos are the dominant ethnic group in some localities. In multiethnic Los Angeles County, Latinos comprise approximately 45 percent of the population, followed by whites (35 percent), Asian Americans (12 percent), and blacks (10 percent). The statistics on the Latino population included in this section are taken from www.census.gov/population/cen2000/phc-t1/tab01.txt and www.factfinder.census.gov/home/en/pldata.html (Census 2000 Redistricting Summary File).

8. For a good discussion of how researchers have gauged the extent of a group’s substantive participation and incorporation into the political system, see Browning, Marshall, and Tabb 1984; Davidson and Grofman 1994.


11. Political activity can be construed as system-challenging and radical in that it defies the existing governmental system in an attempt to alter it dramatically or replace it altogether. Political activity may also be seen as normal, seeking to create changes within the framework of the current system. Although some studies link immigrant groups to radical politics (Rosenblum 1973; Portes and Rumbaut 1996), the activities that I most often encountered can appropriately be categorized as normal politics. I am indebted to Gaspar Rivera-Salgado for helping me to think through these distinctions as they relate to immigrants in particular.

12. In some cases, the gap in participation rates between new arrivals and first-generation immigrants who have resided for long periods in the United States is greater than the gap in participation rates when comparing first-generation immigrants as a whole with native-born (second- or subsequent-generation-) immigrants.

Chapter 2


2. Haney-Lopez (1996, 38) estimates that as many as half a million people were “repatriated” to Mexico.

3. Historian Matthew Frye Jacobson (1998) argues that although immigrants from Europe were considered white, a meaningful hierarchy based in part on phenotype and ethnic stereotypes existed within that broad category, which thus included several “white races.”

4. New York City includes fifty-nine community districts, geographic areas established by local law in 1975. They range in area from less than nine hundred acres to almost fifteen thousand acres and in population from fewer than thirty-five thousand residents to more than two hundred thousand (New York City Department of Planning 2001b).

5. The 2000 Census showed more than 3 million people of Mexican origin living in Los Angeles County, approximately 50 percent of them immigrants (Allen and Turner 2002).

6. Sanchez (1993) observes that it is likely that the organization also used the Independence Day events to advertise its life insurance services.
7. James Lai examines the relationship between elected representation and mobilization of the Asian American community. He finds a strong relationship between Asian American elected officials and community organizations, which suggests that “politically-active community-based organizations play both supportive and proactive roles in the recruitment of future Asian Pacific American elected officials” (2000, 7).

8. Despite these similarities to the U.S. system, there is widespread dispute over designation of Mexico as a democracy, since the executive exercises a dominant role over the judiciary and legislature, the government is highly centralized, and the country had one-party rule for more than seventy years (1929–2000).

Chapter 5

1. James Q. Wilson (1995, 96–97) distinguishes between “party organizations” and “political machines.” A party organization is “a group of persons who consciously coordinate their activities so as to influence the choice of candidates for elective office,” whereas a political machine is “a party organization relying chiefly on the attraction of material rewards.”

2. Steven Erie (1988, 2) writes that although they had their roots in the Jacksonian period (1820s and 1830s), full-fledged urban machines emerged only in the late 1800s.

3. I am indebted to Michael Jones-Correa and Ann Crigler for sharing these important observations with me.

4. Turnout in the 2004 presidential election spiked to the highest levels since 1968, with the increase attributed to a unique set of factors, including voters’ strong feelings about the Iraq war, the polarizing effects of the Bush presidency, and a close race that led to strong voter-mobilization efforts (in the battleground states where Asian Americans and Latinos are underrepresented) by the parties and other groups. Because of these unique circumstances, it is difficult to conclude whether the election changed overall trends in turnout or represents a special circumstance.

5. Noncitizens could participate in many elections until the 1920s but today are barred from voting in federal and most state and local elections. Exceptions include New York and Chicago school board elections and local offices in several municipalities in Maryland and Massachusetts (Hayduk 2002).

6. Furthermore, intraminority racial stereotypes are quite prevalent (Johnson, Farrell, and Guinn 1997).

7. I am indebted to Efrain Escobedo, with whom I worked during his tenure as a McNair Research Scholar at the University of Southern California, for his synthesis and analysis of Latino outreach efforts.

8. Although Latinos did not uniformly oppose such anti-immigrant initiatives as California’s Proposition 187, exit polls clearly show that the majority of the Latino community, including those who were born in the United States, opposed the initiative. Latinos were by far the most opposed to the initiative, although a majority of blacks and Asian Americans also voted against the measure. Less than 20 percent of Latino voters supported Proposition 187, as did 63 percent of white
voters. Latino Voter Forums conducted by the National Association of Latino Elected Officials demonstrated that although nonimmigrant Latinos often opposed illegal immigration, few supported Proposition 187 or other such policies, viewing them as not just anti-immigrant but anti-Latino.

9. The Web site was available in English and Spanish only. See http://www.democrats.org/ (accessed December 5, 2003).


11. Gold also mentioned that the candidates had failed to include Latinos in their inner circle of advisers.

12. Bloomberg, a lifelong Democrat, ran for mayor as a Republican.

13. On party clubs in New York City, see also Peel 1968; Adler and Blank 1975.

14. This observation conforms to Mollenkopf’s analysis showing that in 1988, three out of four of the party organizations in Latino assembly districts were non-competitive (1992, table 4.1).

15. Philip Kasinitz (1992) argues that Afro-Caribbeans were overrepresented in New York City politics between 1935 and 1965. These political leaders tended to deemphasize their Afro-Caribbean ethnic origins in public life, although they maintained a strong sense of ethnic identity in their personal lives (55).

Chapter 4

1. On noncitizen voting rights, see chap. 3, n. 5.

2. Because I did not interview a representative sample of community leaders or conduct a survey of a scientific sample of national organizations, caution should be used when applying these observations more generally.

3. This book places national labor unions and their local affiliates under the category labor organizations and distinguishes them from independent worker centers and independent unions. The latter deal with labor issues, but the focus is often less on union organizing than on advocacy on behalf of workers. Although the AFL-CIO is a national organization, it sponsors local, face-to-face activities with immigrants—for example, the Immigrant Workers’ Freedom Ride, which was organized in different localities. Thus, for the purposes of this work, the AFL-CIO is counted among the community organizations.

4. As discussed earlier, California’s Proposition 187 was a 1994 ballot measure that sought to deny benefits to immigrants without legal documents. Proposition 209 was an anti-affirmative-action measure that passed in 1996 in California.

5. I am indebted to Eric Oliver for sharing this observation.

6. I have grouped workers’ centers with labor organizations because both are active primarily around worker issues and worker rights. However, some workers’ centers were started because workers and community leaders felt that unions were not doing a good job of representing or protecting workers.

7. Because the Democratic Party is no longer mobilizing at the neighborhood level, it must now rely heavily on unions to turn out support for candidates. This
reinforces the claim that unions and other local community organizations bear the primary responsibility for direct mobilization of immigrants.

8. In 2002, the 1.4 million-member Teamsters Union and New York City’s 200,000-member health-care-workers union endorsed Governor George Pataki, a Republican, for reelection, and Andy Stern, Service Employees International Union president, worked with Tom DeLay, the House Republican whip, on federal policies affecting airport security screeners. A senior official in the Bush White House claimed in May 2002 that the “level of union support for Republicans in the House and Senate has jumped from 6 percent to nearly 20 percent, and I think it will go even higher before the election season is over” (quoted in Lambro 2002, A-19).

9. Unions have developed get-out-the-vote and political education programs that are separate from any candidate campaign as a way of maintaining independence from the Democratic Party (Greenhouse 1998a). In 1998, the director of the AFL-CIO announced a commitment to an explicitly grassroots campaign around the congressional elections rather than engaging in the more common practice of making large campaign contributions (Dark 2000). In the weeks leading up to the November election, the AFL-CIO registered half a million new voters (AFL-CIO 1998) by going door to door, passing out leaflets, and organizing local rallies and corporate campaigns (Seelye 1998). During the 2000 presidential campaign, AFL-CIO leaders went on a People Power 2000 tour, and union members handed out 14 million leaflets at work sites and focused on one-on-one neighborhood canvassing (Chang 2001).

10. Is it appropriate to group these different types of nonprofit community-based organizations together under one category? Such lumping may obscure differences in funding sources, the historical context that has shaped their development, and whether their origins are linked to local movements or government programs. However, community-based nonprofit status represents one key way that the organizations described in this section are similar, and that is why I have chosen to categorize them as such.

11. J. Lin (1998) notes that since the 1970s, pro-Beijing supporters have challenged the dominance of Nationalist Party (KMT) loyalists within the CCBA.

12. Jones-Correa was referring to immigrant men in particular in this case, but I suspect that the example applies to immigrants of both genders.

13. Although more than 75 percent of Latinos report that they are Roman Catholic, Latino converts are becoming a significant presence within the Protestant Pentecostal movement. For example, Los Angeles is home to about one thousand Latino Pentecostal churches (Orr 1999).

14. See Dahl 1961; Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980; Conway 1991; Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995. Scholars who study participation among groups made up of a large proportion of immigrants criticize these socioeconomic theories because they fail to consider migration-related variables such as language proficiency, minority status, experience in the country of origin, and length of residence (Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991; Uhlaner and Garcia 1998; Cho 1999; Junn 1999; J. Wong 2000). For example, a number of scholars have questioned
the applicability of the socioeconomic model for Asian Americans, who, on average, demonstrate high levels of education along with low levels of political activity (Tam 1995; Lien 1997; Cho 1999; Junn 1999).

Chapter 5

1. For potential inegalitarian responses by ethnic organizations to cleavages within groups, see Cohen 1999; Strolovitch 2002; D. Warren 2003.
2. For a quantitative study supporting this point, see T. Lee 2004.
3. According to the organization’s Web site, “CECOMEX es una institución no lucrativa que activamente trabaja para mejorar la imagen y el bienestar de la Comunidad Mexicana de Nueva York. CECOMEX tiene sus puertas abiertas a todas las comunidades sin importar raza, color, nacionalidad, credo, posición socio-económica, estatus legal y orientación sexual. Estamos localizados en el corazón de Harlem Hispano donde hay 63 negocios Mexicanos que orgullosamente representamos. Además, se estima que más de 16,000 residentes Mexicanos habitan en esta área. CECOMEX labora en los cinco condados del área metropolitana y algunas partes de Nueva Jersey. Nuestra organización se enfoca en lidiar con la problemática socio-política y económica que afecta a nuestra comunidad que se estima compuesta de más de 250,000 personas sólo en el área metropolitana, según el Censo de 1990, pero hoy en día se calcula a 850,000 en la Ciudad de Nueva York [CECOMEX is a nonprofit organization that actively works to improve the image and well-being of the Mexican community in New York. CECOMEX opens its doors to all communities, without regard to race, color, nationality, religion, socioeconomic position, legal status, or sexual orientation. We are located in the heart of Spanish Harlem, where there are 63 Mexican businesses that we proudly represent. Moreover, an estimated 16,000 Mexican residents live there. CECOMEX works in five counties in the metropolitan region and in some parts of New Jersey. Our organization focuses on combating sociopolitical and economic problems that affect our community, which the 1990 Census estimated at more than 250,000 people in the metropolitan area alone but which today is calculated at more than 850,000 in New York City].”

4. A body of research on the relationships among gender, migration, and political participation is slowly emerging, and it suggests that gender is likely to play an especially important role in the political involvement of immigrants. Michael Jones-Correa claims that working outside of the home for pay gives Latin American immigrant women in the United States more economic independence than they would have in their countries of origin and that they are more likely than Latin American immigrant men to “find reasons for adapting to their stay in United States” (1998, 345). He concludes that because women are more likely than men to remain in the United States, women are also more likely to naturalize and participate in American politics.

Chapter 6

1. Many studies that focus on immigrant populations include Puerto Ricans while noting differences in citizenship status and travel restrictions between them
and other immigrant groups (Marshall 1987; Acosta-Belen 1988; C. Davis, Haub, and Willette 1988; Jennings 1988; Safa 1988; de la Garza et al. 1992). Puerto Rico became a U.S. colonial territory in 1898, and because Puerto Ricans have been U.S. citizens at birth since 1917, they may travel without restriction between the United States and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has its own political parties, representative government, and separate laws. Puerto Ricans living on the island choose delegates for the Republican and Democratic National Conventions but cannot vote in U.S. presidential elections. However, Puerto Ricans who have immigrated to the United States can vote after registering in one of the fifty states or Washington, D.C. Most studies that include Puerto Ricans tend to refer to individuals who move from Puerto Rico to the continental U.S. as either Puerto Rican immigrants or Puerto Rican migrants. In this discussion, Puerto Rican refers to people of Puerto Rican origin whether born in the United States or on the island. Puerto Rican immigrant refers only to individuals born on the island but who have since migrated to the United States.

2. When respondents indicated that they preferred to use Spanish, they were asked: “¿Piensa que hay algún grupo u organización que se preocupa por sus intereses, aunque no sea usted miembro?”

3. Those individuals who answered “Don’t know” or who declined to state a specific organization are not included in these categories.

4. The LNPS question about membership in an organization asked, “Some of these questions will refer to [your national-origin group]. By [national-origin group], I mean all people born in the U.S. who are of [that country’s] ancestry, as well as people born in [that country] who now live here. Please tell me the names of any organizations or associations that you belong to or have given money or goods to in the past twelve months that are . . .” One category was “General Latino, Hispanic organizations/Mexican American organizations/Cuban American organizations and Puerto Rican organizations.” That category included ninety-seven possible responses, among them the National Association of Latino Elected Officials; the League of United Latin American Citizens; the National Council of La Raza; Aspira (National Associations of Chicago, Florida, New Jersey, New York, and Puerto Rico); the Cuban American Committee; and Mexican American, Cuban American, or Puerto Rican American community centers and neighborhood organizations.

5. See appendix tables A4–7 for full models. In the LNPS, political engagement was measured by questions asking about the extent to which respondents followed politics, their strength of partisanship, and their strength of ideology (strong liberal or strong conservative). For analyses of participation in activities outside of voting, citizenship status was also used as a measure of political engagement. Experience with discrimination was measured by a question asking respondents, “Because you are a Mexican/Puerto Rican/Cuban, have you ever been turned down as renter or buyer of a home, or been treated rudely in a restaurant, been denied a job, or experienced other important types of discrimination?” In the PNAAPS, questions about the degree of interest in politics, partisanship, and ideology were used to measure political engagement. Again, citizenship was included
as a variable for analysis of participation outside of voting. Experience with discrimination was measured by the question, “Have you ever personally experienced discrimination in the United States?” A follow-up question asked whether respondents had been discriminated against based on race or ethnicity.

6. Scholars have recently attempted to address this causality issue by conducting field experiments that compare a randomly selected treatment group of individuals who are contacted to a randomly selected control group who are not contacted. The results of the studies show some evidence that contacting leads to more participation (D. Green and Gerber 2002; R. Ramirez forthcoming; J. Wong 2004). However, results of mobilization through contact vary according to type of contact and sample.

Chapter 7

1. The CNN exit poll (2004), based on a sample of 13,660 respondents interviewed immediately after leaving the polling place, estimated that Asian Americans comprised 2 percent of the electorate and Latinos 8 percent. Based on a sample of 5,154 voters, the Los Angeles Times (2004) estimated that Latinos represented 5 percent of the electorate and Asian Americans 3 percent. Most of those respondents were Californians, but the Times conducted the survey in 136 polling places nationwide.

2. Asian American socioeconomic resources vary greatly by national-origin group. Japanese Americans have among the highest incomes in the United States, whereas Vietnamese and Hmong Americans have among the lowest.

3. The 2002 Current Population Survey Volunteer Supplement includes valid responses from 2,769 white, 682 black, 4,293 Latino, and 2,360 Asian American immigrants (Ramakrishnan 2003). Not all volunteer activities are political in nature, but the survey does show organizational affiliation, which is often associated with political participation.

4. In this chapter, Latino and Asian American participation in activities other than voting is measured by a dummy variable. Those who indicate that they took part in any activity other than voting are assigned a value of 1, and those who did not take part in any activity are assigned a value of 0. Thus, the variable simply measures whether one took part in any activity. In the preceding chapter, participation in activities beyond voting was measured by an index of participation that better captured participation across a range of activities.

5. The example provided was generated by converting the coefficients generated by the regressions to odds ratios.

6. What is true at the individual level may not be the case at the aggregate level. Even though individual Asian Americans with more socioeconomic resources participate at higher levels than those with fewer resources, higher average socioeconomic status for Asian Americans as a group has not translated into high average voting rates for the group.

7. The data on earlier European immigrants do not contain enough detail about length of residence to conduct a comparative analysis.

8. Further correlation analysis suggested a positive association between length
of residence and political participation for several Latino subgroups (the LAT distinguished among Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Cubans, other Central and South Americans, and other Latinos) and several Asian American subgroups (Chinese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Japanese, Filipinos, and South Asians). Those who had not met the five-year residency requirement and Puerto Ricans, who are already U.S. citizens, were not included in the analysis of the relationship between length of residence and citizenship. Unfortunately, small sample sizes for specific ethnic groups prevent multivariate analyses (see appendix, tables A1 and A2 for number of respondents).

9. Although immigration rates were highest in the first and second decades of the twentieth century, naturalization rates crested in the four years before 1928, very likely initiating the upward trend in turnout among immigrants that Andersen (1979) documents.

10. These figures assume that the most recent immigration trends will continue with immigration rates stabilizing.


Chapter 8

1. I use the term homeland to refer to a migrant’s country of origin. I do not intend to imply that the United States or receiving community is any less a real home to migrants than the country of origin, nor do I mean to suggest that immigrants are more loyal to one country than another.

2. Given that since the early 1960s, the United States has limited the amount of remittances that can be sent to the island, Cuban immigrants exhibit lower remittance rates. What is surprising is that despite the restrictions, one in five Cubans regularly sends money to the island. In recent years, the U.S. government has increased the upper limit for cash remittances.

3. In 1996, the Mexican congress voted to allow Mexican citizens living abroad to vote in Mexican elections without having to return to Mexico, but the major Mexican parties disagreed about how to implement specific voting mechanisms.

4. About 14 percent of Latino immigrants in the LNPS indicated that they were more concerned with politics in the homeland, 46 percent said that they were more concerned with politics in the United States, 32 percent claimed that they were concerned with both, and 8 percent didn’t know or had no opinion.

5. Some of these activities, such as donating to a political campaign, may require immigrants to be permanent residents.

6. The dependent variable for this analysis is a dummy variable for participation in activities other than voting. This variable measures whether an individual took part in any political activity. In contrast, the variable used to measure participation other than voting in the analysis using the LNPS data in chapter 6 was based on an index created from the seven questions about political activities other than voting. That variable allows for analysis of whether an individual participated
in a range of political activities. One question asked in chapter 6 was whether involvement with a community organization was associated with political participation in a range of activities; thus, the index of participation was the appropriate measure of participation.

7. This estimate of California’s Mexican immigrant population is very likely low because it does not take into account those men and women who entered the United States without documents.

Chapter 9

1. I am indebted to Michael-Jones Correa for his insights regarding the larger political system’s importance in structuring mobilization in the United States.

Appendix


2. The screening question was used primarily to simplify analyses. Respondents were also asked to self-identify both ethnically and racially. For example, 0.3 percent of the Mexican respondents, 5.1 percent of the Puerto Rican respondents, and 2.6 percent of the Cuban respondents self-identified as black. A majority in each of these groups self-identified as white.

3. Puerto Rico was one of the response categories for this question, and 73 percent of those who were screened into the study as being of Puerto Rican origin indicated Puerto Rico when asked their country of birth.

4. I defined activists as individuals who (1) consider themselves to be actively involved with either the Chinese or the Mexican community (including immigrants); (2) are considered to be involved with that community by at least two other individuals; and (3) are affiliated with an organization or office that provides social, legal, political, or issue-oriented services to or advocacy for Chinese or Mexican immigrants in New York or Los Angeles. I identified the leaders of well-known immigrant-serving institutions and advocacy groups by attending local community events, such as the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival in New York City, and through directories of community organizations. The interviewees provided some additional contacts. I conducted interviews between June and November 1999 using both a sample based on the national and local reputation of the organizations and a snowball sampling method. Although most organizational leaders with whom I spoke were bilingual, interviews were conducted in English.

5. The research assistants were not community activists.

6. Although I would have liked to include Mandarin Chinese speakers in the study, I lacked the resources to conduct interviews with Chinese immigrants in three languages. A follow-up study that includes Mandarin speakers is planned.