

**CBOs and Non-Profits in Policy Intermediation in New Latino
Settlements:
The Cases of Holyoke and Lawrence, Massachusetts.**

**Ramón Borges-Méndez, PhD.
University of Massachusetts, Boston
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies
Ramon.Borges@UMB.EDU**

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I Introduction

In New England, the patterns of geographic concentration of Latinos and federal devolution are demanding new avenues and formulas of governance to prevent the exclusion of this population from the local public policy arena. This study investigates two things. First, what has been the impact of devolution on the organizational fiber of Latino communities in two small cities in Massachusetts: Lawrence and Holyoke. Secondly, what types of strategies Latinos have devised to increase penetration of the local policy arena of these two cities, using selective examples from education and urban development.¹ Between the 1960's and the early 1980's, concentration in large urban areas (and even in some rural areas), and the principle of "maximum feasible participation" underlying many social and community development programs allowed Latinos to create community-based organizations that were fundamental to political empowerment, and, to some extent, socio-economic mobility. But both such conditions have changed, thus affecting the prospects for Latinos to become meaningful stakeholders in the local policy arena. For Latinos to remain relevant players in these locales new bodies and principles of policy intermediation and governance must come into action, especially when overall political and fiscal conditions do not favor state-driven action or assure even minimal resources to meet local development needs.

"Maximum feasible participation" spoke about (individual and collective) empowerment, and promoted and supported the formation of community-based organizations to serve as local governance institutions that connected citizens to the policy arena, in addition to carrying other local development tasks. Federal legislation provided the backdrop for this overall approach. The discourse on devolution is quite different, as well as its implementation. Devolution involves the federal government returning or delegating all kinds of aspects of policy making and of the provision of good and services to sub-national administrative and political bodies. Technically and economically, the selling points of the approach are the flexibility it creates for local administrators to better match local needs and demands, and the efficiency gains devolution creates for taxpayers or the citizen-customer through a much smaller and presumably more accountable government. The institutional requirements for these benefits to be realized remain unclear, although functioning competitive markets with

¹ This study will expand upon previous research on the economic, historical and political development of Latinos communities in these cities. None of these, however, address the impact of devolution on the organizational fabric of Latino communities and their ability to participate in the local policy arena. See: Borges-Mendez, Ramon, (1994). Urban and Regional Restructuring and Barrio Formation in Massachusetts: The Cases of Lowell, Lawrence and Holyoke. Ph. Thesis. Dept. of Urban Studies and Planning. MIT.; Borges-Mendez, Ramon. (1993). "Migration, Social Networks, Poverty and the Regionalization of Puerto Rican Settlements: Barrio Formation in Lowell, Lawrence and Holyoke, Mass." Latino Studies Journal. May, 1993. pp. 3-21; Borges-Mendez, Ramon. (1995). "Industrial Change, Immigration, and Community Development: An Overview of European and Latinos." New England Journal of Public Policy. Spring/Summer, 1995. Vol.11. Pp. 43-58; Borges-Mendez, Ramon. (1993). "The Use of Immigrant Labor in Mass. Manufacturing: Evidence from Lowell, Lawrence and Holyoke." In Latinos and Economic Development in Massachusetts. Edwin Melendez and Miren Uriarte, (eds.). UMass Press. 1993. For most recent work on the political development of the 1990's in these cities see: Borges-Méndez, Ramón & Miren Uriarte. (2003). "Tales of Latinos in Three Small Cities: Latino Settlement and Incorporation in Lawrence and Holyoke, Massachusetts and in Providence, Rhode Island." Prepared for The Color Lines Conference: Segregation and Integration in America's Present and Future. Harvard University. Cambridge, MA. August, 30,31 and Sept. 2003. Extra material on the politics and effects of devolution in workforce development and health has been collected and it currently being analyzed.

customers acting with the right information (transparency), voice, able to exercise choice, and protected from the abuses of state authority should make the policy process work effectively. Conservative public choice conceptualizations of this world see mainly the private sector taking the lead in the new policy arena and the state moving away. It is the old tug-of-war between the state and the market.

This tug-of-war, however, has shown that the public and private spheres are not immutable, but rather flexible and in some cases very permeable. Radical processes of privatization and fiscal/governmental devolution all over the world have contributed to the creation of mixed and hybrid formulas for the delivery of government services.² The organizational arrangements cannot be squarely classified as simply public or private, since they borrow principles and organizational characteristics from both sides of the divide, or often combine the networked action of multiple private, public, and non-governmental parties.³ Are Latino organizations assimilating any of these new principles and strategies for more effective intermediation in public policy? Are others actors in the local arena also interested into accepting new principles of governance, or do they continue to adhere to old habits of patronage, exclusion or institutional neglect?

II The Future of Latinos in the American City

According to the US Bureau of the Census, the number of Latinos is projected to grow from 35.6 million in 2000 to 102.6 million in 2050, an increase of 188 percent. Their share of the nation's population would nearly double, from 12.6 percent to 24.4 percent. During the same period, the white non-Latino population will increase by 7% or 14.6 million to comprise 50% of the total population, down from 69.4% in 2000.⁴ These numbers may very well imply that the political responsibilities of Latinos will increase rapidly in the upcoming years, in all kinds of urban and suburban settings.

Every ethnic/ethnic racial group making its way through American cities has had to face differential conditions of incorporation, forms of exclusion, and has accessed power with distinctive styles. In most recent memory, the experience of African-Americans becoming political players in urban areas is illustrative of the process. Between 1967 and 1996, sixty seven black mayors were elected to office in cities with populations greater than fifty-thousand people, including New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.⁵ This entry into the local arena, an unprecedented process in American urban political history took place when many of those cities (and often their adjacent regions) were experiencing de-industrialization, when the white middle-class (and

² See Kettl, Donald F. (2002). The Transformation of Governance: Public Administration for Twenty-First Century America. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.; Smith, Steven Rathgeb & Michael Lipsky. (1993). Non-Profits for Hire: The Welfare State in the Age of Contracting. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

³ See: Salamon, Lester. (2002). "The New Governance and the Tools of Public Action: An Introduction." In Salamon, Lester M. (ed.). (2002). The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁴ US Bureau of the Census, 2004. "US Interim Projections by Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin." From Table 1A: Projected Population of the US by Race and Hispanic Origin: 2000-2050. <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/intreimproj/> Accessed 1/8/07.

⁵ Colburn, David R.. (2001). "Running for Office: African-American Mayors from 1967 to 1996." In Colburn, David R. and Jeffrey S. Adler, (eds.). (2001). African-American Mayor: Race, Politics and the American City. University of Illinois Press. Urbana: IL.

arguably a segment of the black middle-class) was moving to the suburbs depleting the tax base of cities and creating urban sprawl, when the New Federalism and the Federal government essentially abandoned the policies of the War on Poverty and removed cities from the policy front burners, and when market-driven policy instruments and rationalization of government services eliminated government jobs and programs of all kinds, but mainly in social welfare.⁶ W.J. Wilson pointed to this scenario to explain the formation of a black underclass.⁷ For obvious reasons, those conditions almost set up mayors for failure, and as a result, the developmental outcomes of urban areas have been mixed, with showcases of success as well as cases of urban stagnation and deterioration. The quality of the outcomes has depended upon many reasons, among them: macroeconomic conditions; the quality of the political leadership; the kinds of coalitions and platform politicians were able to strike with other ethnic and racial groups; and the willingness of the local growth coalitions to open up to the new players.⁸ The point is that African-American mayors were forced to assume the responsibility of governing cities under macro circumstances not precisely of their choosing but that nonetheless they had to face. What have been the implications of African-American becoming urban managers and leaders and what has been the effect on the organizational fabric of communities? This question is beyond the scope of this paper, yet extremely important to ponder from where Latinos are standing today.

It is important to keep in mind the story above because Latinos may be at the edge of embarking upon such an analogous historical process, although the conditions to be faced by Latino mayors and local officials will be significantly different. The sporadic election of a Latino mayor in a large and mid-size city, such as Federico Peña or Henry Cisneros in the 1980's in Denver and San Antonio, respectively, is likely to become a much more regular political event as Latinos begin to translate their growing numbers into political success in the local electoral arena. Last year, the local electoral campaigns in Los Angeles and New York City, had Latinos as primary political players. The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) placed the number of Latino municipal officials at 1,295 in 1996, which increased to 1,695 in 2005.⁹ The numbers are not disaggregated so to say how many officers were elected and in what positions. Nonetheless, it is probably the case that these numbers are low given the size and concentration of the Latino population in some urban areas of the nation. The numbers of Latinos in school boards have also increased, from 1,240 in 1996 to 1,760 in 2005, probably a small number given that Latino children and youth represent a big share of the student populations of urban public school systems.¹⁰ So what kinds of structural

⁶ Adler, Jeffrey S. (2001). "Introduction". In Colburn, David R. and Jeffrey S. Adler, (eds.). (2001). African-American Mayor: Race, Politics and the American City. University of Illinois Press. Urbana: IL.

⁷ Wilson, William J. (1987). The Truly Disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy. The University of Chicago Press. 1987.

⁸ Adler, 2001. Op.cit.; Colburn, 2001.op.cit.; Jones-Correa, Michael. (2001) "Structural Shifts and Institutional Capacity: Possibilities for Ethnic Cooperation and Conflict in Urban Settings." In Michael Jones-Correa (ed.). Governing American Cities: Inter-Ethnic Coalitions, Competition and Conflict. Russell Sage. NY:NY.; Thompson, III, J. Phillip. (2006). Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy." Oxford University Press. Oxford: UK.

⁹ National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). (2006). "NALEO At-A-Glance". <http://www.naleo.org/ata glance.html>. Accessed: 1/8/07.

¹⁰ Ibid.

circumstances will Latino mayors and officials face, as Latinos become a larger share of urban (and suburban) America?

Various trends are evident and directly relevant to this research. First, Latino immigration will continue to grow, which implies that Latino regional and local settlement patterns are not likely to stabilize any time soon, contributing to produce a patchwork of cities showing contrasting differential rates of Latino population growth: slow, fast, very fast, etc.¹¹ Several typologies are currently on the table to characterize the process.¹² At the neighborhood level and in cities of all sizes, Latino neighborhoods will become, if they are not already, “fluid” urban ecologies, with a multiplicity of patterns of human circulation coexisting within, and pushing upon, the spatial boundaries (and identity) of barrios. Central to this research, is the path Latinos are undertaking, who seem climbing down the urban ladder to form barrios in small towns and mid-size cities. To early work on the regionalization of Latino settlements in the Northeast¹³ and the Southwest¹⁴ that identified the trend of geographic dispersal of the Latino population away from large urban areas, and not necessarily into the suburbs, has followed other work on Latino new destinations and settlements that confirms a movement into mid-sizes and small cities.¹⁵

Second, making possible Latino geographic dispersal and the circuits of mobilization are social networks that move people and resources.¹⁶ The economic sociology of globalization is increasingly connecting these networks to other transnational ones resulting into new social, cultural, political and economic interdependencies between sending and receiving locales.¹⁷ These interdependencies are coming to bear directly upon the endowment of the asset base of some Latino communities by way of remittances, business activity and collaborative financing. Culturally, these expanding networks of migration are contributing to redefine the boundaries of citizenship in barrios and cities.

¹¹ Passel, Jeffrey S. & Wendy Zimmerman (2000). “Are Immigrants Leaving California? Settlement Patterns of Immigrants in the Late 1990’s.” Urban Institute. Washington, DC. Singer, Audrey. (2004). “The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways.” Center on Urban and Metropolitan Policy. The Brookings Institution. Washington, DC.; Suro, Robert & Audrey Singer. (2002). “Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations.” The Brookings Institution. Survey Series. Census 2000.

¹² See: Arreola, Daniel D. (2004). “Hispanic American Legacy, Latino American Diaspora.” In Arreola, Daniel, (ed.) (2004). Hispanic Spaces, Latino Places. University of Texas Press. Austin, TX; Singer (2004); Suro & Singer (2002); Waters, Mary & Tomás Jiménez (2005). “Assessing Immigrant Assimilation: New Empirical and Theoretical Challenges.” American Review of Sociology. 2005. 31:105-25. Zúñiga, Victor & Ruben Hernández-León, (eds.). (2005). New Destinations: Mexican Immigration in the United States. Russell Sage 2005. NY;NY.

¹³ Borges-Méndez, 1993. Op.cit.

¹⁴ Massey, Douglass, Rafael Alarcon, Jorge Durand, Humberto Gonzalez. (1990). Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico. University of California Press. Berkeley:CA.

¹⁵ Suro & Singer, 2002; Singer, 2004.

¹⁶ Levitt, Peggy. (2001). The Transnational Villagers. University of California Press. Berkeley: CA. Massey, et.al., Op.cit., 1990; Portes, Alejandro & Richard Bach. Latin Journey: Cuban and Mexican Immigrants in the United States. University of California Press. Berkeley: CA.

¹⁷ Fox, Jonathan & Gaspar Rivera-Salgado. (2004). “Building Civil Society among Indigenous Migrants.” In Fox, Jonathan and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, (eds). (2004). Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States. Center for US-Mexican Studies, UCSD. San Diego; CA; Levitt, 2001.Op.cit.

Third, even though manufacturing continues to decline, for the most part, the shock of de-industrialization experienced by urban areas in the 70's and 80's has been absorbed, albeit unevenly. Some former manufacturing-dependent cities in the Mid-west, like Detroit and Cleveland, continue to struggle with the social and physical legacy of de-industrialization, as well as other cities in the Northeast, like Philadelphia and Baltimore. Their job base, however, is now made of services with various degrees of specialization in knowledge-based industries, high-tech, finance, hospitality, real estate, health and education. In these sectors, there are abundant unprotected low wage jobs at the bottom of job ladders that offer little opportunity for mobility and that are increasingly occupied by minority workers.¹⁸ Occupational polarization is common in these sectors and Latinos are concentrated in lower level occupations. In the new urban and regional economies, mid-level jobs demanding higher education (AS, BA, MA) might promise better prospects, yet Latinos are not present in those occupations, and new threats, such as rapid technological change and offshoring, are increasing labor market volatility. Some smaller and mid-size cities, like company or mill towns, simply never recuperated from de-industrialization, only experiencing further isolation and deterioration in the transition to service-based economies, very much the case of our two case studies, as it is discussed further below.

Fourth, the process of fiscal devolution that began under the Nixon's administration revenue sharing in the early 1970's matured into the New Federalism, under both Democrat and Republican administrations during the 1990's.¹⁹ The process has brought massive changes into the policy making world of cities of all sizes, much too complex to address in here. Some changes are critical to highlight though. Cutbacks in services and the reduction in the size of the public sector set the tone of managerial reforms. The policy instruments used to organize the funding streams from the federal to the local level have changed from categorical grants to flexible bloc grants with much less federal oversight, and enforcing new requirements of accountability and performance at the local level. Although some grants are formula-driven, increasingly the funding is being organized into competitive grants. The state has retired significantly from the production and delivery of goods and services, relying on markets and the private sector.²⁰ In small and mid-size cities, the capacity to assimilate these changes has been very limited due to market insufficiencies, resilient and decrepit political machines, and the lack of resources for institutional modernization. On the positive side, however, in the midst of these conditions, all kinds of new partnerships, networks and collaborations between private, public and non-profit sectors have flourished to address service, production and representative (governance) gaps. Their capacity to address local policy needs sometimes can surpass those of the local state. Policy makers are clearly aware that these networks and collaborations can play a fundamental role revamping the local policy

¹⁸ Kochhar, Rakesh (2005). "The Occupational Status and Mobility of Hispanics". Pew Hispanic Center. Washington, DC.

¹⁹ Salamon, 2002. Op.cit.

²⁰ Salamon, 2002. Op.cit.; Smith, Steven Rathgeb & Helen Ingram, (2002). "Policy Tools and Democracy". In Salamon, Lester M. (ed.). (2002). The Tools of Government: A Guide to the New Governance. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

arena, and that they require support and resources.²¹ Latino mayors and local officials will have to be skillful at this kind of networking and collaborative engagements, although the policy structure at all levels may resist the political implications of these developments. The effectiveness of these networks and collaborations hinges on the activation of civil society and its real incorporation through participatory/democratic practices, as educational reform in some large cities has demonstrated.²²

III Latinos Climbing Down the Urban Ladder: Regionalization of Latino Settlements and the Formation of New Barrios in Massachusetts

3.1 Latinos Moving into New England's and Massachusetts' Small and Mid-Size Cities

Between 1960 and 2000, the Latino population in Massachusetts grew from about 5,000 to almost half a million people. For the 1980-1990 decade, Massachusetts was one of the five states with the highest rate of growth of Latinos.²³ In 1960, while Latinos represented about 0.3% of the total population of the state, by 2000 they were almost 7%. The makeup of the Latino population has also changed. For forty years, Puerto Ricans have been the largest group in the New England region, yet large numbers of Latinos are coming from the Dominican Republic and Central America. Latinos, in addition to the historic settlement pattern of forming dense concentrations in large urban areas, are forming big *barrios* in small cities and towns.²⁴ In Massachusetts, this pattern of growth and dispersal of the Latino population, away from the traditional big urban cores, is firmly established. For example, as of 2000, Latinos made up 7% (428,729) of Massachusetts' population; only about 20% of them live in Boston. The rest are distributed in small cities and towns across the state, where, in some cases, they account for large percentages of the population, as in Lawrence (60%), Chelsea (45%), and Holyoke (42%).²⁵ This trend is also apparent in other areas of the country as well.²⁶

Several phenomena converge to fuel the growth of the Latino population and its diversity. The first has to do with the evolution of U.S. policy toward Puerto Rico and the

²¹ See: Harrison, Bennett & Marcus Weiss. (1998). Workforce Development Networks: Community-Based Organizations and Regional Alliances. Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks: CA.

²² See: Fung, Archon. (2004). Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy. Princeton University Press. Princeton: NJ; Sirianni, Carmen & Lewis Friedland. (2001). Civic Innovation in America. University of California Press; Warren, Mark R. (2001). Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy. Princeton University Press. Princeton: NJ

²³ Rivera, Ralph, (1992). Latinos in Massachusetts and the 1990 U.S. Census. Mauricio Gaston Institute. University of Massachusetts. Boston: MA. All figures are from the US Census of 1960-1990.

²⁴ In general terms, a *barrio* is the Spanish word used to identify concentrations of Latinos in a particular district(s), neighborhood (s) or area(s) of a city where they represent the majority of the population. Barrios vary in size and extension depending on the city. The origin and development of barrios in urban areas of the US obeys to the diverse circumstances of urban development and change of cities, the history of migration, settlement, and labor market insertion of the different Latino sub-groups, and to their socio-cultural background.

²⁵ Similarly, a large population of Latinos has settled in Providence and Central Falls (RI), where they represent 30% and 47% of the population, respectively. Hartford, in Connecticut, is another example. In 2000, Latinos represented 41% of its total population. U.S Bureau of the Census, 2002.

²⁶ Robert Suro & Audrey Singer. (2002). "Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations." The Brookings Institution. Survey Series. Census 2000.

use of Puerto Rican migrants in the economic transformation of the Eastern seaboard. U.S. capital investment in the island, through a program known as *Operation Bootstrap*, resulted in the accelerated industrialization of the island's economy, the mechanization of agriculture, and massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the United States,²⁷ just as cities in the northeast of the U.S. were demanding low-wage labor for their dying urban manufacturing industries and expanding service sectors. Between 1945 and 1965, over half a million Puerto Ricans—about half of the active workforce of the island—migrated to the United States.²⁸

The settlement of Puerto Ricans in small Massachusetts' cities like Lawrence and Holyoke began in the early 1950's. Mainly seasonal agricultural workers in the apple orchards bordering New Hampshire (Lawrence) and tobacco farms of the Connecticut River Valley (Holyoke) dropped out of the migrant stream and settled there. In the 1960's and 1970's, however, Puerto Ricans were attracted by manufacturing employment.²⁹ The interconnection between the island and the mainland has become tighter and faster during the last 15 years, allowing Puerto Ricans to move at ease through a broader migratory circuit much beyond the traditional destinies in and around New York City.

The second factor that affects the growth and diversity of the population is the increasing number of immigrants from Latin America, propelled by both a more lenient U.S. immigration policy (before the Patriot Act) and a series of economic and political crises in their countries of origin. In the case of Dominicans, the other most important group in Lawrence, close to one fifth of the population of the island has migrated to the U.S. in the last 40 years.³⁰ At first, repression under the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, which ended with his assassination in 1961, expelled large numbers of Dominicans to NYC and the other northeastern cities. The subsequent political turmoil during the 1960's, and recurrent economic crises until this day have continued to fuel migration.³¹ In New England, labor migrants from the Dominican Republic came from New York City during the 1960's to work in the remaining manufacturing industries in Massachusetts and Rhode Island (shoes, textile, leather, jewelry).³² Although most Dominicans arrive legally from the Dominican Republic or via New York City, limitations on the quotas of U.S. visas allotted to the country force many Dominicans to be undocumented. Accounts from the period reveal that Puerto Rico and New York City are often intermediate stops between Santo Domingo and Providence, Boston, and Lawrence.³³ The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 and the

²⁷ History Task Force/ Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, (1979). Labor Migration Under Capitalism: The Puerto Rican Experience. Monthly Review Press. NY:NY.

²⁸ Vazquez Calzada, José. (1979). "Demographic Patterns of Migration." In Labor Migration Under Capitalism: The Puerto Rican Experience, edited by the History Task Force, Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños. Monthly Review Press. NY: NY.

²⁹ Piore, Michael, (1973). The Role of Immigration in Industrial Growth: A Case Study of the Origins and the Character of Puerto Rican Migration to Boston. Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Department of Economics Working Paper no. 112. May 1973.

³⁰ Torres-Saillant, Silvio, and Ramona Hernández, (1998). The Dominican Americans. Greenwood Press. Westport:CN.

³¹ Leavitt, 2001. Op.cit.

³² Selby, John, (1985). En la Brega: Economía Política Popular para Trabajadores Latinos: El Caso de Massachusetts. Red Sun Press. Boston: MA.

³³ Selby, (1985). Op.cit. p.85

Immigration Act of 1990 provided avenues for the legalization of undocumented workers, although not enough to improve the legal status of a significant segment of this community. The causes and conditions of migration of newcomers from Central and South America are also diverse. The civil wars in Central America, for instance, during the 1970's and 1980's, strongly influenced by US foreign policy, contributed to displaced large numbers of people who ended migrating to the USA.

3.2 *A Poor Local/Regional Economic Fit: Latinos and Economic Restructuring in New England*

The formation of Latino settlements in small cities respond to the specific dynamic of immigrant flows from the different Latin American countries and Puerto Rico. But the particular characteristics of the local and regional economy and the ways Latinos fit into those economies also explain part of the attraction to the region. Puerto Ricans and other Latinos have been the labor power of fading New England industries for almost half a century, helping to breathe some life into this dying sector. These jobs are characterized by instability, low wages, and poor working conditions, and have meant high rates of poverty for Latinos in the region. The restructured economy's high tech and biotechnology industries have largely bypassed Latinos, who in the new economy are concentrated in the low end of the service sector.

By the time Latinos arrived in the region, New England had already undergone several waves of de-industrialization. By the end of the 1970's, the new industrial structure of New England (and especially Massachusetts) consisted of five sectors: (1) declining labor-intensive, mill-based industries employing tractable labor and old technologies; (2) surviving mill-based industries producing mainly consumption goods through a combination of product specialization, substantial mechanization, computerization, and the use of relatively cheap sources of labor; (3) subcontracting manufacturing firms making capital goods for domestic and foreign producers; (4) high-tech firms making computers and peripherals and a wide variety of military, scientific, and medical equipment; and (5) expanding service sectors. Except for the 1982 recession, economic expansion continued until the late 1980's, mostly in Massachusetts—associating the state with the image of “Economic Miracle.”³⁴

Through the 1950's and 1960's, Latinos were making their way into the rapidly declining manufacturing industries, or into the still viable mostly labor-intensive manufacturing that remained in areas such as Lawrence and other mill towns: shoes, garments, paper and cardboard, and a few into electrical appliances and equipment. Notwithstanding, their insertion was precarious since the sector truly did not promise any long-term prospects of mobility, although it solved the problems of immediate employment.

During the 1970's and 1980's, Latinos were hardly able to enter the growing segments of the booming New England economy, especially in Massachusetts. The Miracle to a large extent was primarily a phenomenon reduced to some cities along Route

³⁴ Borges-Mendez, (1993a), (1993b), (1994), (1995). Op.cit.

128 (analogous to Silicon Valley), which left untouched other parts of the state and the region. Also, the over-concentration of Latinos in declining manufacturing fueled Latino poverty in Massachusetts and the region. In the 1980's, Latinos in Massachusetts showed the highest poverty rate of Latinos in any other state (Table 2). Latinos also doubled in number during the 1980–90 decade. In 1970, 29% of the whites and 26% of the blacks in Massachusetts were employed in manufacturing, and 38% of the employed Latinos were in that sector. By 1980, the percentage of whites and blacks in manufacturing as a share of each group's total employment had decreased to 26% and 23% respectively; for Latinos, the share had increased to 42%. Boston aside, the concentration of Latinos in manufacturing in selected standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs) was even higher. For instance, in 1980 in the Lawrence-Haverhill SMSA, 37% of the whites and 58% of the blacks employed had manufacturing jobs; of the total number of Latinos employed, 72% were employed in manufacturing.³⁵ The decline of manufacturing dominated the employment picture of New England (and of Lawrence) at least from 1967 until 1988. This seclusion into declining manufacturing in occupational terms has translated into concentration in low-skill occupations with little prospect for upward mobility, moreover in a sector that continues to decline.

Has this story of regional/local labor market insertion continued into the 1990's? During the 1990s, the Massachusetts economy underwent an expansion³⁶ fueled by the growth of the knowledge-based economy in high-tech, bio-tech, and financial services, which this time around seems to have been even more closely integrated into the economy of the immediate Boston area and Cambridge, with some employment and growth spillover into the Northern suburbs but not as far as Lawrence.³⁷ In Massachusetts, the knowledge-based economy and the internal sophistication of the sector created a profile of jobs that are not likely to be filled by Latinos, especially given the high educational requirements those jobs demand. Occupational data for the 1990's shows that there are new avenues opening for Latinos, although for the most part these are in low-skill, low-wage occupations: clerical, sales, and personal services. Recent data from the 2004 American Community Survey reveal that Latinos are concentrated in low skill occupations relative to the rest of the population (Note).

3.3 *Dense Concentration in Neighborhoods: The Struggle for Spatial Integrity and Continuity*

In Lawrence and Holyoke, Latinos have been highly concentrated in certain neighborhoods, where they have lived since they initially settled. They have faced urban renewal, isolation, displacement, and urban “benign neglect.” But contrary to the situation of Latinos in large urban areas (for the most part), they have managed to remain. “Staying in place,” preserving the spatial integrity of the initial *colonias* and of to-be *barrios*, has been critical to spinning several territorially-based as well as cultural

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Congdon-Martin, et al, (2001). “Economic Performance of the New England States in 2000: An Overview.” New England Economic Indicators. June, 2001. FED Boston. pp.vii.

³⁷ Farrant, Robert; Moss, Philip; Tilly, Chris, (2001). Knowledge Sector Powerhouse. Reshaping Massachusetts Industries and Employment during the 1980's and 1990's. Donohue Institute. UMass. Boston: MA.

organizations. It has also provided an anchor to the growing Latino population base of the cities. The process, however, is far more complex and rich than the dry dynamics of “neighborhood replacement,” strongly marked by “white flight.” The process has been fraught with conflict and to a large extent illustrates the tensions of social and political incorporation in the cities.³⁸

Latinos in Lawrence did not settle in a section of the city slated for urban renewal or transformation; in other words, they did not occupy valued real estate and thus the concentration took place without significant interference. In Lawrence, the paucity of urban renewal initiatives and municipal neglect allowed Latinos to plant roots in several neighborhoods and housing projects in the Northern part of the City, albeit under heavy ostracism which made living conditions deteriorate as years went by. Latinos settled in the mainly Irish Lower Tower Hill and the Italian Newbury Street neighborhoods.³⁹ In Lawrence, Model Cities monies and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding went into constructing high-rise buildings for the retiring old white ethnic population.⁴⁰

The extent of the concentration can be further appreciated at the Census Tract level. Lawrence is divided into 18 Census Tracts. In 1970, in all 18 tracts whites represented between 80–100% of the population, and in all of them Latinos represented between 0–19.9% of the population. Through the 1970’s and 1980’s, Latinos slowly “climbed the ladder of concentration.” By 1990, only two of such tracts had white shares between 80–100%. Latinos in one tract had reached the 80–100% plateau, and in ten more tracts they represented over 40% of the population. In 5 tracts, Latinos represented between 20% and 39.9% of the population. By 2000, Latinos had moved into Southern Lawrence, previously rather off-limit to them. Also, the number of census tracts with over 80% Latino increased rapidly from one tract in 1990 to six in 2000. Although for different reasons—resilience, resistance, or institutional obliviousness—Latinos have managed to “stay in place.” Such long-term anchoring separates the experience of Latinos in Lawrence from that of Latinos in Hartford, New York, and, especially, Boston, where the forces of urban renewal, gentrification, and displacement unleashed by restructuring have kept the base of the Latino community “moving” from neighborhood to neighborhood and without the possibility of consolidating social capital and political power.⁴¹

Latinos in Holyoke settled in the southern part of the city—in the predominantly Irish neighborhood known as “The Flats” and in French-Canadian South Holyoke. They concentrated in these neighborhoods for a number of reasons, mainly related to the overall ecology of decline that had embroiled the city. First,

³⁸ Lawrence was planned and built as a manufacturing city during the first two decades of the 19th century. Its urban form is influenced by the layout required for large-scale textile (wool) manufacturing, including railroad lines, water canals for power generation, large and long multi-story buildings to house looms, and a clear class division between working-class quarters on the one hand and middle-class and industrial bourgeoisie Victorian houses on the other.

³⁹ Borges-Méndez, 1994.

⁴⁰ Model Cities and CDBG are programs from the U.S. Federal Dept. of Housing and Urban Development. Funds for these initiatives are usually intended for community improvements.

⁴¹ Uriarte, (1993a). Op.cit.

housing tended to be cheaper in these areas, and their relative proximity to the center of the city offered easy access to hospitals, churches, shops, and workplaces. The housing stock in these neighborhoods was made of multi-unit buildings and tenements built at the turn of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries by companies and mill owners to house immigrant textile and paper mill workers. A sizable portion of this stock had fallen in disregard. Second, since the late 1940's some of the housing in these neighborhoods had been vacated by previous immigrants who moved to other areas within the city, or to surrounding towns as a result of having achieved some socioeconomic mobility during the immediate post-WW II bonanza and through educational opportunities offered by the GI Bill. Thus, in spite of socially disliking the incoming new Latino tenants, some landlords were economically relieved by Latino occupancy.

From the late 1960's on, the city mounted several campaigns either to remove or to stop the process of Latino communal expansion, albeit unsuccessfully. We discuss this confrontation in a section below in greater detail. For Latinos, the story of remaining in those neighborhoods has unraveled through three phases of protracted confrontation with City Hall during a period of some 20 years. The first phase of urban renewal, which took place between the mid-1960's and early 1970's, sought to remove Puerto Ricans from the Flats, and targeting French-Canadian South Holyoke for industrial redevelopment. A second (1970–75) and a third phase (1975–early 1980's) targeted the same areas with campaigns of “building code enforcement” with CBDG grants administered by the city. The protracted process threw the neighborhoods into a tailspin of arson, demolition, abandonment, and environmental decay, from which until this day they have yet to recover. Between 1969 and 1983, city government enforced the demolition of about 4,200 housing units, wiping out over a third of the city's total rental housing supply and over half of the total rental units in the four census tracts that make up South Holyoke, where Puerto Ricans were and continue to be concentrated.⁴²

Nevertheless, an analysis of the distribution of Latinos in census tracts in Holyoke shows spatial continuity and consolidation. Holyoke is divided in eight Census Tracts. In 1970, in all eight tracts whites represented between 80–100% of the population, and in all of them Latinos represented between 0–19% of the population. Through the 1970's and 1980, Latinos slowly “climbed the ladder of concentration.” By 1990, only three of such tracts had white shares between 80–100%. Latinos in one tract had reached the 80–100% plateau, and in three more tracts they represented over 40% of the population. Those four tracts comprise South Holyoke. The 2000 Census indicates that Latinos are growing in number in those tracts and beginning to move and to enter into the Northern area of the city, traditionally off-limits. From this spatial platform, Latinos have moved to spin some of its most important institutions in the city, like *Nueva Esperanza* CDC, which we describe in a further section.

⁴² Borges-Mendez, 1994.

IV Latino Community Based Organizations and Devolution in Lawrence and Holyoke, Massachusetts.

4.1 *The Cultural Base of Latino Organizations*

Closely related to Latino's capacity to prevail in their neighborhoods is the possibility for the development of independent, community-sustained organizations that serve the needs of the group. The formation of these organizations, although at one point they were interpreted as a "lag from the past" and a barrier to social incorporation by strict assimilation scholars, has proven to be the formal expression of the dense and strong networks characteristic of immigrant communities and the vehicles for social support and political activism among these groups. Most recently, the literature on social capital and social networks has reaffirmed the principle that organizational density is a fundamental component of collectivities accumulating civic culture and eventually political consciousness and power for all groups.⁴³ The literature on community development also underscores that active participation in local, community-based associations and institutions is an effective road to community building in poor communities. This literature highlights the critical importance of collaboration, coalition building, planning, and leveraging resources to support community goals to the development of healthy, sustainable communities.⁴⁴ Accounts of the process of formation of Latino communities in the region also underscore the role of community-based organization. These accounts highlight: (1) the role of social networks, both local and transnational, in the formation and development of communities; (2) the plethora of small, formal and informal organizations present in communities ranging from storefront churches and small "bodegas" to sports and cultural organizations to political organizations focused on local or transnational issues; and (3) how the networks evolved from such groups to form the base for the more formal organizations in the community, usually more visible to outsiders; (4) the role of community based organizations in the process of leadership development.⁴⁵

After the first "pioneers," the fact is that most Latinos arrive to join other people they know: family, friends or acquaintances from the same town. This was the case in both Lawrence and Holyoke: a pattern of multi-household, multi-generation migration had led to settlements where in many cases immigrants brought with them long-term relationships which were reinforced by the dense concentration of the population in specific neighborhoods.⁴⁶ In both cities, organizations reflect the longing for the land left behind and the need to reaffirm culture abound. In Lawrence, "*Los Juanadinos Ausentes*" is an

⁴³ See: Robert D. Putnam. (2000). *Bowling Alone*, Simon & Schuster. NY:NY; Theda Skocpol & Morris P. Fiorina. (1999). "Making Sense of the Civic Engagement Debate." In Theda Skocpol and Morris P. Fiorina, (eds.). *Civic Engagement in American Democracy*. Brookings Institution Press. Washington, DC. 1999.

⁴⁴ Harrison, 1998. Op.cit.; Sirianni & Friedland, 2001. Op.cit.; Warren, 2001.Op.cit.

⁴⁵ On Latino communities in New England see: Borges-Mendez, Ramon (1994), *Urban and Regional Restructuring and Barrio Formation in Massachusetts: The cases of Lowell, Lawrence and Holyoke*. Department of Urban Studies and Planning, MIT; Hardy-Fanta, Carol .(1993). *Latina Politics, Latino Politics*. Temple University Press. Philadelphia: PA; Hardy-Fanta, Carol and Jeffrey Gerson. (2002). *Latino Political Representation : Struggles, Strategies, and Prospects*. Routledge. NY: NY; Jennings, James (1984). *Puerto Rican politics in two cities: New York and Boston*. In James Jennings and Monte Rivera, eds. *Puerto Rican politics in urban America*. Greenwood Press. Westport: CN; Uriarte-Gaston, Miren. (1989). *Organizing for Survival: The Emergence of a Puerto Rican Community*. Department of Sociology, Boston University. PhD Dissertation; Levitt, 2001. Op.cit.

⁴⁶ Borges-Mendez, 1994.Op.cit.

example of an organization formed by persons from a particular town, in this case Juana Diaz in Puerto Rico, that provides a context for social activity and social support. Cultural maintenance and dissemination, sports, entertainment, the celebration of patriotic dates, and the organization of yearly festivals are the focus of activity of many of these organizations. In Lawrence and Holyoke, the organizational base of the *Festival Latino* and *La Familia Hispana* Festival are analogous expressions. Organizations of this type also carry out significant transnational activity related to the country of origin, including political and economic activity. These organizations are also largely invisible to outsiders to the community because of their informality and their popular nature. These, however, are for the most part cultural organizations which do not get truly involved in policy issues, even though they may occasionally rally with other organizations around very specific situations in education, health, or citizen security.

On the economic front, “bodegas” (small Latino markets) are perhaps the most visible marker of Latino communities. These one- or two-person businesses provide Latino groceries, newspapers, and music. They are also the source of short-term loans—“*fiados*”—for newcomers and those not used to relying on formal banking. In Holyoke, Nueva Esperanza CDC has expanded small business development opportunities in South Holyoke creating a small business incubator with several Latino businesses.⁴⁷ In Lawrence, relative to Holyoke, the power of the Latino business community, especially Dominican, is considerable. A commercial strip of Latino businesses practically dominates Broadway Street. The city also has a rather robust Latino small business community that has helped create the Minority Business Council and the Minority Relations Committee of the Greater Lawrence Chamber of Commerce, and maintains a small business development fund with the City’s Office of Economic Development and banks.⁴⁸

4.2 *Struggles for Latino Inclusion in the “Devolved Policy Arena”: Urban Development and Education*

The geography of the new immigration has come in tandem with policies that have underscored the role of localities in the funding and delivery of public services. Just as Latinos began to arrive in small cities and towns in large numbers, federal devolution began to create new challenges for local public administration and public policy development. Local bureaucracies were called upon to modernize and to develop new processes of accountability while at the same time local “no-taxes” initiatives capped the wiggle room of local governments. The “New Federalism” of the 1980’s challenged the basic premises of the “War on Poverty” programs of the 1960’s and ‘70’s not only on the role of the federal government in guiding and delivering social policy programs but also on the role of social services as vehicles for the empowerment of the poor. What began as an attack on “welfare” policies, a fact that has marked the debate on social policy until welfare’s virtual demise in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity

⁴⁷ Interview with Carlos Vega, July 2003.

⁴⁸ Borges-Mendez, 1994. Op.cit.

Reconciliation Act of 1996, in fact, spilled over into other areas, including neighborhood revitalization and services to newcomers.⁴⁹

Federal devolution has meant greater local policy discretion, and the use of market-driven instruments as the motors of local policy making. Those principles have replaced public-institution building, distributive equity, and mandated maximum feasible participation. In the process, also significant scaling-back and retrenchment has reduced available welfare resources and entitlements. Public policies and public funding previously geared to provide, if not “maximum feasible participation,” at least some limited opportunities for racial/ethnic groups shut out of mainstream service systems to meet their needs, are now the focus of struggle at the local level.

The process of devolution in many ways assumed modern, capable, and fair local bureaucracies. But the fact is that in many small cities—including our two cities—local political machines, and the long-settled coalitions or arrangements between old ethnic communities, have for the last 70 or so years shared or rotated the management and control of city hall. Yet the changes in federal funding format not only have handed greater discretion to the local levels, but they also demand greater local initiative and capable management to cope with competitive bidding and the aggressive partnering with multiple actors that is now required to address the funding gaps. Old political machines are not precisely prepared to manage local control and efficient use of resources—the new administrative challenges brought by devolution. Thus, local governments vary in their capacity to meet the demands of better performance and systemic accountability, creativity, and entrepreneurial initiative in local administration.

At the center of the federal devolution are policies and funding in the areas of urban policy, workforce development, social service delivery and education. Because the large migration north of African Americans largely bypassed these cities and towns, local politics and governments had remained largely homogeneously white and not had to address the needs of newcomers since the great influx of immigrants in the early part of the Century. Local decision making, largely handled with the blessing of long-settled arrangements between white ethnic groups, now is taking place in a dramatically different demographic and political environment as new populations begin to take up ever-larger shares of the polity of the towns. There has been great resistance to adapting priorities to the needs of the new populations and even more resistance to including new populations in the decision-making processes at the local level.

The political changes point to a very uneven process of engagement between the old political machines and the Latino community in its search for political space and empowerment. Federal, formula-driven allocations for programs are clearly not enough for the local bundle of problems. In addition, fiscal measures that limit expanding the local revenue base, like the Massachusetts’ 2½% cap on property taxes, and the general resentment shown by “old towners”—who feel threatened or

⁴⁹ For an analysis of the impact of welfare reform in inner city neighborhoods, including neighborhoods in Lawrence, Mass see Jennings, James (2003). Welfare Reform and the Revitalization of Inner City Neighborhoods. Michigan University Press. East Lansing: MI.

invaded by the new populations—hinders political change, or delays power-sharing, coalition-building, or outright power transfers. Part of the resistance shown by the local machines is related to the fact that government jobs in small cities and towns are a very important source of employment, and part of the system of rewards and incentives used by the political machines to hold onto power. But the resistance to change seems way more complex than a battle for jobs: in the vortex of power-sharing, or power-transfer, economic interests combine with institutionalized racism, administrative insufficiencies, mutual distrust, and shifting demographics.

In Lawrence, the struggle for inclusion has been constant since the 1980's. This struggle came to the consciousness of the state on a hot night in August 1984, when a “big brawl” between Latino and white youth escalated into two days of racial/ethnic rioting. The riots, although many government officials insisted in that it was just a “big brawl,” marked the opportunity to assail the city for its failure to move forward on social and economic integration. In the aftermath of the riots, the city responded to the plight of Latinos with a number of policy measures that marked the beginning of a more open—although uneasy—sociopolitical relationship between Latinos and Anglos. Municipal and state authorities moved to: (1) create Lawrence's Human Rights Commission; (2) subcontract with Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción in Boston to create a social multi-service agency (Centro Panamericano); (c) build a recreational area; (d) rehabilitate the housing projects in the area; (e) open a Neighborhood Housing Services Office in the Lower Tower neighborhood; and (f) step-up efforts to employ Latinos in municipal jobs. Some of the proposed changes were not carried to any significant extent, as the incorporation of Latinos in more city hall jobs. They however, paved the road to more serious political encounters between City Hall and the emerging Latino local power base.

In Holyoke, where the Latinos have a longer tenure, their inclusion in the social institutions, including the mainstream churches, appears to be marginal. A possible exception is the social service system, both public and private non-profit, where Latinos are users of the programs and played a significant role since the 1970's. Because of several crises in relationship to Latino infant mortality in the city during the 1980's, the health system is more attuned to Latino needs. But the overall political relationship in Holyoke between the Latino community —predominantly Puerto Rican—and City Hall has often been tense and acrimonious. During the last 20 years, confrontations have taken place over several critical problems: political representation, health and infant mortality; urban neglect; police abuse, and education. To a large extent, community capacity/organizational build-up has taken place around those instances of confrontation. But the dynamics and effects of devolution at play in the local agora are most clear in regards to urban and educational policy.

Since the late 1960's, the City of Holyoke has been making claims on South Holyoke—where most Latinos live—as an area that it wanted for industrial redevelopment. These claims were formalized in a plan that the city unveiled in 1968 and that called for the rapid industrial redevelopment of the area. The plan ignited the

first sparks of activism of the Puerto Rican (and elderly French-Canadian) community, actually managing to amend the plan. But by the time the plan was amended, the neighborhoods had been red-lined by banks, destined to suffer from heavy physical deterioration because of arson, absenteeism, and municipal neglect. In fact, that is what happened. The City returned again to the charge (1970–75) armed with funds from the Workable Program for Community Improvement and the Community Development Block Grant, both administered by HUD but implemented through and by the City. Between 1969 and 1983, city government enforced the demolition of about 4,200 housing units, wiping out over a third of the city's total rental housing supply and over half of the total rental units in the four census tracts that make South Holyoke, where Puerto Ricans were and continue to be concentrated.⁵⁰ The pace of this destruction and deterioration caused a massive white flight but it did not manage to “extirpate” the growing barrios of South Holyoke. Arson, however, furiously ravaged the community, even though the city flatly denied the problem. *La época de los fuegos* (the era of the fires), as the period is popularly called, between 1976 and 1981 took the lives of 31 people, and between 1980 and 1982 another 76 fires left more than six hundred people homeless. The campaign to combat arson (and infant mortality) produced an organizing drive that would last for about a year and that comprised several marches, instances of civil disobedience, and community mobilization to assist to public hearings.⁵¹

Through the 1980's, the City tried unsuccessfully to grow and promote various organizational “proxies” to reach Latinos, eventually having to come to terms with Nueva Esperanza, a Latino founded CDC. A revision of the Consolidated Program 2000–2004 by the City shows that some funding is reaching the Latino community through Nueva Esperanza, yet according to Latino leaders after “long battles for crumbs.”⁵² Further examination of the Consolidated Plan and other anecdotal evidence suggest that the City largely relies on its decreasing formula-driven allocations, with little else done to mitigate fiscal insufficiency. Besides, in a city which is roughly 41% Latino, the Office of Community Development has no Latino officers or planners. Devolution has taken place but it is up to the local Latino actors to fight the battle for inclusion.

An area of high contention has been education: it has been at the center of the struggle between Latinos and local governments in both cities. Holyoke and Lawrence are among the cities with the worst school outcomes for Latino children in the Massachusetts. Following the Educational Reform Act of 1993 which attempted to equalize funding across school systems and introduce measures of accountability, Massachusetts embarked in a testing program that for the first time provided comparative data on outcomes by race across school systems. The MCAS included a high-stakes tests in Math and English Language Arts in the 10th grade which students were required to pass in order to graduate from high school. In Holyoke, only 4% of the students passed the math exam; in Lawrence, only 10% did so in 2000.⁵³

⁵⁰ Borges-Mendez, 1993a. Op.cit.; Borges-Mendez, 1993b.Op.cit.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Holyoke-Chicopee Consortium. (2000). *Consolidated Plan: FY 2000-2004*. Holyoke: MA. May, 2000. Also interviews with Carlos Vega (2003). Director of Nueva Esperanza, CDC.

⁵³ Borges & Uriarte, 2003.Op.cit.

In Massachusetts, the effects of reduced local funding due to Proposition 2 1/2—which capped property taxes at 2.5%—began to show disastrous effects on local educational systems just as Latino children began to enroll in the small city systems. By 1990, about 70% of the students in Holyoke and over 90% in Lawrence were Latinos. Through the 1990's Massachusetts schools, including Lawrence and Holyoke, received substantial additional funding as part of the Educational Reform Act. But Lawrence and Holyoke quickly became the “poster cities” of Educational Reform gone bad. This was due to incompetence and mismanagement as well as resistance to change. Lawrence, for example, received more than \$250 million between 1993 and 1997 to improve its schools as part of Educational Reform.⁵⁴ Lawrence was well known for under-funding its school system, refusing to increase its property tax base to fund the schools. Under Educational Reform, the budget of the school system more than tripled; this funding was to be directed to increasing the teacher core, reducing class size, purchasing books and equipment, professional development for teachers, and building maintenance.⁵⁵

The fact is that educational reform, like devolution, assumed capable leadership at the local level. And this proved to be hard to come by in Lawrence. In a 1997 report on the use of Educational Reform funding in the Lawrence district, the State Auditor called the management practices of the district “horrific,” pointing to such “chaos in management” that there were millions of dollars in funding for which there was no accounting. The School Board, under strong pressure from the State Department of Education, fired James Scully, who had been Superintendent of the Lawrence Public Schools since 1987 and had lived in Lawrence all of his life.⁵⁶ But the saga was not over. In collaboration with the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education, the Lawrence Public Schools embarked on a search for Superintendent which yielded Mae Gaskins, a former Superintendent of the public schools in St. Paul, Minnesota. Her tenure would last less than two years. In January 2000, the Mayor of Lawrence called for her resignation for misspending \$600,000.⁵⁷ Gaskins left Lawrence just as the economy faltered in 2000 and was replaced by Wilfredo Laboy, a top administrator in the public schools of New York City and a Puerto Rican. By 2002, Educational Reform funding was greatly reduced due to the State's budget crisis.

Wilfredo Laboy was the first Latino superintendent in Lawrence, a system that has been predominantly Latino for over 20 years. He joined two members of the school committee who were also Latino, but whose influence, at first, in the midst of the corruption and mismanagement, had been limited but that has been slowly changing. In recent years, Laboy has been involved in several controversial situations related, first, to his position in favor of eliminating bilingual education, which he perceived more as a

⁵⁴ Zernike, Kate. (1997) “Audit Finds Aid Wasted in Lawrence \$8.9 Million in State School Money Misspent, Investigators Sat.” The Boston Globe, 6/13/1997, p. A1

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ For an account of the situation in Lawrence see: Zernike, Kate. (1997). “Audit Finds Aid Wasted in Lawrence \$8.9 Million in State School Money Misspent, Investigators Sat.” The Boston Globe. 6/13/1997, p. A1; “Lawrence Schools Face State Takeover”.(1997). The Boston Globe.1/29/1997, p. A1; Hart, Jordana. (1997). “Panel's Steps Could Lead Lawrence Schools into Receivership.” The Boston Globe, 6/17/1997 p. B3; Daley, Beth. (2000). “Audit of Lawrence Schools Scathing.” The Boston Globe. 5/14/2000, p. B2.

⁵⁷ Daley, Beth. (2000). “Lawrence Schools Chief Told to Resign \ Gaskins Rebuff Mayor, Denies Misusing Funds.” The Boston Globe. 1/ 25/2000 p. B1

dysfunctional bureaucracy rather than as an educational program, and second, to his handling of his public persona, after engaging into a physical altercation with a member of the school committee and a conflict with the school committee over the frivolous use of public resources to arrange his car and his wife's SUV. Notwithstanding, under his administration, the Lawrence's school system seems slowly turning around in various ways: (1) two Latinas were elected to the school committee; (2) collaborative practices between Latino CBO's engaged in leadership, youth development and student retention, and the school system have vastly improved; (3) Latino parents speak about better avenues for participation; (4) the city is about to inaugurate a state-of-the-art new high-school for scientific education; (5) drop-out rates have stabilized and started to decline.

In Holyoke, Latinos also show progress in the educational arena, but improving the system has been an uphill battle in the poorest city of the state. Betty Medina-Lichtenstein was elected to the Holyoke School Committee in 1985, also the first Latino elected official to a local government post in Massachusetts. Eduardo Carballo assumed the leadership of Holyoke's 7,400-student system in 2002. Carballo, has moved aggressively to change Holyoke's public image as the worst MCAS performer statewide, and has changed the leadership in half of the city's 14 schools since his arrival, which has increased political pressure upon him and other Latino leaders. More recently, however, the initial spirit of collaboration has faded over the superintendent's lack of support for the creation of a community-backed Latino charter school, an initiative headed by long-standing activists and educators like Medina.

4.3 Political Empowerment Through Electoral Politics

Analysts and observers of Latino politics in Massachusetts and New England are saying that a new era in Latino electoral politics has arrived. Although electoral results still trail Latinos' percentage in the electorate, the 1990's have brought political maturation and unprecedented penetration of the political arena. Latinos evidence some political maturity and expertise by winning state senate and house races in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and even New Hampshire; gaining numerous school committee and city council posts; and running some very visible mayoral challenges and triumphs, as in Hartford (Connecticut), whose mayor is Latino. In Lawrence, last year's mayoral race was battled between a Latino, Marcos Devers, and the incumbent Republican Michael Sullivan, who defeated Devers. Apparently, we are beginning to combine our "numbers" with the effective use of the American political institutions, resource mobilization, pan-Latino campaigning and coalition building, leadership development, and other forms of political learning and strategies.

Managing the internal relationships within the community is one of the most critical variables and these relationships are currently battered in this region by contradictory forces that reflect the evolving dynamics of intra-group leadership. One critical piece is the evolving role of Puerto Rican leadership. Puerto Ricans are the oldest and still the largest Latino group in many parts of the region. Having historically spearheaded and mediated political mobilization in communities throughout the

Northeast, Puerto Ricans, are experiencing their own set of political dilemmas as the new local political reality exacts a different type of political maturity. Puerto Ricans are citizens by birth and, historically, among Latinos in the East Coast, Puerto Ricans were most able to use the avenues offered by public policy and public programs to gain a measure of political empowerment. In many ways, Puerto Ricans were the brokers of that relationship for Latino communities, and in this region, to their credit, the benefit was often well shared with other Latino groups. But during the 1980's and 90's, as was mentioned earlier, social policy reforms driven by devolution, privatization, and cutbacks greatly curtailed these avenues. For Puerto Ricans, this is a time of re-definition.

Simultaneously, we see some “new” Latino immigrant groups, especially those from the Dominican Republic, coming to the fore with great political strength. Better known for their involvement in transnational politics than in local ones, Dominicans seem to begin to be able to use one to push the other. Many elected officials in New England, are Dominican. The most critical variable in this development has been time—time for Dominicans to achieve citizenship and for the second generation of Dominicans, born and raised in U.S. cities, to exercise their power. What has been the path of Latinos in local electoral organization and politics in Holyoke and Lawrence?

4.3.1 *Holyoke*

Holyoke's local political system has a 15-member City Council, with 7 members elected by ward and 8 members elected at-large. The city's 9-member School Committee is also elected, with 7 seats elected by ward and 2 at-large. Latinos in Holyoke have been running candidates practically every year since 1971. Between 1971 and 1995 a total of 15 Latino candidates ran in 27 campaigns. These were mostly at the district/ward-level. In 1997 there were four candidates, and in 1999 eleven candidates, the largest slate in any one year.⁵⁸ The first Latino/a elected to a public post in the city was Betty Medina-Lichtenstein to the School Committee in 1985, subsequently re-elected in 1987, 1989, and 1991. Then, in 1991 Diosdado López was elected to the City Council for Ward 2 (then an alderman system). Currently, there are three Latinos in ward seats in the City Council, and one Latino in a ward seat in the School Committee.

In Holyoke, Puerto Ricans remain the majority Latino group, although other Latin Americans (Colombia and Ecuador) have been long-term activists and leaders in a broad range of community settings. But, in general, inter-Latino political fighting is not a political problem. Latinos in Holyoke have for long been shut out almost completely from the avenues to empowerment offered by the development of community service agencies and the struggle around public policy issues. In Holyoke, the timing and path to some political representation has taken some 20 years of overcoming objective political and social barriers, trial and error, organizing, and reversals. Some of the barriers have

⁵⁸ See: Hardy-Fanta, Carol & Gerson, Jeffrey N. (2002). Latino Politics in Massachusetts: Struggles, Strategies and Prospects. Routledge. NY & London. In this volume see pieces relevant to this research by Lindeke, William. (2002). “Latino Political Succession and Incorporation: Lawrence.”; Racusen, Seth. (2002). “New Civil Rights Strategies for Latino Political Empowerment.”; Hardy-Fanta, Carol & Bassols-Martinez (2002). “Strategic Planning in the Community and the Courts: Holyoke.”
Hardy-Fanta & Bassols-Martínez, 2002. Op.cit.

been institutional, as for example, the City of Holyoke's requirement that citizens appear in a local census in order to be registered voters. Individuals who did not respond to this mail census, which was in English, were dropped from the list of registered voters. The form and characteristics of the census, moreover, during the aggressive campaign of building demolition and urban renewal in the city, needless to say, resulted in dramatic exclusion of Latinos from the list of registered voters.⁵⁹ It took the collaboration of the Massachusetts and the Holyoke Rainbow Coalition, local political organizers, and intervention from the Attorney General of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to force the City of Holyoke to modify the use of the census as the basis for voter registration.⁶⁰ As a result of the challenge by Latinos to the political structure, Latinos have secured poll watchers, bilingual materials, and greater understanding of how to get involved in the management of the political process.

Further into the political history of the city, in 1992, the Latino citizens of Ward 1, in conjunction with the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights under the Law of the Boston Bar Association, brought a lawsuit against the City of Holyoke (*Vecinos del Barrio Uno v. City of Holyoke*) arguing that the at-large city council system contributed to political under-representation. At first, the Massachusetts district court was sympathetic to the lawsuit, but the case was remanded upon appeal, and the court reversed its prior decision. The case opened a new era of political confrontation between the Latino community, and the City, and within the Puerto Rican community. The court's reassessment of the decision was based upon City Hall throwing its muscle behind "its own Puerto Rican" candidate for an at-large seat, who received 42% of his votes from non-Latino voters. Most recently, the same candidate accused a well trusted and liked Latino incumbent in the Council of electoral fraud, an allegation, which was thrown out after an investigation, but not without a political cost. In more recent years, the oldest member of the Latino representation in the City Council, after a decade or so, continues to emphasize the little representation Latinos have in the local administrative and service bureaucracies of the city. Citing the police department, he describes innumerable situations of abuse and of blocking the access of competent Latinos officers into the upper ranks of the force.⁶¹

Barriers to Latino representation in Holyoke have been strong and to overcome them has taken significant effort on the part of the community. Nevertheless, voting turnout among Latinos remains low, in part due to the poverty and youth of the population, divisions in the leadership, and weak candidates.⁶² Latinos have responded with political organizing through various strategies: (1) consistent running of candidates; (2) voter registration and "get out the vote" drives; (3) using the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1964 to challenge Holyoke's election system, especially the discriminatory implementation of the city census; and (4) taking the city to court for a redistricting battle.

⁵⁹ Borges-Méndez, 1994.Op.cit.

⁶⁰ Hardy-Fanta & Bassols-Martínez, 2002. Op.cit.

⁶¹ Interview with Diosdado Lopez. 2003. See also: Vannah, Tom. (1997). Part I: "A Force to be Reckoned With: An Inside Look at the Holyoke P.D.—A Dept. divided into factions and about to come unglued." Valley Advocate. 2/6/97; Part II: "Blowing the Whistle on the Whistle Blowers." Valley Advocate. 2/13/97.

⁶² Ibid.

4.3.2 *Lawrence*

Lawrence's local political system has a 9-member City Council, with 6 members elected by district and 3 members elected at-large. With the Mayor as the Chair of the School Committee, the city's 6-member School Committee is also elected, with all seats elected by district. In Lawrence, the history of Latinos running candidates dates from the 1980's. Since 1981 into the early 1990's, a dozen or so candidates ran, but their candidacies failed badly.⁶³ It is not until 1991 that a Latino, Ralph Carrero, was elected to the School Committee. This marked the start of a string of electoral victories by Latino candidates—a clear process of coming of political age during the 1990's. In the 1999 local election, Latinos fielded 11 candidates.⁶⁴ The electoral victories have been shared by Dominicans and Puerto Ricans, along gender lines, and have been “scaling up” from the very local to the state level. Currently, the level of Latino representation stands at: two members at the School Committee; three city councilors; one of the three state representative seats (16th Essex District) in the Massachusetts' House of Representatives. In the previous electoral cycle, Latinos were able to control the Council's President post.

Latinos seem to be coming of political age in this town. It would be a mistake to think, however, that this rapid ascent and breakthrough in the late 1990's was clean and swift. Not so. It is connected to a rather long and heated political history of inter-Latino conflict, predominantly between Puerto Ricans and Dominicans, which apparently has been subsiding in more recent years, and to a contentious and explosive relationship with the local white political machines of Irish, Italian, and French-Canadian background. The city's Latino community has evolved to show a rather well defined set of leadership arenas in education, politics, business, religious, communications, and social clubs. In all of them there are Latino leaders pitching in one way or another into the pool of social and political capital of the community at large. The hampering conflicts between Latino leaders from different national groups, or between the different leadership arenas, of the 1970's and 1980 have not necessarily disappeared; at times they still flare with viciousness, yet they are being well enough managed not to erode the accumulated political capital.⁶⁵ This shows, according to former Council member Julia Silverio, political maturity. In addition, the passing of time has allowed the Dominican community to amass and activate a larger number of people with citizenship status who can directly influence local political outcomes.

Regarding the relationship with City Hall, it remains contentious yet is becoming more amenable to negotiations, framed by the terms of the old ethnic political machines yearning for “restoring a glorious past.”⁶⁶ Most important, this relational framework forestalls Latino appointments to meaningful posts in, and power sharing and managerial collaboration within, the numerous administrative commissions and departments that run

⁶³ Borges-Mendez,(1993).Op.cit.; Andors, Jessica (1999)” City and Island: Dominicans in Lawrence.” Masters Thesis. DUSP. MIT.; Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit.

⁶⁴ Lindeke,2002.Op.cit.

⁶⁵ Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit. Interviews with Julia Silverio, City Councilor; and Gilda Duran, Administrative Director of Latino Health Reach 2010.

⁶⁶ Lindeke, 2002.Op.cit.

municipal affairs.⁶⁷ Some Latinos have been appointed to some of these posts, like the Human Rights Officer, and Affirmative Action Director, yet the appointees come from smaller Latino groups (Chilean, Mexican-American) that have non-threatening power bases.⁶⁸ Most recently, appointments to the School Superintendent and Police Chief posts perhaps indicate a shift for the better.

In this context, Latino strategies of political incorporation have been combining electoral and confrontational strategies with more weight on the electoral side. To illustrate the matter, in 1998, responding to urgent complaints by citizens, the U.S. Justice Department filed a suit against the City of Lawrence for violating the Voting Rights Act.⁶⁹ Three issues were at the core of the suit: (1) districts and at-large seats may have been created or used to weaken voting power of Latinos; (2) not all election materials were provided in Spanish⁷⁰; and (3) the city had not provided sufficient Latino poll workers or a conducive environment to Latino political participation. After some political and legal haggling, the City negotiated a deal with the Justice Department. It included more resources and provisions to enhance and safeguard Latino participation in the electoral process.⁷¹ Although it did not include provisions to overhaul the structure of the districts, the fresh resources, according to local Latino political leaders and other observers, have greatly improved the prospects of political empowerment.⁷² Along the same lines, the combined strategy comes out clearly in the process of redistricting that carved the Massachusetts' State House Representative seat for the 16th Essex District, and in the election of a Latino to that seat (already alternately occupied by two Latinos of Puerto Rican and Dominican descent). The first victory was possible due to strong and well-organized grassroots and media activity among Latinos, including managing the tensions of a vote recount, transportation to get voters to the polls, and information about the voting process.⁷³

The process of political empowerment in Lawrence seems to have “taken-off” once Latinos began to effectively manage internal strife. This has enabled diverse leadership and a more focused electoral strategy while external pressures have forced some change upon the local political machine. Political electoral gains seem opening access into the administrative arena of municipal affairs.

Finally, although we do observe electoral political gains, we also see disconnection between those gains and the access to the policy-making institutions of the city, especially in critical areas such as education, urban and economic development, and general urban services. This is not to say that the situation has not been changing. In recent years, for example, both cities have appointed Latino school superintendents, Lawrence has appointed a Latino police chief and promoted others into the upper ranks

⁶⁷ Interviews with Julia Silverio, City Councilor; and Gilda Duran, Administrative Director of Latino Health Reach 2010.

⁶⁸ Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Under the Act, any city with more than 5% of a given language group requires translated materials. Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit. Interview with Julia Silverio. City Council member.

⁷³ Lindeke, 2002. Op.cit.

and there is some Latino presence in the school committees. For the most part, however, we estimate that the disconnection between the political agora and policy-making arena is still hindering Latino political empowerment.

V Conclusion

Settlements in Lawrence and Holyoke developed out of various migratory streams that include both direct migration from Latinos' countries of origin and internal migration from other U.S. cities. These new Latino settlements do not represent "spill-over settlements" nor are they the result of the process of suburbanization of larger urban areas. This path of settlement and incorporation of Latinos, of forming "big *barrios* in small cities", reveals that these new communities do not fit easily, or only partially, into the classical paradigm of immigrant spatial assimilation, which predicts a "big-city/suburbanization" path. Further, the various streams that converge in the formation, expansion, and further consolidation of these communities do not occur as a simple "push-pull" mechanical outcome of economic forces: employer-or government-sponsored recruitment, "word-of-mouth," social, political, and cultural forces in Latin America, the countries of origin, the New England region, and in the specific city interplay to "modulate" the flows.

Latinos have experienced an uneasy fit into the economies of these small cities. They have been incorporated into the dying manufacturing and low-end service jobs of the economies of Lawrence and Holyoke. As a result wages are low and poverty rates are among the highest in the region. Likewise, they have not been able to enter the rising industries, at least into some of the good occupational categories. They remain concentrated in low-end, low-pay occupational categories. Such poor fit took place in the prosperous mid-1980's, and appeared to have repeated itself in the mid-to-late prosperous 1990's. The poor fit is particularly dramatic in Holyoke, since the city has remained disconnected in both occasions from any significant "axis" of growth at the regional or sub-regional level. Lawrence, although not so well connected either in spite of being so close to Route 128 and other "spots" of economic activity, saw a brief period of recuperation in the 1990's, yet not enough to call it a an economic revival. Poverty rates dropped but still remain very high

In both cities, Latinos are highly concentrated in specific neighborhoods, where they have lived since they initially settled. They have faced urban renewal and displacement, but contrary to the situation of Latinos in large urban areas, they have managed to remain. In South Holyoke, Latinos fought against an aggressive City Hall-sponsored campaign of "renewal," "code enforcement," and demolition and managed to stay. In North Lawrence mainly a story of "benign neglect," the paucity of renewal allowed communities to prevail spatially, yet at the expense of other malaises like disinvestment and isolation. This capacity to "stay in place" has allowed Latinos to develop some primary organizations "in situ." These organizations become an important building block toward further political incorporation. But they are not powerful enough to contend with other forces such as local ostracism, institutional racism, exclusion by political machines, and devolution.

Such forces detracted these organizations from the traditional path which the organizations of previous immigrants might have followed. In the path to political incorporation, so the story goes, immigrants develop a spatial power base—city trenches with marked ethnic identity, or an enclave—that catapults the group into power.

In recent years, the welfare state has been undermined, and replaced by a much less responsive subsidiary state oriented by principles of market efficiency, performance-driven social service provision, and individualist responsibility. The policy garb of this transformation, in which cutbacks have been covered with the overrated advantages of devolution—local autonomy and flexibility—, have had an ambiguous effect on the prospects of Latino political and social incorporation in these rather new settlements. The social incorporation of Latinos in these small cities has been affected by devolution in two fundamental ways. First, devolution has limited the local governments' capacity (and willingness) to serve a rapidly changing and demographically different population. Secondly, it has made it more difficult for Latinos to form the types of service oriented organizations that have characterized the organizational environment (and might) of Latinos in large cities.

This is a difficult “dialectic” to disentangle. It involves dissecting a complex, almost symbiotic, relationship, in the making since the 1960's, between the organizational capacity of Latinos and the structure of organizational opportunities made possible by the priorities of social policy and specific ways funding for these priorities evolved in areas that ranged from pres-school services to community development. Such outlays and “policy windows”, so to speak, helped to develop and support Latino community-based/social service agencies for some two decades. And they have been for the most part unavailable to the newly forming Latino communities in any of the cities studies here. To this you add the resistance of the local political machines to the new environment of accountability, reductions in the lifeline of support of these machines due to cutbacks, and their reluctance to accept that Latinos are here for good, and the results are strongly exclusionary political practices. This is an area for challenging research and with vast practical and strategic implications for Latino communities.