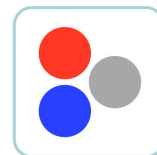# RUN LOCAL:

The New American Electorate and the 2013 Municipal Elections

THE NEW AMERICAN LEADERS PROJECT

March 6, 2013

Notes

In this report, we use several terms to refer to African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, and Latino communities and individuals, including *co-ethnics*, *new Americans*, and *immigrants*. We use Hispanic and Latino interchangeably and often refer to the larger Asian American community as APIA (Asian Pacific Islander American).

We also refer to non-white candidates and elected officials as co-ethnic candidates, new American candidates, and descriptive representatives.

Acknowledgements

This report was written by Tyler Reny and Sayu Bhojwani. Alejandro Rodas provided research assistance, and Amanda Church and Paru Shah provided editorial input. The report was designed by Nina Spensley.

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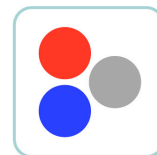www.newamericanleaders.org

Here at The New American Leaders Project, we are committed to increasing the number of diverse progressive elected officials at local, state, and national levels. We believe this diversity in leadership brings with it an understanding of the needs and concerns of our country's diverse population and helps to create both a representative and responsive democracy. We recognize that many elected officials who are not new Americans can, and do, champion policies that benefit immigrant communities. We also acknowledge the unfortunate reality of elected officials who deny their immigrant heritage and worse, advocate for anti-immigrant policy. However, in making the case for more new Americans in elected office in this report, we are particularly focused on those who campaign and govern with sensitivity to their communities' needs.

Elections are a strange beast – they go silently into the night in too many cases. Low voter turnout is a major issue in local elections in particular, and our report emphasizes the critical role that new Americans can play in those elections, by running for office and voting.

As we relish the impact that new Americans had on the 2012 elections, we hope to seize opportunities open to our communities in 2013, to ensure that the new American coalition is not simply a new American coincidence.
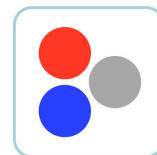
Sincerely yours,

Sayu Bhojwani

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Executive Summary

Run Local: The New American Electorate and the 2013 Municipal Elections makes the case for increasing representation by first- and second-generation Americans in local office. Through the analysis of existing research and our experience training community leaders to run for office, the report demonstrates that:

Elected officials from APIA, Latino, Arab American, and Caribbean American communities (co-ethnics) are the best leaders for their communities. Co-ethnic elected officials make a difference by mobilizing their communities, building political power and capacity for disenfranchised and vulnerable populations, bringing to the deliberative process a shared experience and understanding of their constituencies, and advocating for substantive policy based on that experience and understanding.

State and local elections are critical for immigrant political participation. State and local elections are ideal training grounds for democratic citizenry and good entry points into the candidate pipeline for new American candidates. First, most new American politicians began their careers at the state and local level. Second, demographic shifts are increasing the diversity of small cities and towns around the country and opening up vast opportunities for co-ethnic candidates to win elections. Third, since state and local elections typically produce lower voter turnout, increased participation by a new American community can effectively impact the outcome of an election and increase the odds of electing a descriptive representative.

Policy affecting immigrant communities is created at the state and local level as well as nationally. While the federal government is constitutionally mandated to control immigration policy, much of the policy that affects the day-to-day lives of new Americans, immigrant policy, is set at the state and local level. From what happens in our children's classrooms to the ways in which public health information is distributed, immigrant policy is a critical means of supporting immigrant integration in towns and cities across America.

Political factors play an important role in the ability of co-ethnic candidates to win elections. Demographics, while important, aren't enough to ensure descriptive representation. Additional factors, such as term limits, redistricting, at-large or district-based elections, and the availability of public financing, affect the ability of new American candidates to engage in the political process and achieve success in their campaigns.

2013 can be a key year for new Americans in municipal elections. While the collective attention of the media and the American people is focused on Washington, D.C., and the immigration debate, the 2013 municipal elections, and state and local elections in general, are crucial entry points into the larger political pipeline for co-ethnic candidates. In addition, nonprofits, Asian and Latino media, and political actors can build on the factors that influenced the outcome of the 2012 elections – redistricting and growth in the new American electorate – to engage immigrant communities.
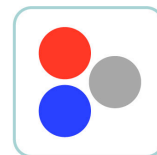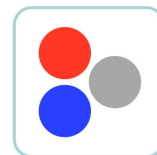
Introduction

As the nation's collective political energy is focused on the federal immigration debate this year, The New American Leaders Project is cheering from the sidelines for much-needed reform of our outdated and ineffective immigration system. The new American electorate's political engagement in 2012 is no doubt a factor in the immigration reform debate. In 2013, we can build on the momentum of 2012 and generate robust interest and participation by new Americans in municipal elections. *Run Local: The New American Electorate and the 2013 Municipal Elections* explores the importance of local elections for our country's increasingly diverse electorate.

In this report, we make the case for targeting resources to identify and groom promising candidates from new American communities at the local level, mobilize and engage new American voters, and support the development of policies that are responsive to the needs of all Americans. We are focusing our energies on our country's municipalities, the polities with the highest concentrations of immigrant communities, because investing in a pipeline of strong, values-based candidates has long-term impact. Local elections are ideal political career launching pads for new American community leaders who can go on to state and national office and become champions of underrepresented communities.

Our analysis of the research on co-ethnic candidates explains why it is more important than ever to work on diversifying every level of American leadership from the community to the Capitol. We review the case for descriptive representation, analyze the changing demographics of American cities and towns, explain why state and local elected offices are ideal positions for candidates from new American communities to launch political careers, and explore immigrant policy made at the state and local level. We also explore the political factors that inhibit or aid in the successful electoral bids of co-ethnic candidates at the state and local level. Finally, we reveal some exciting political opportunities in 2013 for African, Arab, Asian, Caribbean, and Latino candidates and offer recommendations for ensuring how best to elect leaders who motivate their communities, increase political participation by new Americans, and help shape a more equitable and robust democracy.

Let's begin with two questions that are at the heart of our exploration of new American candidates in state and local politics: why are elected officials from new American communities important and why do state and local elections matter?

What Is
Descriptive Representation and
Why Does It Matter?

"The principal difficulty lies, and the greatest care should be employed, in constituting this representative assembly. It should be in miniature an exact portrait of the people at large. It should think, feel, reason, and act like them. That it may be the interest of this assembly to do strict justice at all times, it should be an equal representation, or, in other words, equal interests among the people should have equal interests in it. Great care should be taken to effect this."

<div align="right">

– John Adams, 1776

</div>

Most fundamentally, descriptive representatives are elected representatives who share characteristics such as race, ethnicity, country of origin, or gender with their constituents. For example: women representing women, and Chinese Americans representing Asian Americans. More broadly, descriptive representatives bring shared experiences and an understanding of their communities that other representatives may not have.[1]

Descriptive representation plays a crucial role in our democracy; its benefits are manifested in three ways: trust and political attitudes, mobilization, and substantive policy. First, descriptive representation has been shown to decrease political alienation, feelings of powerlessness, cynicism, meaninglessness, estrangement, and distrust in individuals as their sense of political empowerment and trust in governing institutions and elected officials increases.[2] Second, descriptive representation is associated with an increased interest in and attention to political affairs, greater likelihood of voting, and more participation in other civic activities.[3] Finally, descriptive representation can have a substantive impact on policymaking. Through shared experiences and a deep understanding of community, descriptive representatives are able to identify and advocate for issues of particular importance to "minority" communities, specifically issues that are not concerns for dominant social groups or in political party platforms.[4] The existing research is supported by The New American

Leaders Project's survey of our 117 alumni. Of those, 62% identified immigration, 55% education, and 52% the economy as the top three most important issues facing the country.

Given the benefits of descriptive representation, the election of co-ethnic candidates to all levels of government, and particularly state and local government, is desirable and necessary for a robust and healthy democracy. Descriptive representatives can help to mobilize and empower their communities, offer a unique perspective to policy deliberations, and introduce and advocate for legislation on issues that either fall outside of traditional ideological frameworks or are not supported by the governing majority.
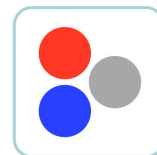
In our increasingly multiethnic and multiracial society, descriptive representation is not a luxury but a necessity. It is an important step toward ensuring that our representative democracy offers both a voice and hope to all Americans regardless of their race, ethnicity, or country of origin.

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[1] See Pitkin (1967) and Mansbridge (1999) for a more comprehensive analysis of descriptive representative.

[2] Pantoja and Segura (2003) find lower levels of political alienation in districts with Latino elected representatives. See also Michelson (2000).

[3] In searching for evidence of the mobilizing effects of co-ethnic candidates and political empowerment of minority communities, Gay (2001) finds that black co-ethnic candidates in congressional elections rarely increase turnout but Barreto (2007), looking at mayoral elections in five U.S. cities, finds that Latino candidates do significantly increase turnout among Latino constituents. Also see Barreto, Segura, and Woods (2004), Griffin and Newman (2008), Pantolja and Segura (2003), and Bobo and Gilliam (1990).

[4] There is a sizeable body of evidence that co-ethnic representatives advocate minority interests more vociferously and appropriately than non-minority legislators, though there is conflicting evidence of substantive representation in U.S. Congress. See Baker and Cook (2005), Hero and Tolbert (1995), and Swain (1993).

Why State and
Local Elections Matter

"The powers delegated by the proposed Constitution to the federal government, are few and defined. Those which are to remain in the State governments are numerous and indefinite."

– Publius, Federalist 45

State and local elections rarely receive the attention or media coverage afforded presidential or congressional elections. Yet in many ways they are far more important. From garbage removal and park maintenance to education and law enforcement, policy made at the state and local level is more likely to affect our everyday lives than that made at the federal level. State and local governments are also closer to the people. They provide an accessible avenue for citizens to engage with elected officials, to acquire democratic skills, and to enter the political pipeline as an elected official. As political scientists Zoltan Hajnal and Paul Lewis write, "Local politics could and should be the training ground of a democratic citizenry – the realm through which they begin to become engaged and empowered in the larger democratic process and the place where they gain trust in government and a belief in their own political efficacy."[5] For the rapidly growing segments of the new American population who too often feel marginalized and alienated from the political process, local governments are a perfect entry point for two reasons. One, they can spur minority political engagement, and two, they are venues to identify and groom new Americans to enter the political pipeline as first-time candidates. In this section, we discuss the changing demographics of America's urban and suburban areas, including the policy that is made at the state and local level, particularly the difference between immigrant policy and immigration policy, and argue for the creation of a robust political pipeline of new American candidates at the state and local level.

Geographic Dispersion, Majority-Minority Cities, and a New American Candidate Pipeline

Over the last three decades, mass immigration has helped transform American cities. While this mass immigration to the United States has bottomed out following the global recession, dramatic geographic shifts in immigrant settlement from large traditional receiving states and cities to smaller towns and cities continues apace.[6] Indeed, in 1980 there were just 289 majority-Latino cities in the U.S. By 2000, that number had almost tripled to 825 before dropping slightly to 727 in 2010. Similarly, in 1980 there were no majority-APIA (Asian Pacific Islander American) cities. Thirty years later, the 2010 Census identified 68 cities with majority-APIA population.[7] While large cities still include significant minority populations, 87% (633 of 727) of Latino-majority cities are small cities (with populations of less than 25,000).
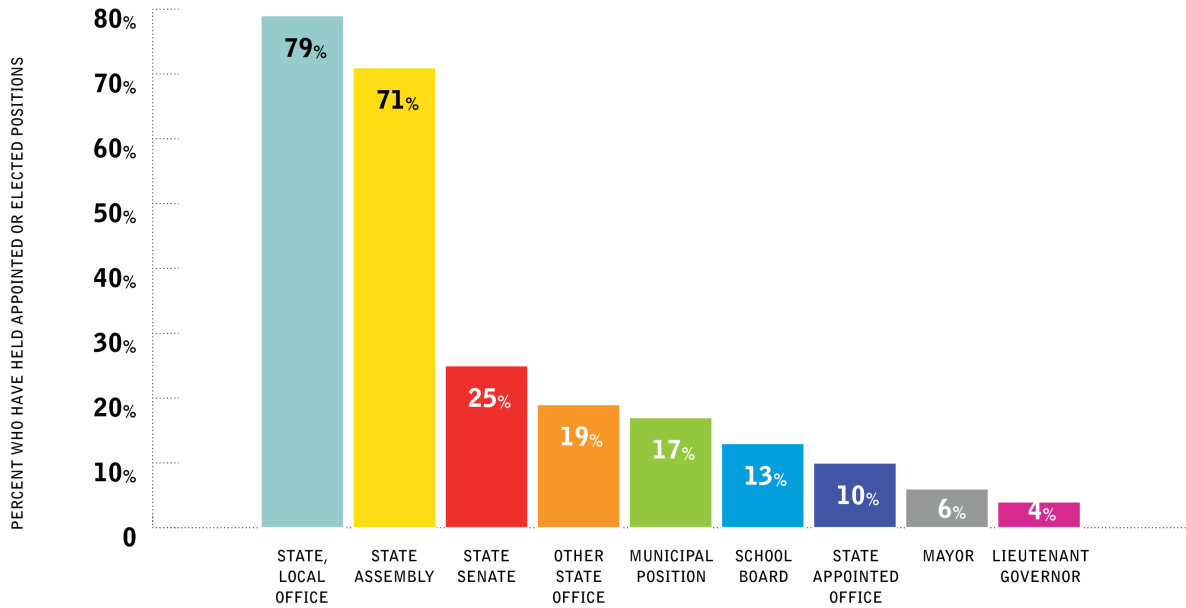
Research has shown that the size and concentration of a minority population is the strongest indicator of a co-ethnic candidate's electoral success. Thus, the increase of Asian- and Latino-majority cities opens up unprecedented opportunities to elect co-ethnic representatives.[8] Progress on this front is already happening.

The vast majority of APIA elected officials entered the candidate pipeline at the local level and currently hold local elected offices. The most comprehensive list of APIA elected officials, the UCLA Asian American Studies Center's 2011-2012 political almanac, found 613 APIA elected officials including U.S. congressmen (13), state representatives and senators (129), governors and other state officials (11), mayors (44), city/county councilmembers (173), and judges (243). Of all elected APIA officials, 98% are holding state and local seats (75% are local).

The story is the same for Latino elected officials. NALEO's 2011 Directory of Latino Elected Officials found 5,850 Latino elected officials including 26 at the federal level, 260 at the state level, and 5,564 at the local level: U.S. congress members (26), state officials (9), state representatives and senators (251), county officials (551), judicial/law enforcement (864), education/school board (2,173) and special district office (245). Again, the vast majority – 99.6% – of Latino elected officials hold state and local offices (95% of those are local) and begin their political careers there.

Among Arab American, Asian American, Caribbean, and Latino elected officials currently serving in the U.S. Congress, the pattern holds. In our analysis of those in office today, we found that 79% have held state or local offices before being elected to U.S. Congress; 71% served in a state assembly, 25% in their state's senate, 19% in other state offices, 17% in municipal positions, 13% in school boards, 10% in a state appointed positions, 6% as mayors, and 4% as lieutenant governors (see figure1). Even President Barack Obama began his political career as member of the State Senate in Illinois.

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL PIPELINE
Latino, APIA, Arab American, Caribbean members currently in 113th Congress

PERCENT WHO HAVE HELD APPOINTED OR ELECTED POSITIONS

- STATE, LOCAL OFFICE: 79%
- STATE ASSEMBLY: 71%
- STATE SENATE: 25%
- OTHER STATE OFFICE: 19%
- MUNICIPAL POSITION: 17%
- SCHOOL BOARD: 13%
- STATE APPOINTED OFFICE: 10%
- MAYOR: 6%
- LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR: 4%

Sources: The New American Leaders Project, www.house.gov, www.senate.gov

Running for local office has many political benefits. First, there are a staggering number of elected officials in local governments. The 2012 Census of Governments estimates that there are 89,004 local governments in the U.S., including 3,031 county, 19,522 municipal, 16,364 town or township, 37,203 special district, and 12,884 independent school districts (see figure 2).[9] Many of these are not majority-minority, but among those that are, many still lack proportionate descriptive representation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN THE U.S. (2012)

| | TOTAL | GENERAL PURPOSE | | | | | SPECIAL PURPOSE | | |
| | | TOTAL | COUNTY | SUBCOUNTY | | | TOTAL | SPECIAL DISTRICTS | INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS |
				TOTAL	MUNICIPAL	TOWN OR TOWNSHIP			
UNITED STATES	89,004	38,917	3,031	35,886	19,522	16,364	50,087	37,203	12,884

Source: 2012 Census of Governments

Second, local elections are ideal entry points into a political pipeline for new American candidates because the barriers to entry are lower than other offices. Campaigns for local positions require fewer funds and resources than bids for federal elections; campaigning takes place within a smaller geographic area and allows for far greater constituent contact than larger elections; and the

chances for name recognition are already high, particularly in tight-knit communities. These factors all facilitate the emergence of first-time new American candidates.

As racial and ethnic "minorities" disperse into smaller cities and towns around the country, majority-minority cities have proliferated. In turn, political opportunities have opened up for co-ethnic candidates to run for and win local and state elected offices, building a pipeline of strong candidates for higher office. Furthermore, the barriers to entry for local elections are low and ideal for new American candidates. Once elected, how can new American candidates play an important role in advocating for substantive policy at the state and local level?
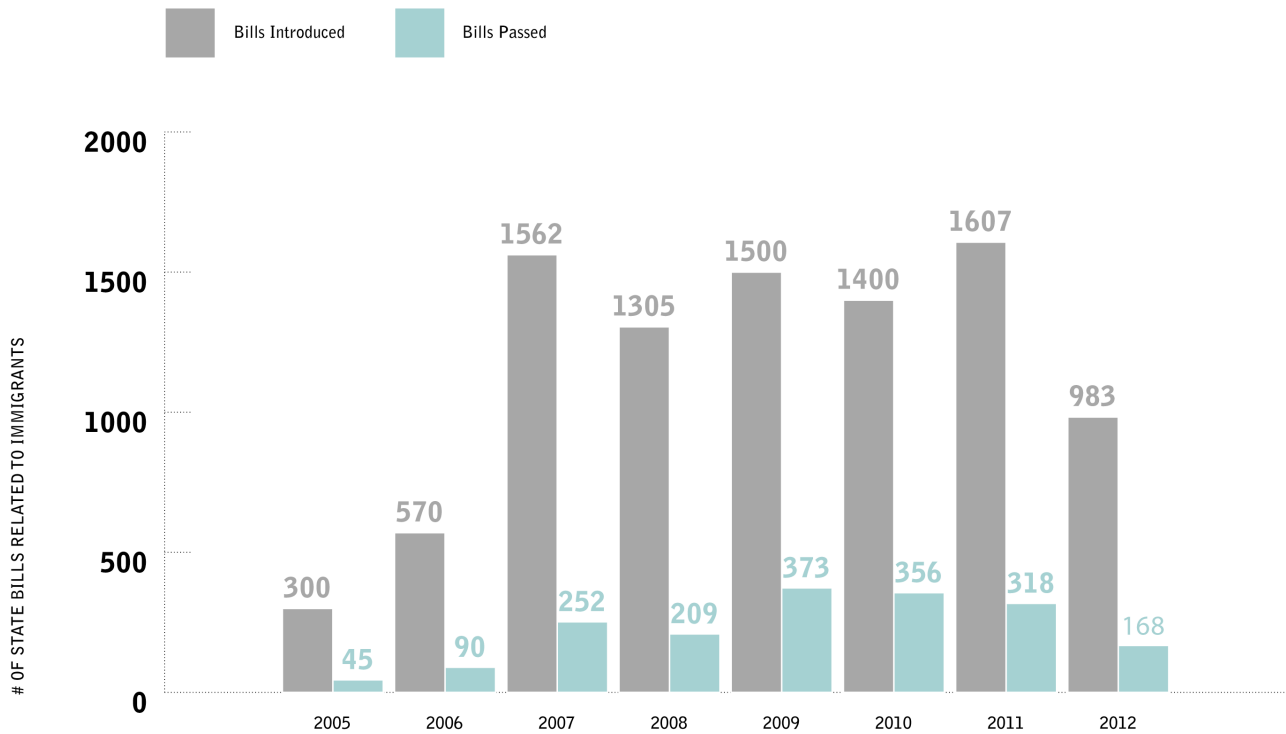
The Policy Dimension

Immigration policy is at the heart of the current national debate in Washington, D.C., and for good reason. Almost every aspect of America's immigration system – from enforcement to mechanisms for new immigrants to enter the country – is broken and badly in need of reform. But the media's intense focus on immigration reform overshadows other policy needs in the immigrant community.

Immigration policy is established by the federal government and essentially regulates who comes in to the United States, from where, for how long, and under what conditions. Immigrant policy, on the other hand, refers to a wide range of policies that affect the conditions under which immigrants and their families are able to live in the U.S., including access to education, healthcare, working conditions, support for immigrant-owned businesses, and professional skills training. These policies can include some other recently high-profile immigrant-specific issues, such as the passage of state DREAM Acts and whether undocumented immigrants can receive driver's licenses or access in-state tuition rates when attending local universities. Policies that aren't necessarily immigrant-specific but disproportionately affect immigrants can also be seen as immigrant policy, such as regulations of restaurants and hospitality industries, domestic work, and agriculture, where many (and in some cases, most) workers are from immigrant communities. Finally, policies that support the integration of immigrants into local communities, such as the availability of translation and interpretation services, English language classes, or naturalization campaigns, can be referred to as immigrant policy.

At the same time, immigration policy has increasingly devolved to the states following frustration with the federal government's inability to reform a broken system. In 2005, 300 bills related to immigrants were introduced in state legislatures, 45 passed, and 39 were enacted. In 2011, 1,607 where introduced, 318 passed, and 197 were enacted (see figure 3).

While the number has dropped in the last year, the trend remains the same: states are increasingly trying to tackle a broken federal system on their own.[10]

STATE LEGISLATION RELATED TO IMMIGRANTS (2005-2012)

■ Bills Introduced   ■ Bills Passed

OF STATE BILLS RELATED TO IMMIGRANTS

Year	Bills Introduced	Bills Passed
2005	300	45
2006	570	90
2007	1562	252
2008	1305	209
2009	1500	373
2010	1400	356
2011	1607	318
2012	983	168

Source: NCSL, 2012

The result has been a patchwork of vastly divergent immigration policy, much of it punitive and harmful, if not outright hostile, toward new American communities. For every state passing a DREAM Act or offering in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants, there is a punitive attrition-through-enforcement bill such as Arizona's SB1070 and Georgia's HB87, both of which encourage racial profiling and instill fear in the lives of both documented and undocumented immigrants.

Given that so much immigrant policy and now immigration policy is determined at the state and local level, increased representation by new Americans in policy-making positions is urgent for immigrant communities to become more fully integrated into our towns and cities. With every new co-

ethnic leader in office, the likelihood of punitive anti-immigrant legislation passing decreases and pro-immigrant legislation increases. [11]

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[5] See Hajnal and Lewis (2003) for more on turnout in local elections.

[6] For more on this phenomenon, see Massey (2010).

[7] For more on the rise of multicultural cities, see Shah and Marschall (2012) and Camarillo (2007).

[8] See Shah and Marschall (2012) for a review of the literature.

[9] http://www2.census.gov/govs/cog/2012/formatted_prelim_counts_23jul2012_2.pdf

[10] The Conference of State Legislatures keeps track of these bills and publishes biannual reports on number of immigration bills introduced. Visit their site for more detailed information.

[11] This is obviously a nuanced argument. Candidates have emerged from new American communities (Ted Cruz, Brian Sandoval, Bobby Jindal, Susana Martinez, Nikki Haley, etc.) who we would argue do not substantively represent, and may actually harm, their communities.

Political Factors

While the size and concentration of new American communities are the best indicators of the emergence of descriptive representatives, a number of other factors – redistricting, electoral institutional structure, financing of elections, and term limits – can play important roles in inhibiting or facilitating the electoral success of a new American candidate. What are the effects of each of these?

Electoral Institutional Structure

In at-large elections, representatives are elected to serve the entire population of a city.[12] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, concurrent with the passage of the 1982 amendments to the Voting Rights Act (VRA), research was being conducted on the number of descriptive representatives in at-large districts. Most found that at-large elections were discriminatory toward racial minorities by reducing the ability of co-ethnic candidates to win elections.[13] At-large voting allows 50% of voters to control the election to 100% of the seats, often to the detriment of communities of color who may be concentrated in specific wards or lack the political infrastructure and city-wide base of power that non-minority communities hold and have access to.

The alternative – single-member electoral districts – is seen as ideal for ensuring proper minority group representation in elected bodies through empowering redistricting following the released of the decennial census. Much voting rights litigation has focused on eliminating at-large districts, seen as inherently detrimental to new American communities, and replacing them with majority-minority single-member districts. Such districts greatly increase the likelihood of electing a co-ethnic representative and are associated with more responsiveness to constituents and greater participation by minorities.[14]

Redistricting

District and ward elections are important for the emergence of new American candidates because of redistricting. Redistricting is perhaps the most well-known mechanism for ensuring that minority communities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. Redistricting

has not always been beneficial to "minority" communities. States have, at different times in history, engaged in cracking, or splitting up, a concentrated group of minority voters into majority-white districts to eliminate the possibility of electing a co-ethnic representative. They have also tried "packing" a district as full as possible with minority voters, to allow for the emergence of a co-ethnic representative while minimizing the number of elections in which they could exert influence.[15]

In the hands of less insidious actors and in the wake of the 1982 amendments to the VRA, redistricting has become the standard tool in facilitating the emergence of co-ethnic representatives. At the federal level, this has resulted in representatives like Grace Meng (D-NY) being the first Asian American elected to Congress from New York and Tony Cardenas (D-CA) being the first Latino elected to represent the San Fernando Valley in California. The examples of majority-minority districts at the state and local level, particularly in large cities, are numerous.

Financing of Elections

Though still fairly uncommon, public campaign financing has two powerful benefits: it can open up opportunities for less experienced candidates and non-incumbents to run for elected office and it encourages participation by constituents who otherwise may not have been involved under traditional models. A matching funds system, for example, greatly increases the value of small donations, encouraging candidates who may not have previously considered running because of the challenges of fundraising to reach out to their constituents for donations rather than out of district to large donors and interest groups. As an added benefit, increasing fundraising in new American communities is strongly correlated with increased mobilization and political participation.[16]

Term Limits

Finally, term limits, particularly in conjunction with other mechanisms like public financing, can play an important role in lowering the barriers of entry into the political pipeline for co-ethnic candidates. Term limits play a critical role in breaking the electoral advantages held by incumbents – name recognition, campaign experience, political connections, campaign-fund war chest – and opening up the field for women and co-ethnic candidates to run. Research has borne this out. Term limits have been shown to increase the representation of women in legislatures.[17] Although the evidence for enhanced electoral opportunities for new American candidates is less clear than for women, term limits, in conjunction with other factors, can increase the likelihood of new American candidates entering and winning elections.[18]

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[12] http://archive.fairvote.org/index.php?page=766

[13] See Engstrom and McDonald (1981).

[14] Visit the National League of Cities for a basic description of forms of municipal elections. See Sass and Pittman (2000) for a historical overview of voting rights cases and a literature review of research on institutional electoral systems and representation. Also see Lublin (1997), Lublin (1999), and Canon (1999) for research of congressional level elections. Also see Handley, Grofman, and Arden (1998), and Meier et al. (2005) for an examination of the same phenomenon at the state and local level.

[15] For more information on the process of redistricting, see The Brennan Center's Media Guide to Redistricting

[16] See The Brennan Center's 2012 report Donor Diversity Through Matching Funds as well as the Center for Governmental Studies' report Keeping it Clean: Public Financing in American Elections

[17] See Carroll (1994), Darcy (1992), Carroll and Strimling (1983), and Rule and Norris (1992).

[18] See Caress et al. (2003) for a comprehensive overview of existing research on term limits and minority state legislators.

2013 Municipal Opportunities

As we head into 2013, unique opportunities exist for immigrant political participation. Almost 1,000 cities in the country are majority-Latino. Many more cities have single-member district elections with districts that are majority-Asian American or majority-Latino. Many of those will be holding elections in 2013. In fact, the U.S. Conference of Mayors has identified 642 cities that are having mayoral elections in 2013, including 288 in immigrant-heavy California, New York, Florida, Illinois, and Texas alone.[19]

The table below shows 22 cities with large foreign-born and/or APIA and Latino populations that are holding municipal elections in 2013. We first looked at the cities with the largest populations and eliminated those that weren't holding elections in 2013. We then supplemented the largest metropolises with some smaller cities with large new American communities. We highlighted the specific political factors we identified above as positively or negatively influencing the ability of co-ethnic candidates to win local elections: type of election, whether redistricting occurred after the 2010 census, whether the city has some form of public financing, and whether there are term limits for local offices.

Of course, the data in this table are not definitive. Although the size of the APIA and Latino citizen voting age population (CVAP) is the best indicator of voting strength and potential political impact, the data are not disaggregated by district in those cities with district elections, and that level of data analysis was beyond the scope of our report. We highlight these cities primarily to offer some examples of diverse polities, examine the interplay of factors that encourage or stifle the ability of co-ethnic candidates to emerge, and to call for greater dedication of resources toward identifying, training, and grooming the numerous and inspiring new American leaders that reside in all of these communities.

Following the table is a more in-depth look at two cities. First we examine New York City, a "model" city with very large and well-established multi-generational "minority" communities, district elections, and public financing. New York has been successful in ensuring that its diverse communities can elect co-ethnic candidates to represent them at the local level.

We contrast New York City with Riverside, California, a city that is far more representative of smaller cities around the country experiencing drastic demographic shifts and with diverse communities struggling to ensure proportionate representation in local elected bodies. In choosing these examples, we emphasize that Riverside's demographic changes might not be enough on their own, and need to be supplemented with institutional changes like New York City's, such as public financing and term limits, to support increased diversity in leadership.

22 CITIES WITH LARGE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS

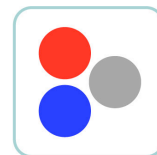| CITY, STATE	TOTAL POPULATION	FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION		APIA POPULATION		APIA CVAP		LATINO POPULATION		LATINO CVAP	
Hialeah, FL	224,275	165,219	73.7%	833	0.4%	140	0.1%	206,426	92.0%	95,330	42.5%
Miami, FL	391,460	231,353	59.1%	3,761	1.0%	1,295	0.3%	285,444	72.9%	117,630	30.0%
Glendale, CA	192,190	105,218	54.7%	31,250	16.3%	17,120	8.9%	34,813	18.1%	16,880	8.8%
Monterey Park, CA	60,175	32,534	54.1%	39,578	65.8%	25,050	41.6%	17,278	26.9%	10,145	16.9%
Miami Beach, FL	87,585	44,985	51.4%	1,174	1.3%	650	0.7%	42,852	53.0%	23,740	27.1%
Sunnyvale, CA	136,480	61,052	44.7%	49,470	36.2%	21,950	16.1%	21,902	18.9%	8,070	5.9%
Los Angeles, CA	3,772,485	1,491,658	39.5%	405,425	10.7%	239,275	6.3%	1,841,119	48.5%	619,220	16.4%
Jersey City, NJ	243,255	93,673	38.5%	45,568	18.7%	22,785	9.4%	66,760	27.6%	34,925	14.4%
New York City, NY	8,078,470	2,989,825	37.0%	968,161	12.0%	504,635	6.2%	2,273,447	28.6%	1,119,525	13.9%
West Covina, CA	105,550	36,978	35.0%	24,390	23.1%	16,705	15.8%	55,180	53.2%	30,375	28.8%
Pasadena, CA	136,450	42,854	31.4%	17,514	12.8%	10,490	7.7%	17,676	33.7%	21,950	16.1%
Vallejo, CA	116,030	31,853	27.5%	27,988	24.1%	18,225	15.7%	23,930	22.6%	9,185	7.9%
Boston, MA	602,610	165,394	27.4%	49,676	8.2%	28,535	4.7%	98,299	17.5%	44,835	7.4%
El Paso, TX	628,925	163,126	25.9%	7,552	1.2%	3,835	0.6%	482,186	80.7%	265,440	42.2%
Dallas, TX	1,187,285	294,643	24.8%	32,264	2.7%	15,050	1.3%	537,501	42.4%	133,710	11.3%
Riverside, CA	300,555	72,740	24.2%	17,956	6.0%	11,910	4.0%	139,020	46.3%	58,490	19.5%
Phoenix, AZ	1,450,205	312,898	21.6%	37,151	2.6%	17,600	1.2%	643,487	40.8%	179,715	12.4%
Fort Worth, TX	705,350	126,576	17.9%	22,999	3.3%	11,450	1.6%	224,835	34.1%	79,820	11.3%
Seattle, WA	595,240	105,508	17.7%	75,985	12.8%	50,035	8.4%	35,192	6.6%	18,700	3.1%
San Antonio, TX	1,290,195	180,255	14.0%	26,587	2.1%	13,900	1.1%	807,194	63.2%	472,420	36.6%
Memphis, TN	654,875	40,112	6.1%	11,461	1.8%	3,585	0.5%	34,994	6.5%	7,640	1.2%
Detroit, MI	759,340	37,536	4.9%	14,187	1.9%	3,510	0.5%	64,837	6.8%	15,380	2.0%

Sources: 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2010 US Census

22 CITIES WITH LARGE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS

CITY, STATE	ELECTION PROCESS	REDISTRICT 2010	PUBLIC FINANCING	TERM LIMITS
Hialeah, FL	SMD	N	N	N
Miami, FL	SMD	Y	N	N
Glendale, CA	SMD	N	N	N
Monterey Park, CA	SMD	N	N	N
Miami Beach, FL	SMD	N	N	N
Sunnyvale, CA	AL	N	N	N
Los Angeles, CA	SMD	Y	Y	Y
Jersey City, NJ	WARD/AL	N	N	N
New York City, NY	SMD	Y	Y	Y
West Covina, CA	SMD	N	N	N
Pasadena, CA	SMD	Y	N	N
Vallejo, CA	AL	N	N	N
Boston, MA	SMD	Y	N	N
El Paso, TX	SMD	Y	N	N
Dallas, TX	SMD	Y	N	Y
Riverside, CA	WARD	Y	N	N
Phoenix, AZ	SMD	Y	N	Y
Fort Worth, TX	SMD	Y	N	N
Seattle, WA	SMD	Y	Y	N
San Antonio, TX	SMD	Y	N	Y
Memphis, TN	SMD	Y	N	N
Detroit, MI	AL	N	N	N

Sources: municode.com and termlimits.org

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[19] http://www.usmayors.org/elections/displayelections2013listing.asp?orderbystate=yes&state=all

A Tale of Two Cities

New York, NY

No other place in the United States embodies America's immigrant heritage like New York City. Once the gateway to America, New York City has welcomed tens of millions through its ports. It remains one of the most diverse cities in the country – a true mosaic with a population that is 64% Asian American, black, and Hispanic. Over the years, New York has adopted a number of reforms that have increased the electoral chances of co-ethnic candidates, including an expansion of the City Council body from 35 to 51 members, conscious redistricting, term limits, and finance reform. While by no means perfect, demographics coupled with reforms have turned New York into a "model" city for descriptive representation.

The first step towards increasing the ability of "minority" communities to elect a representative of their choice to the City Council was a 1989 overhaul of the city charter that expanded the Council from 35 to 51 members. Today, the City Council has 27 black, Hispanic, or Asian American members, 53% of the total (the city is 64% APIA, black, and Hispanic). While not quite proportional, it is much closer to parity than most cities in the country.

In 1993 and again in 1996, New York City voters, buoyed by a national wave of anti-incumbent fervor, overwhelmingly approved a two-term limit for City Council members and the mayor. While the term limits were briefly overturned by the City Council, at the urging of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in 2008, two-year terms were reinstated by voters again in 2010. Many have attributed greater diversity on the City Council to New York City's term limits law.[20]

New York City also has a robust public finance system that is often referred to as a model for state and national campaign finance reform. The New York City Campaign Finance Board currently matches at a 6-to-1 ratio the first $175 a city resident contributes to a campaign. After a huge campaign finance scandal in the late 1980s, the late Mayor Ed Koch, together with the City Council Speaker Peter Vallone, led a push to institute the current system of public finance. A Brennan Center report shows that public financing has increased donor participation among the city's lower socio-economic status Asian American, black, and Hispanic neighborhoods; created stronger incentives for candidates to reach out to their constituents; helped lower the barrier of entry for less experienced, less well-connected, and more diverse candidates; and shifted the power away from large donors

toward small donors (participating candidates raised 63% of their funds from small donors who gave less than $250).[21]

New York City is by no means a perfect example. Its redistricting process has come under heavy scrutiny by Hispanic and Asian American rights groups for splitting ethnic blocs and neighborhoods, highlighting the existing weaknesses in district boundaries and the challenges of ensuring that new American communities can elect co-ethnic representatives. In addition, although the City Council is diverse, some major ethnic groups, such as South Asians, still lack descriptive representation. But, together with its rich demographic diversity and conscious reforms, New York City has succeeded breaking down the barriers of entry to local offices and electing Asian, black, and Hispanic City Council members. Its reforms can be seen as a guide to other cities working to diversify their local governmental institutions.

Riverside, CA

The city of Riverside, CA, has a diverse and rapidly growing population. A full 51.9% of the population is Hispanic, and 7.6% is Asian American, making Riverside a majority-minority city. Twenty-four percent of its population is foreign-born and, unlike New York City, most of its immigrants are fairly recent arrivals with the majority arriving after 1980. This growth is expected to continue throughout the next half-century. Riverside County, nestled in the Inland Empire area of Southern California, is expected to expand 92% between 2010 and 2060, which would make it the fastest growing county in California during that period.[22]

Because so many are recent arrivals, the Latino and Asian American populations have not yet been able to build a base of political power that can translate into the emergence of a proportionate number of co-ethnic candidates. Only 3.8% and 18.8% of the citizen voting age population (CVAP) are Asian American and Latino, respectively. As the population ages and naturalizes, more opportunities can emerge.

Furthermore, the Latino population is not segregated in a few densely packed neighborhoods but spread throughout the city, increasing the influence of Latino and Asian American voters in most of the wards. Sixty percent of the neighborhoods in Riverside have a combined Asian American and Latino population of 40% or more. Nearly half of neighborhoods are already majority-minority.

Despite the demographic realities of Riverside, only two of seven City Council members are Hispanic.   This disparity can be attributed not only to the relatively small and recently arrived APIA and Latino CVAP but also to several political and institutional factors. Riverside has ward elections, similar

to district elections, for its City Council members. Because the ward boundaries are redrawn every ten years, wards can be shaped to maximize the impact of the Asian American and Latino votes. However, Riverside does not have term limits or any system of public financing that could weaken the electoral advantages of incumbents and encourage the emergence of new American candidates.

Riverside is more representative of the political realities of rapidly growing majority-minority cities around the country than New York City. Without political reforms like term limits and public financing and the leveraging of resources to identify, train, and groom new American leaders, opportunities for descriptive representatives will remain limited.

[20] http://www.brennancenter.org/publication/donor-diversity-through-public-matching-funds

[21] See The Brennan Center for Justice's Empowering Small Donors in Federal Elections.

[22] http://www.sacbee.com/2013/02/01/5157052/dan-walters-demography-may-doom.html#storylink=cpy

Conclusion

Our analysis shows the importance of descriptive representation in a racially and ethnically diverse representative democracy. It can help empower new American communities and decrease political alienation. It can increase mobilization and political participation. Finally, descriptive representatives are uniquely situated to identify, advocate for, and propose legislation to help respond to the policy and services needs of new American communities.

Our survey of the research also demonstrates why state and local elections matter. Local elections, in the abstract, are an ideal "training ground of a democratic citizenry"; demographic shifts and geographic settlement patterns are beginning to open up political opportunities for co-ethnic representation in hundreds of new cities around the country; and local elections, with their lower barriers to entry, are ideal political career launching pads for less experienced co-ethnic candidates.

The report also emphasizes the importance of state and local offices for policy-making, highlighting the difference between immigration and immigrant policy and showing that co-ethnic candidates at the state and local level can play an important role in shaping policy that affects the daily lives of all citizens as well as moderating the emergence and passage of damaging punitive immigration bills.

Our analysis supports the need for certain political and institutional factors to help co-ethnic candidates in their bids for electoral office. District elections, particularly if the district lines are properly drawn, can be extremely empowering for new American political representation. Term limits and public financing can help break the stranglehold that incumbents often have in American politics and open up opportunities for less connected and less experienced candidates, particularly those from new American communities, to run for office.

Finally, our selection of a handful of municipalities highlights just a few of the exciting possibilities for new American candidates to enter the political pipeline in both large and small municipalities. Our case studies allow us to juxtapose a large city with a well-established immigrant population and numerous reforms that have facilitated the emergence of descriptive representatives, New York City, with Riverside, CA, a smaller city with rapidly evolving demographics that has not yet achieved proportionate descriptive representation but harbors considerable future potential.

Below we offer recommendations, based on the findings of this report, for building strong pipelines of strong co-ethnic candidates at the state and local level. In our increasingly diverse country, the continuing success of our democratic republic and accessibility of the American dream relies on smart governance and strong institutions that work for all Americans regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin.

Recommendations

1)   **Making change for New American communities at the federal level starts with building a pipeline of energetic and values-driven APIA, Arab American, Caribbean, and Latino leaders at the state and local level.** These leaders are most likely to be familiar with their community's needs and can begin to introduce policies that are responsive to those needs. Resources are needed to develop and train community leaders to run for office. Also, local party organizations, unions, and other political actors should support the entry of new candidates into local races, focusing on candidates who have strong ties to immigrant communities and can run a values-based campaign.

2)   **Increasing the chances of new Americans being elected to public office requires changes in political factors at the state and local level.** These changes include lowering the institutional and political barriers of entry for co-ethnic candidates by encouraging racially conscious redistricting, transition from at-large to single-member district elections, public financing, and term limits.

3)   **Continuing to invest in voter engagement and registration and get out the vote efforts in 2013 can help to build on the momentum of the 2012 elections.** Nonprofit groups and Asian and Latino media were critical players last year and must continue to tap into the energy and motivation of new American voters to draw them to the polls in 2013. At the local level, any increase in turnout by new Americans can have a significant impact on the outcome of elections. Municipal elections are thus an ideal place to focus civic engagement efforts

4)   **Preparing new legislators for governance ensures that they will have the tools to represent their communities effectively.** Particularly as local office is likely to be held by first-time elected officials and co-ethnics may be the first in their family or community to be elected, introduction to the political and legislative process can make the difference between a novice and an effective public official. Training and support for newly elected immigrants can be provided by a range of players, including nonprofit groups like The New American Leaders Project, various political parties, and university training programs.

5)   **Conducting additional research on the demographic composition of districts can provide more insight into a community's ability to elect a co-ethnic representative.** This report examined data at the municipal level for Asian and Latino citizens of voting age but disaggregated, district-level data can more accurately show jurisdictions where co-ethnic candidates have a chance of succeeding by mobilizing an ethnic base.

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